

Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity
NEWSletter

Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity of
lower Michigan and Toledo Ohio

November 2007



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Messengers of peace moving forward with Francis



Anne Marie Burns, SFO who is the Vice Minister of St. Louis the King Fraternity in White Lake talks with Rita Vargo from St. Joseph Fraternity, Ann Arbor during a break in the Formation Day workshop held in Saginaw.

Mark your Calendar

November 10

St. Isidore Fraternity, Grand Rapids Day of Recollection beginning at 8:30-9:00 a.m. Roch Neimeher, OFM will be the speaker.

April 5, 2008

Spring Ministers Meeting at Holiday Inn, Lansing.

August 15-17, 2008

Annual Meeting and Visitation at St. John's in Plymouth. Guests will be welcome to attend.

Grace is abundant in Saginaw

by Margo Dean, SFO

The Grace of God was abundant and flowing as 70 plus candidates, inquirers, formation ministers, regional formation team members and DMRF Executive Council members gathered on September 15 for a Formation Conference in Saginaw, MI.

The beautiful sunny day began with a delightful visit from Sr. Diane and Sr. Laura, of the Saginaw Poor Clares. Sr. Diane welcomed all and gave an overview of their ministries of prayer and apostolates.

Formation team member, Margo Dean, SFO, began by introducing the communication style of mutual invitation. A beginning exercise was given to all, and the "What did you notice?" question brought surprising and excited answers from participants.

Mary Bittner, Regional Minister, led the next session on Vocation as Gift. Mary used the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-18) to help attendees look at the importance of unwrapping and using vocation as gift. Mary also made use of the SFO Rule and Constitutions to unwrap and define the gift of vocation (Art. 3.3., 2.2, 3.1) Participants continued in small groups to identify the essential elements of the SFO vocation, both secular and Franciscan.

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Margo finished out the morning leading a session on the Gift of Community. Based on Article 22 of the SFO Rule, and again using the mutual invitation style, participants listened to each other answer the questions

- What do others need to know about me in order for me to function or communicate effectively in community?
- How do I know I am being respected?
- What are my responsibilities in order for community to be inclusive and respectful for everyone?

The large group came back together sharing answers to, "What did you notice?"

Following a pleasant lunch, Marie Amore, SFO, Regional Formation Minister, began the afternoon sessions by giving a presentation on the Gift of Profession. Marie gave information that she had gleaned from the International Formation Conference she attended in Rome a few years ago. How profession helps community grow and live was the focus. The depths and insights learned were amazing to all.

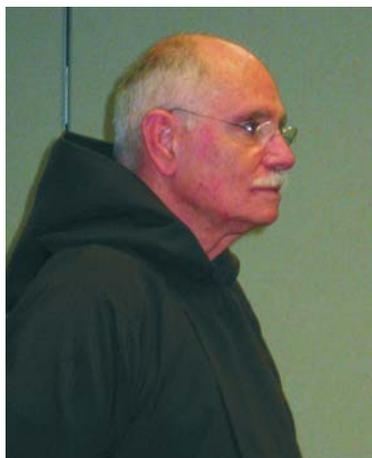
Also in the afternoon, candidates and inquirers gathered with Formation Team Member, Patti Reynolds, SFO, for an overview of the SFO as a Lay Association of the Faithful. Patti noted how happy she was to share with her brothers and sisters and was especially happy to see many young adults in attendance.

Lo and behold, our inquirers and candidates were then treated to a surprise visit by St. Francis (a.k.a. Deacon Richard Hulan, SFO), St. Clare (a.k.a. Pat Carsley, SFO) and a professed member of the SFO (a.k.a. Marylynn Hewitt). Francis and Clare dialogued with and answered questions from our special SFO member and gave many wonderful insights to our attendees. What a fun-filled and spirited session, with smiles and laughter everywhere.

While Francis and Clare were charming our candidates, Marie Amore and Mary Bittner were meeting with our Formation Ministers separately, reviewing their successes and any concerns they might be having. Discernment issues were the highlight of the session.



Pat Carsley, SFO made a surprise visit to the candidates and inquirers as St. Clare.



Deacon Richard Hulan, SFO as St. Francis and Pat Carsley, SFO (above) dialogued with a professed member, Marylynn Hewitt, SFO about how Secular Franciscans live out their common vocation today.

A prayer service rounded out this special day. In a moving service, inquirers and candidates were encircled by team members and formation ministers in a declaration of support for their journey ahead.

New friends were made and old acquaintances were renewed in this truly Franciscan day of formation. As people left to travel home, smiles and hugs were plentiful and the grace flows on . . .

On the Road by Fr. Tod, OFM



*Friar Tod Laverty, OFM
Regional Spiritual Assistant*

*I want to help
Secular Franciscans -
and all other types of
Franciscans - develop a
growing sense of
belonging to a world-
wide movement of
Franciscan men and
women animated by
the charism of
Francis and Clare.*

Am I getting too old for this? Guiding pilgrimages to Franciscan Italy, that is.

Touchdown stateside was on Friday evening, October 5th; takeoff for Italy again is Sunday, October 21st. I have two weeks to catch up on office work, give a day of recollection, conduct four fraternity visitations, see some counseling and spiritual direction clients, do laundry and get myself back to pilgrimage. So, it should come as no surprise that the Franciscan Federation invited me and Sr. Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, a colleague and fellow pilgrimage guide, to give several keynote addresses at next summer's Denver gathering. We are both itinerants; on the road like Francis of Assisi, preaching the Gospel and learning how to let go of things and places and relationships for the sake of the Kingdom. They want us to talk on pilgrimage and itinerancy.

My service to Secular Franciscans in Michigan is similar. I'm striving to serve as a link for the nearly 40 Fraternities scattered all around the state. I want to be a link for the Fraternities with one another and the Divine Mercy Region as a whole. I want to help the Fraternities develop and hone the sense of belonging not just to a Region but to a worldwide Order called the Secular Franciscans. But beyond that, I want to help Secular Franciscans -- and all other types of Franciscans -- develop a growing sense of belonging to a worldwide movement of Franciscan men and women animated by the charism of Francis and Clare. Therein lies a blessing for me, personally. All my contacts with Secular Franciscans throughout the region give me a sense of belonging with you and fills a gap in my own experience.

While we were meeting in Denver in mid-September, the planners of the Federation gathering invited me to address yet another topic in one of the many break-out sessions they're organizing: the Franciscan Family. Actually it's in doing pilgrimage work that I've learned the most about being a member of a worldwide Franciscan movement. We are Friars of all three branches of the First Order (Capuchins, Conventuals and Observants) and the TOR, Franciscan Sisters of many US congregations from all over the country, and lay men and women who are animated by the Franciscan charism. There are no SFO's on our pilgrimage staff roster -- yet.

Besides leading over 35 pilgrimages a year in the US, Italy, England, Ireland and France, we meet for an annual staff meeting which we call our Chapter and stay in touch all year long through the dedicated services of our Franklin, WI office staff.

I've been doing this ministry since 1989. Through those years of working side-by-side with Franciscan brothers and sisters of all stripes and leading Franciscan men and women from over 62 countries worldwide, I've come to appreciate the diversity of gifts we all bring, yet the unity of purpose and spirit that joins us.

We're a family; what a blessing! We share one animating spirit: the charism of living the Gospel after the manner of St. Francis of Assisi. Thanks for being my brothers and sisters.

-Fr. Tod, OFM

St. Francis, Sterling Heights celebrates Day of Reflection

St. Francis Fraternity in Sterling Heights held a Day of Reflection in August led by the two Bernardine OSF Sisters, Sr. Marie Cacciatore & Sr. Mary Elena Sabalausky. The gathering was attended by forty people, mostly professed Secular Franciscan members from four fraternities including St. David Fraternity in Washington, St. Louis the King Fraternity in White Lake, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Fraternity in Allen Park and of course St. Francis Fraternity. Five Candidates as well as a couple of guests also participated.

Rose Maroto, the Minister of St. Francis Fraternity reports that God blessed the group with wonderfully lively, informative, interesting talk with meditative sessions on our Blessed Mother, whose Queenship they celebrated that day, and on the life of our SFO Patroness, St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Participants enjoyed a continental breakfast and lunch served simple and ecologically Franciscan and wonderful camaraderie.

The celebration was fittingly capped with the Eucharistic Liturgy presided over by their Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Alex Kratz, OFM. It was a beautiful, blessed day indeed. Rose concludes, "All praise to our the Most High, Glorious and Ever-Loving God."

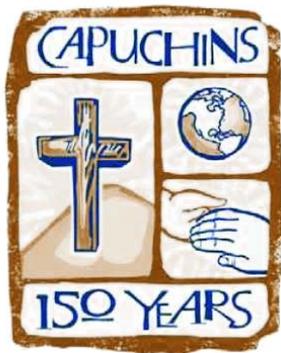


Rose Maroto, SFO welcomes participants to a Day of Reflection on the feastday of the Queenship of the Blessed Mother last August.

- Photo courtesy of Leigh Lentine, SFO

St. Bonaventure Fraternity in Detroit celebrates

Congratulations to St. Bonaventure Fraternity in Detroit who recently celebrated their 120th Anniversary Jubilee. In October they also joined with their Capuchin Brothers in celebrating their 150th Jubilee, the anniversary of the first



permanent establishment of the Capuchin Franciscan Order in North America at Mount Calvary, WI in 1857. It was this first Capuchin foundation that grew into the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph, headquartered now in Detroit.

The focal event of October's Third Sunday Meeting was a Mass of Thanksgiving in gratitude to God for the many blessings showered upon their Fraternity and on all of metro-Detroit through the presence of the Capuchin Friars.

Ecumenical/Interfaith committee seeks new members

The National Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee is soliciting applications from Secular Franciscans interested in serving on the committee. The term of service is three years, with the possibility of a second three-year term.

If you are interested in serving, please contact committee chair, Ed Shirley at elssfo@hotmail.com. He will let you know what materials you will need to provide. Interest must be expressed by January 1, 2008.

Divine Mercy NEWSletter is a bi-monthly publication of Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity of Lower Michigan and Toledo, Ohio.

Local fraternities are encouraged to send their news and upcoming events to the editor.

The deadline for the January issue is December 15.

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