

Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity
NEWSletter

Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity of
lower Michigan and Toledo Ohio

November, 2008



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Messengers of peace moving forward with Francis



Minister Rose Maroto, SFO presents a Certificate of Recognition to Joan Van Buren, SFO the Historian/Archivist of St. Francis Fraternity in Sterling Heights upon the occasion of the fraternity's 45th anniversary.

Region and SFO-USA prepare for CIOFS Chapter

In the past several months local fraternities and the Regional Fraternity, together with our brothers and sisters in other Regions throughout the U.S., engaged in serious prayer and study in preparation for the General Chapter of the CIOFS. As she prepared to leave for the Chapter in Hungary, National Councilor Anne Mulqueen, SFO offered what she termed a snapshot of the Order today. "But the SFO-USA is much more than these glimpses," she reminded us.

"We have listened with the ears of our hearts to the written words of our Minister General Encarnacion del Pozo, concerning the . . . two themes of the November meeting: having a sense of belonging to a real Order within the Catholic Church and having full awareness of the grace of our Profession."

Here are just a few of the comments from our Region and from throughout the United States.

To what degree is your being a Secular Franciscan an essential part of your life?

The overwhelming response to this vocation question is that being a Secular Franciscan is extremely important. In fact, some said, it defines who I am; it is my identity.

Is your life in Fraternity only a meeting among many others?

Again, overwhelmingly the response is that it is much more than one meeting among others. It is a gathering of family—a family reunion. Family is a word that was used more than any other word in these responses.

St. Francis Fraternity celebrates 45th anniversary

On Wednesday September 24, 2008 St. Francis Fraternity in Sterling Heights celebrated their 45th Anniversary with a very special liturgy of thanksgiving for all the blessings from the Most High and Good God and the intercessions of Mother Mary, our Seraphic Father Francis and St. Clare.

Certificates of Recognition were presented to past Lay Ministers and Council members for their service and fidelity to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

A potluck dinner party followed the liturgy.

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On the Road by Fr. Tod, OFM



*Friar Tod Laverty, OFM
Regional Spiritual Assistant*

Secular Franciscans have a long history of responding creatively to the social needs of the times. Once again the Gospel challenges us to live radically and respond with love.

Henny Penny gets the rap for scaring all of us. “The sky is falling,” she said. But it didn’t. A little like the little boy who cried, “Wolf!”

But in recent weeks we probably felt just as frightened and bewildered as Henny Penny’s neighbors and no doubt tensed our muscles in preparation for fighting off the Wolf. It’s been a scary time. And that’s no Halloween joke!

Home mortgages, job losses, business failures and now a major recession. These are seriously frightening times. What does our faith have to say to us? How can the good news of the Gospel penetrate the chaos and confusion of the Wall Street-Main Street cacophony?

While we believe that in the end everything **will** be all right, no one in his or her right mind would be wise to announce this form of good news right now. Common sense tells us that everything will not be all right for quite a while. There will be continued job losses, money and credit will become even tighter, all of us will have to pull in our belts and cutting back will happen everywhere from the dinner table to the marketplace. Times will be tough; it is not unlike the last great depression.

We already see it at the three outreach centers here in downtown Detroit. Donations of money, food and clothing are down; and the demand for these selfsame items is increasing. People need help for food, medical and heating bills. As always, children are the most vulnerable; but adults suffer too, in the heart as well as in the pocketbook.

The Gospel, I think, calls us to come together as never before. Let no one go through this recession alone. We have all lived through hard times before, and we know we can do it again. During those lean years we discovered anew the values of faith and family, humility and courage. In our poverty and need we have often discovered the Risen Savior hidden in the folds of generosity, sharing, caring and friendship. It is the Spirit within each of us who calls us to discover once again that “God is with us”. Especially when the wolf is at the door or the sky seems to be falling.

Secular Franciscans have a long history of responding creatively to the social needs of the times. Once again the Gospel challenges us to live radically and respond with love.

Help Us, We Are Dying

We are your Christian brothers and sisters of Orissa, India. Why have you not heard about us? Because we are poor and a minority. And the world remains silent...

For more information go to <http://www.paulinecharismlive.magnify.net/video/OrissaBurning0001-wmv>

Please pray for all Christians worldwide, especially those in India at this current time, who are being persecuted and killed because of their faith. Please include in your prayers those of other faiths who are also being persecuted and killed.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all our brothers and sisters in India, and throughout the world, who are suffering or dying for their faith because of hatred, intolerance and fear. In solidarity and compassion, show us how to be a voice for the voiceless, for those crying out for justice and peace. Help us to do all we can to show that we care for all our brothers and sisters. Lord, we ask this in Your name. Amen.

Take a look at the Canticle Café - Detroit

After many years of providing hospitality to their neighbors in need in downtown Detroit, the St. Aloysius Community Center is now doing so in a new and imaginative way.

What was formerly known as St. Al's Warming Center is now the Canticle Café, so named in honor of St. Francis. The Café welcomes all people to enjoy its pleasant environment, surf the internet, browse the library and partake in a variety of beverages and light fare, much of which is prepared or baked on site.

The Canticle Café is a re-imagined hospitality ministry and food pantry serving more than 300 homeless and low income individuals on a daily basis in downtown Detroit. The parish of around 160 families counts on the movement of the Holy Spirit and the continued generosity of those whom the Spirit touches to accomplish their ministry.

Canticle Café services include Internet access, breakfast, coffee, tea and hot chocolate, a daily movie. There are opportunities for guests to participate in the ministry at every level and opportunities for greater community involvement.

The Clothing Room provides clothing, shoes, hygiene supplies, and household items to those in need. It also provides under certain circumstances the ability to have laundry washed. The Food Pantry provides monthly groceries to those in the 48226 Zip Code as well as food to those coming to the door in need. Living Waters Healing Ministry provides Spiritual Care and support to all in need. AA/NA Meetings are available several times a week.

A Street Ministry includes taking food, clothing and an invitation to St. Al's directly out to those on the street. Case Management assists with obtaining government assistance, substance abuse programs, rent and utilities, referrals for shelter, mental health care and employment and resumes.

The ways we Secular Franciscans can help are almost limitless. Volunteer Opportunities include:

Baristas

Baristas are the face of the Canticle Café. They greet and serve the guests as they enter the Café, providing coffee, tea, cold water, donuts, cinnamon rolls, and other light fare. Baristas set the tone for the guests' visit with their pleasant smiles and casual conversation.

Food Preparation

Food prep workers are the backbone of the Café, preparing bagels, cinnamon rolls, breakfast sandwiches, oatmeal, and other light fare. They work with qualified staff to provide safe, fresh and healthy food.

Food Servers

Food servers work to distribute kindness as well as good food to our guests. Volunteers work in conjunction with the food prep workers to provide a constant flow of fresh food to those in need.



As Outreach Director Mike Carsten, SFO oversees the day to day activities of the Center. He meets and greets the Café's many guests and visitors. Mike is a Secular Franciscan belonging to Saint Joseph Fraternity in Burton. He says that he personally taste tests each and every pot of coffee and batch of cinnamon rolls in the bakery.

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Profession by its very nature is a permanent commitment. Do you live it as such?

If truth were known, I suppose some days we live our profession more consciously than others. Profession is not a garment that can be put on or taken off when convenient or inconvenient.

To what extent is your fraternity helping you to accomplish what your profession demands of you?

In essence most indicated that if the local fraternity is what it is called to be, it provides the fuel to sustain each member in the world, the family, the community, the workplace, and the Church.

To what extent do you yourself work to help the brothers and sisters of your fraternity to achieve these very same goals?

The operative word in the responses to how we help others achieve a sense of belonging is relationship—being present and available to listen.

Why did you want to enter the Secular Franciscan Order?

The responses to this question were as varied as the personalities of the people responding. God fashioned us as unique, irreplaceable beings; and His call is personal and unique.

If you think that there is not a sufficient sense of belonging to the Order, what are the reasons?

Lack of Formation, lack of communication and lack of contribution and sharing were mentioned. Other comments included the need to be more attentive and less hasty to accept new members and the need to get together more than once a month.

So let us begin again for up to now, we have done nothing. - St. Francis of Assisi

Take a look at the Canticle Café - Detroit *continued*



Dishwashers and Cleanup

Dishwashers and cleanup workers help ensure a clean, healthy environment for our guests. From washing dishes to bussing tables and cleaning up the occasional spill, they are an integral part of the cafe dynamic.

For a list of food needs see the Café's website at <http://www.canticlecafe.org/needs.html>

To help ensure the sustainability of this important and cutting-edge outreach ministry to the poor and homeless of Detroit, the Café now offer Canticle Café Blend Coffee. On top of that, because Canticle Café Blend coffee has its origins in Fair Trade and Organic sources, you are also supporting Bio-diversity, Indigenous Rights and Dignity, as well as Corporate and Social responsibility.

The Café's Humanitarian Blend coffee is available in regular and decaf, whole bean or ground. They offer coffee in one pound bags for only 10 dollars. That is an excellent price for certified fair trade coffee.

The coffee is available at the Canticle Café at 1209 Washington Blvd. in downtown Detroit, or call the Coffee order HotLine at 313-309-1276.

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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