

Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity
NEWSletter

Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity of
Lower Michigan and Toledo Ohio

March 2008



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Marie Amore, SFO

Spiritual Assistant

Friar Tod Laverty, OFM

Messengers of peace moving forward with Francis



St. Isidore Church in Grand Rapids is home to St. Isidore Fraternity.

Mark your Calendar

April 5, 2008

Spring Meeting for local Ministers and Formation Ministers at Holiday Inn, Lansing. Whole formation teams are encouraged to attend.

August 15-17, 2008

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

Local ministers, formation ministers to meet April 5

by Marie Amore, SFO

Formation ministers who were present at the candidates' gathering in Saginaw last September spoke of the need for a day when they could have more time to learn, study, ask questions and to share information. In response to that need the Regional Council is encouraging each formation minister to join local ministers at their semi-annual meeting. This meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 5th from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Holiday Inn in Lansing.

This event will include time to listen to, as well as discuss, material from the *International Formation Course*. There also will be ample time to ask questions, dialogue and to share information about the formation process. Because the information and material prepared by the regional formation team is so valuable for both the local fraternity ministers as well as the formation ministers, the Divine Mercy Executive Council determined that the appropriate time to accommodate both would be at the local minister's gathering in Lansing.

A continental breakfast and lunch will be served. There will be no cost to the elected formation minister or local fraternity minister. Formation ministers are encouraged to invite other people from their teams, and there will be a \$15.00 charge for each additional person.

We believe that keeping informed on updated formation material is important to all who have been called to serve as formation ministers in our fraternities. It is our hope that every fraternity minister and formation minister will be present on April 5th.

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OFM - p.3*

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H2O Project is a Franciscan Youth fundraiser

Help bring clean water to those most in need.

Some of us throughout the Region have participated in the H2O project to bring clean drinking water to youth around the world, especially those in most need. The Franciscan Youth and their supporters collected \$12,757.08 in 2007 by fasting and donating.

Again this Lent we challenge you and your fraternities to not only donate — but to participate in this project. By actively 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 within our Franciscan Charism.

We urge you to consider joining the project again this year.

The money raised in 2008 will be donated to the Sister Water Project of the Sisters of St. Francis in Dubuque, Iowa. They are actively raising resources to provide clean water to villages in Honduras and Tanzania, even sending hands-on volunteers.

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, 2008 to:
Kathy Taormina, SFO
920 Whitney Drive
Apple Valley, MN 55124

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

Just do it, so you can say...

We All Gave It Up So We Could All Give It Away

<http://www.franciscanyouthusa.com/h2o/main.html>

<http://www.theh2oproject.org/>

http://www.osfdbq.org/work/Sister_Water/The_Project.html



By actively 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.

THE H₂O PROJECT

On the Road by Fr. Tod, OFM



*Friar Tod Laverty, OFM
Regional Spiritual Assistant*

*On February 24,
2008 we celebrated
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to the amazing work
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wide family sharing
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One of the discoveries I've made while wandering around the Divine Mercy Region is that we are in need of well-trained, creative Spiritual Assistants. To address that issue Michael Carsten and I have outlined a mini-training course for persons interested in becoming Spiritual Assistants and for those who are exercising that ministry already somewhere in the Region.

The role of the Spiritual Assistant is to provide pastoral guidance for the fraternity, to be a resource for the formation of new Seculars and for the ongoing formation of the professed members of the fraternity. Just as important is the work of providing a link between the Secular Franciscan Order and the other branches of the Franciscan Family.

Here in Michigan (to my knowledge) we are blessed to have a wide range of Franciscan life and ministry represented. Besides the nearly 1000 Secular Franciscans we have Poor Clares in Saginaw and several communities of Third Order Religious (for example, the Felician Franciscan Sisters, the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, and the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters) and representatives of the three branches of the First Order (Capuchins, Conventuals and Observants). We are richly blessed by such broad representation in the Franciscan Family.

There are efforts already to come together, particularly when we celebrate the Feast of our Beloved Founder, St. Francis. Besides the regular pattern of regional and local meetings initiated by the Secular Franciscan Fraternities, there are fraternity celebrations of profession, Christmas parties, summer gatherings and all kinds of ongoing formation gatherings. All of these are opportunities for Spiritual Assistants to meet one another, to interact with the fraternities and to reach out and develop friendships with other members of the Franciscan Family. In the end, the more we get to know one another, the better we will be able to blend our diverse gifts for the sake of God's Kingdom.

On February 24, 2008 we celebrated the beginning of the wonderful adventure that led St. Francis beyond his personal vocation as a penitent to the amazing work of founding a worldwide family sharing his charism. Let's use this opportunity to deepen our relationships with one another across the Franciscan Family and to discover those persons who would be especially gifted to help build the bonds of fraternal love among us.

-Fr. Tod, OFM



Update - Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the world in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare



During the Ecumenical Advocacy Days gathering, we officially will launch the Franciscan Action Network as an organization seeking to transform our world in the Spirit of St. Francis' and St. Clare's example of following the Gospel. The launch will take place on Saturday evening, March 8, 2008, and promises to be an exciting, spirit-filled event of prayer, formation and solidarity-building.

The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) continues to move rapidly towards its public launch. Thus, on behalf of the FAN Steering Committee and the newly formed Action Commission, I am thrilled to invite you to our first FAN-sponsored event.

The Franciscan Action Network Steering Committee and Action Commission determined that the first public action of FAN should be one that represents who we hope to be as an organization. To this end they discerned and have worked to make the Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice 2008 part of our launch event, and our first official action of advocacy. Ecumenical Advocacy Days is a gathering of more than 40 national and regional organizations spanning the Christian spectrum. The event gathers together more than 1000 persons to advocate on common issues where they collectively can help build the Common Good. This is a most appropriate backdrop for the launch of the FAN. Although we may not agree with all the stances that other sponsors hold, we as Franciscans seek to find common ground and engage in dialogue, as does the larger Catholic and Christian Tradition for public action. We are called to add to the mix our particular message to live out the Gospel values. This bridge-building activity is itself an action of Franciscan Peacemaking.

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 May issue is April 15.

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This year's theme, 2008: Claiming a Vision of True Security, speaks to the urgent need for peace in our nation and world. As Franciscans, our deep peacemaking tradition and message can help make this effort, during this pivotal election year, all the more possible.

The program for Ecumenical Advocacy Days is better than ever. The sponsors are working not only at having an advocacy day on Capitol Hill that will help the U.S. have better tools for domestic and international peace, but also at getting the 2008 Presidential Candidates to come for a public forum. In this way, the more than 1000 participants can help shape the possibility of a more peace-filled future. Franciscans must be a part of this dynamic if we are to be true to our charism.

For more information please go to the conference's website www.advocacydays.org. This site will provide you with the most current details of the event and allow you to register.

Fraternity Elections

Immaculate Conception, Detroit

Joseph Lee, SFO - Minister
Angelica Yanez, SFO - Vice Minister
Clara Garcia, SFO - Secretary
Lilia Gonzales, SFO - Treasurer
Clara Garcia, SFO - Formation Minister

St. Thomas More, Rochester Hills

James Butina, SFO - Minister
Magdalen Kinsella, SFO - Vice Minister
Florence Murphy, SFO - Secretary
Christina Dolence, SFO - Treasurer
Richard Hulan, SFO - Formation Minister

San Damiano, Brighton

Jerome Palka, SFO - Minister
Veronica Brennan, SFO - Vice Minister
Clare Line, SFO - Secretary
Karen Szczerowski, SFO - Treasurer
Nancy Myer, SFO - Formation Minister
Michael Rzeppa, SFO - Councilor

St. David, Washington

Leigh Lentine, SFO - Minister
Natalie Frey, SFO - Vice Minister
JoAnn Traczynski, SFO - Secretary
Robert Paille, SFO - Treasurer
Michael Atkinson, SFO - Formation Minister