

FRANCISCAN MIRROR

SPRING 2006

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region
covering most of Upstate New York & Northwestern Pennsylvania



FACES OF YOUNG ADULTS EMERGE

Pilot project attracts younger adults to Franciscan formation. See PAGE 6.

REGIONAL MINISTER'S NOTEBOOK

Annual Meeting in May

By BILL HEINZ, SFO
Regional Minister

Our Annual Minister's meeting is May 5-7. Everyone is welcome.

Ministers are expected to be there; if they cannot, they should send a delegate with written permission giving him

or her voting rights.

Ministers, please bring a list of your deceased members for the Memorial Mass.

Treasurers, please send in your Fair Share and forms to Donna Roberti, SFO.

See ANNUAL- Page 3

U.S. Leaders Give Keynote 'Assisi Talks' At World Gathering

The spirit of St. Francis is as relevant today as it was in the 13th century, two Americans told delegates and observers from 60 countries at the recent 2005 General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order held in Assisi, Italy, the birthplace of Francis.

"Our Franciscan heritage is meant to be shared with a world on the verge of spiritual and physical suicide, violence, revenge and hatred, depression and loss of hope, greed and the desire for power to dominate," said Lester Bach, OFM Cap., of

See ASSISI - Page 12



National Minister Carol Gentile, SFO, and National Spiritual Assistant Lester Bach, OFM Cap., gave the keynote talks at the Order's General Chapter in Assisi.

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FRANCISCAN
MIRROR
WINTER 2005-06

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AND FRATERNITY
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The SFO is a Catholic order of married and single people who strive to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

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By BILL HEINZ, SFO

Minister's Message

Peace and All Good.

Lent has begun again.

Most of us probably heard these words on Ash Wednesday: "Remember, man, you are dust and to dust you will return." Genesis 3:19.

This Old Testament reading brought back memories of our forbearers of some 800 years. Think of how much has been given to us by our Franciscan Brothers and Sisters over these years. What a treasury of history, saints, and good deeds for God has preceded us.

Now think of those who have passed away in our own Fraternities. I'll bet there has been a great many who have led the way for us. It is not a time of sadness but of joy that they are now back with the Lord. I know we have had many deaths in our Region in the last few years, but let us not forget them. During this time of Lent, let us remember and rejoice with them. They have given us much, and like St. Francis, they have left us to carry on the Franciscan way of life.

Have a good Lent, make it meaningful, and remember in a special way those who have gone before us.

I need to announce that, due to work and personal commitments, Wayne Carpenter, SFO, has resigned as Eastern Area councilor. We wish to thank Wayne for selfless service to the order and hope to see him involved in the future.

REGIONAL ANNUAL GATHERING: MAY 5-7, 2006

CHANGE IN VISITORS

The National Fraternity has informed the Regional Council of changes in the national visitation team to the Regional Annual Gathering May 5-7.

National Treasurer Dennis Ross will fill in for National Minister Carol Gentile, and National Spiritual Assistant Bart Karwacki, OFM Conv., will conduct the pastoral visitation in place of National Spiritual Assistant Kevin Queally, TOR.

ANNUAL

Continued from Page 1

Ministers, please send me the Annual report for your Fraternity. Thank you to all who have submitted the report so promptly.

Have you updated your database lately? Please check to see that the information is up to date.

Elections are approaching on the National, Regional, and Local levels. Is there anyone willing to step forward? Please pray on it.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Friday

8:45 Registration
 9:45 Welcome, icebreaker
 National Visitation team
Break
 State of Region – Bill Heinz
 noon *Lunch*
 Service of Remembrance
 Treasurer's Report
 Formation Report
 Commissions Reports
 Family of Year presentations
Break
 Ministers' Open Forum
 Approval of 2005 minutes
 Approval of 2007 Budget
 5:30 *Dinner*
 7:30 Mass & Social Time

Saturday

7:30 Morning Prayer
 8 *Breakfast*
 9 Mass
 10 Open Forum/Nat'l Visitation

noon

Lunch

1

Featured Speakers:

Rob Breen, Franciscan Ecology
 Jim Flickinger, Amazon Relief

5:30

Dinner

7

Evening Prayer & Social

Sunday

7:30 Morning Prayer

8

Breakfast

9

National Visitation Team

Open Forum

10:30

Mass

11:30

Lunch and Departure

The Regional Gathering is open to all fraternity members. For info or to register, contact Kim Marks, SFO, 11 East Rouen Drive, Cheektowaga, NY 14227; phone 716-688-3830; email kimmmarks11@aol.com. Cost: \$175 for three days, two nights (includes room and meals); or \$50 per day commuter rate (includes meals).

LENT 2006 CHANGE THE WORLD IN 2 WEEKS!

The H2O Project is a Franciscan Youth fundraiser to help create clean water for youth and their families most in need. Franciscan Youth groups and SFO fraternities are encouraged to join in this sacrificial endeavor.



THE PROBLEM:

- Women and children walk 2 hours each way to fetch water (hauling dirty water back). They have no time or energy left for education or small business, and

many of them die.

- Preventable water-related diseases kill one child every 15 seconds.

THE SOLUTION:

- Take the H2O Challenge!

Continued on Page 14

BUFFALO FRATERNITY HAS REASON TO REJOICE

"In April 2006 as we gather at Mass to renew our profession, we will also be celebrating many milestone anniversaries," reports Marie Meyer of St. Patrick Fraternity, Buffalo. She forwarded the following milestone profiles.

BRO. MOE (60 YRS)

In 1950, after solemn profession, I received permission to go to Brazil. In 1965 I returned to the States. I was asked to serve in our formation program, guiding young men in their desire to serve the Lord as friars, and became the first brother in the Order to be appointed the assistant superior at Rye Beach, NH. Then, three other friars and I decid-

ed to express our Franciscan life in a simple way of living in a poor area of Boston. In 1989, following 16 years in East Boston, I came to St. Patrick's Friary where I am Guardian, plus spiritual assistant to the fraternity.

JULIA MAXWELL (50 YEARS)

I attended St. Ann's School and Sacred Heart Academy. While in high school, I was professed in 1956. I joined the Fraternity at Rosary Hill. I was with St. Joseph Fraternity for awhile, and then moved out of the area. In 1980, I joined St. Patrick Fraternity and have been treasurer, minister and formation director.

SHIRLEY BROWN (35 YEARS)

I married Norman Brown and we had 5

children. Every third Sunday, we drove my mother, a Franciscan, and her friends to the fraternity. Eventually, I joined them. I was commissioned an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. Then my life changed. My husband of 30 years divorced me; my mother passed away, and my daughter died suddenly. But my truest friend, God, blessed me abundantly with family and friends. At age 50, I joined the work force. Now at 75, I continue my walk in faith.

JOHN SANBORN (30 YEARS)

I have been married since 1967 to Christine, with six children (two in heaven). Professed in 1976, I was elected to the Fraternity council shortly thereafter, serving initially as formation director, then

minister. I was elected to Holy Name of Jesus SFO Provincial Council in 1981 as Western Area rep and treasurer. Then I was elected national treasurer in 1991, serving until elected national vice minister in 2003. Now chair of '07 Quinquennial Planning Committee.

EILEEN RUSSO (25 YEARS)

I was married in the early 1950's to Samuel Russo and after five children and almost 30 years later, I was received on June 15, 1980 and professed the following year on September 20. Most of this time was spent remembering that Franciscans start with themselves as gift to others. They value time spent as community. Currently, I am holding the office of fraternity treasurer.



Brother Moe



Julia Maxwell



Shirley Brown



John Sanborn



Eileen Russo

SISTER DEATH



Robert T. Gavin, SFO, (above) of Buffalo, embraced Sister Death on Nov. 20, 2005. He was professed in June 1981 at St. Patrick's Fraternity in Buffalo. In 1991 he helped form The Little Portion Fraternity, which was canonically established in March 2002. Among his greatest joys was working with wood and stained glass.

Helen Buckley Smith, SFO, 98, of Utica, passed away Feb. 7, 2006. In addition to St. Joseph Fraternity, Utica, she had been active in several church organizations (Legion of Mary, Marion Visitors, Altar Rosary Society), and had volunteered at the Martin de Porres clothing center at St. Francis de Sales

AROUND THE REGION

Wall of Honor

IN MEMORY OF

Robert T. Gavin, SFO
remembered by
Dorothy P. Gavin

Helen Buckley Smith
remembered by
St. Joseph Fraternity, Utica

Virginia Hamlin, SFO
remembered by
Kim and Chris Marks, SFO
St. Joseph Fraternity, Utica

Mabel/Nan Hamlin, SFO
remembered by
Kim and Chris Marks, SFO

IN HONOR OF

Young Adult Group in Formation
organized by Rob Breen & Holy Family Fraternity
St. Joseph Fraternity, Utica

How to participate in the Wall of Honor -- Page 18.

Church, Utica.

Virginia Hamlin, SFO, 86, of Canastota, embraced Sister Death in February 2006. She had been a long-time member of St. Joseph

Fraternity, Utica. She was a retired registered nurse, and had been active in choir and the Altar Rosary Society. She was married in 1941 at St. Joseph-St. Patrick Church, Utica.

Anthony Bellizia, SFO, 81, of Horseheads, NY, embraced Sister Death on Nov. 3, 2005. He was professed on July 15, 1984. He had volunteered in a soup kitchen, and was a former formation director and faithful member of St John the Baptist Fraternity, Elmira.

HOW-TO GUIDE FOR PUBLICITY

Want tips for publicizing your next event? Or steps to take for working with news media? Or a guide for generating publicity aimed at attracting potential vocations?

Local fraternities can get all that and more, in the form of a NAFRA Public Relations Manual. Developed by Mary and Bob Stronach, SFO, this guide to publicity and public relations is available for free downloading from the National Fraternity's website, www.nafra-sfo.org. (Click on "Meetings and Resources" and then right-click on NAFRA Public Relations Manual to download the PDF document. It is nearly 4 MB in size.)

'HOLY FAMILY' LAUNCHES YOUNG ADULT PILOT PROJECT

Holy Family Fraternity in Vernon, NY has begun a pilot project to reach out to young adults interested in becoming Secular Franciscans. Thirteen people between the ages of 19 and 30 were invited to participate in a young adult Secular Franciscan orientation last fall. After the orientation experiences, seven young adults made the commitment to the initial formation process, and are currently in formation. "Several of these young adults have been involved in the Franciscan

AROUND THE REGION

Earth Club programming, where they were engaged in Franciscan Ecology, and decided to explore the Secular Franciscans," explained Regional Ecology and Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair Rob Breen, SFO.

"We are adapting initial formation materials for the needs and life stages of young adults," he said. "The formation sessions include time for sharing faith, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, discussing Franciscan readings, and asking questions. We are also including retreats and service projects as part of the initial forma-

tion experience."

Friar Tim Mulligan, OFM Conv., Sr. Jeanne Karp, OSF, and Breen, are working together to share their own Franciscan stories as guides through the initial formation process. The Holy Family fraternity celebrated its Ceremony of Welcoming in December, and broke bread together as an intergenerational fraternity. Added Breen: "Please prayer for our young Inquirers: Meghan Breen, Crista Gray, Michael Huynh, Christy Huynh, Beth Gambino Portuese, Tom Portuese, and Jason Stoodley."

If you know a young

adult interested in discerning a Secular Franciscan vocation, and who would like to connect with other young adults, or if you would like some assistance in outreaching to young adults, please contact Rob Breen at fec@anamduan.org.

ERIN GO BRAUGH

St. Patrick Fraternity in Buffalo invites fraternities in the Western Area to a Corned Beef Dinner as it celebrates its Patron Saint's Feast Day on Sunday, March 26, at Sts. Rita and Patrick Parish, Fillmore Avenue. Dinner follows 11 a.m. Mass. Call Marie at (716) 835-5480.



Holy Family Fraternity, with young adult inquirers.

FRANCISCAN ECOLOGY

A Source for Social Justice and Caring for Creation

By ROB BREEN, SFO
Ecology Commission Chair

When we speak of Franciscan Ecology, we want to use some common ideas and language. Our Franciscan tradition has given us a way of understanding Creation from the Gospel perspective. Francis gave us the Canticle of Creatures, and both Francis and Clare lived lives of brotherly and sisterly love with every living and nonliving thing in Creation. Franciscans throughout the ages have given us an intellectual tradition that helps us to understand God's relationship with Creation, our human role within Creation, and the role of Creation in our own faith development. Our contemporary Catholic Social Thought insists that Caring for Creation is a moral obligation, and Pope John Paul II called for a new generation of



Catholics to respond to the Holy Spirit's call for a new "environmental vocation." The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order calls for Franciscans to be a force for social justice and for Caring for Creation. In the effort to protect the health and sanctity of the Earth's ecosystems, Secular Franciscans may become an important partner in this new environmental vocation.

The Franciscan Ecology Center has developed seven components of Franciscan Ecology:

1. Ecospirituality - connecting us with God through spiritual experiences of Creation.
2. Ecotheology

- understanding our relationship with God's Creation.

3. Ecological science - understanding the Book of Creation to help us to know the Creator, and how it all works.

4. Environmental service - projects that restore and protect the environment.

5. Sustainable environmental management - managing homes, buildings, and properties in an environmentally sustainable way.

6. Environmental Justice - understanding the links between the environmental crisis, environmental health impacts on children and the poor, and the causes of oppression and violence in abuse of natural resources.

7. Environmental Education and Leadership - education and formation for sustainable and healthy lifestyles, conflict resolution, advocacy, and civic action.

By understanding these seven components of Franciscan Ecology, we can begin to talk about our roles as Franciscans in engaging in environmental vocations in a variety of ways, based on our individual and fraternity capacities. If you would like to be added to the BTKR Ecology Commission's email list, please contact me at fec@anamduan.org.

NEWS GALORE FOR ROB (AND MEG)

Rob Breen, SFO, of Syracuse, chair of the Regional Ecology and Youth/Young Adult Commissions, has been appointed to the National Ecology Commission, bringing to the national level his Franciscan Earth Club/Corps model.

He also was offered a full-time tenured assistant professor position at Siena College, effective September. He and

his wife, Meg, plan to relocate to Albany, and set up another branch of the Franciscan Ecology Center. He will be teaching environmental policy and American politics.

He is currently teaching environmental policy at Siena as an adjunct professor, and teaching a directed study course on Environmental Policy and the Catholic Church.

Also, “we began the initial dialogue with friars in Bolivia to develop a Franciscan Ecology exchange/service program with EcoBolivia,” Breen reports.

Putting finishing touches to his dissertation, he expects to receive his PhD in May.

The Breens are also expecting their first baby in July.

Nurturing Franciscan Charism in Young People

By ROB BREEN, SFO
Youth/Young Adult Chair

The early Franciscan movement was also a youth movement. A significant proportion of the early Franciscan movement was led by young people, inspired by Francis and Clare, and attracted to Christ and his Gospel of love. As Secular Franciscans, we continue that tradition by recognizing and nurturing the Franciscan charism in young people today. Although the number of young people involved in our Secular Franciscan Order has declined over the decades, there is a new spirit – a young one – blowing throughout our Order. The Fran-



ABOVE AND BELOW: Faces of youth at the Syracuse area 2005 Franciscan Earth Club Retreat.

ciscan Charism is alive and well in our next generation of young people, and as Franciscans, we are called to walk with them in their Gospel journey.

In our region, we are beginning a new initiative to train Secular Franciscans to run Franciscan Youth groups and young adult groups as a ministry of the fraternity. Using a model developed by the Franciscan Ecology Center, we are combining Franciscan Youth and Franciscan Ecology to reach out to young people in our region. This same model was recently adopted by the NAFRA Ecology Commission in collabo-

ration with the NAFRA Youth and Young Adult Commission to serve as a national model. **We will be offering training to adult Secular Franciscans to prepare them to work with high school youth and young adults.** If you or your fraternity are interested in participating in the training program and would like more information, or would like to visit one of the Franciscan Youth programs already operating in our region, please contact me at fec@anamduan.org. If you are already running a Franciscan youth program, we'd like to hear from you, too.



‘SMOKE SIGNALS’

Community vs. Summer Break

By ED CZAPLA, SFO

During a session of the Regional Executive Council recently, there was a discussion on some issue pertaining to local fraternities. As each councilor around the table contributed to the discussion, one made a casual statement that, upon review, took on special significance. The statement was something like: “I called the fraternity minister, but there was no answer. I made calls to others on the council, and finally reached a member who informed me that the matter would have to wait until the fall because they don’t meet during the summer...”

Needless to say, such revelations are a source of frustration for those around the council table. In principle, our Order functions on a 12-month, year-round



Ed Czaplá, left, is advisor to the Regional Executive Council and author of the periodic newsletter, Smoke Signals.

basis. Neither the Rule nor the Constitutions provide for a recess from activity at any time of the year. (Indeed, it is difficult to imagine our founder sanctioning such a deviation from purpose!) Since we are all subject to the same human frailties and failings, so we are also in constant need of gathering in community with our Franciscan brothers and sisters, for mutual spiritual encouragement and inspiration. Except for the isolated cases where individual Seculars take positive steps to enhance their Franciscanism, on their own initiative, the regular

gathering of the fraternity is the only means we have of providing for our Franciscan journey.

Where fraternities meet regularly, and where formation programs, presentations, etc., are well-planned and well-attended, there is usually a noticeable heightening of community spirit and a sense of “family”. Ultimately, there develops within such fortunate fraternities a *need to gather together!* In the Western Area there are a few home-based fraternities that regularly meet more frequently than once a month – for the same reason.

As an alternative to the “formal” meeting format during the heat of summer, the council may choose to hold an informal gathering of members for a cook-out in a park or private backyard – in the company of God’s little creatures. Last August several fraternities in the Buffalo area shared in a day of recollection at Villa Maria College. Highlights included Mass, lunch, outdoor Crown Rosary and outdoor Stations of the Cross. We left Villa spiritually refreshed.

Whenever such informal gatherings are held, it is very important that time be allotted for group prayer. The spontaneous sharing that follows, is actual grace...

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst.” (Mt 18:20)

Pick Your Battle!

By SANDY McCOY, SFO
Peace & Justice Chair

Our Rule # 13 states: As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the first born of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready



Sandy McCoy, SFO

to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create

conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

I strongly suggest that, as a fraternity, you spend a few sessions digging into the meat of this rule. It is packed with justice issues. Following is a list of several justice issues. As a fraternity, pick one issue and run with it as a fraternity apostolate.

I am at your beck and call and will walk with

you all the way.

Some issues: Africa, Consumption, Corporate Accountability, Death Penalty, Debt, Disasters, Environment, Food & Hunger, Genocide, Global Solidarity, Global Citizenship, Globalization, Health, Human Rights, Interfaith, Iraq, Middle East Conflicts, Just & Unjust Structures, Poverty, Prison System, Racial Justice.

Great Words from the Past

By MARIE DIEHL, SFO
Family Commission Chair

Many fine and helpful thoughts have been spoken and written over the past years, which have been temporarily appreciated and maybe even forgotten. Just recently I discovered a few pages on the topic of family, including a prayer from Pope John Paul II as well as advice from Pope Paul VI, published in 2000 in the Magnificat Pilgrim's Guide to



Marie Diehl, SFO

the great Jubilee from the New York Archdiocese "Families and the Third Millennium" by Nicholas Bagileo.

Pope John Paul II has asserted that the future

of humanity passes by way of the family. Civilization still rises or falls on the health of family life. The family is the school of virtues. The future of the Church is the family.

Pope Paul VI offered families excellent advice. "Mothers, do you teach your children the Christian prayers? Do you say the family rosary together? And you fathers, do you pray with your children and your whole domestic

community?" Your example of honesty in thought and action is a lesson for life, an act of singular value. In this way you bring peace to your home.

Prayer for Families by Pope John Paul II

Lord God, from you every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. Father, You are love and life. Through your son Jesus Christ, born of woman and through the Holy Spirit, fountain of divine
Continued on next page.

CENTRAL NEW YORK FRANCISCAN EXPERIENCE

“Meeting Francis through the Eyes of Bonaventure” is the theme for the 13th Annual Central New York Franciscan Experience on March 24 and 25, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis, 2500 Grant Blvd, Syracuse.

Presenters are Michael Blastic, OFM Conv., and F. Edward Coughlin, OFM. Both are on the faculty of the

Franciscan Institute at St Bonaventure University. In addition to their teaching duties, Fr. Mike is the Associate Dean in the School of Franciscan Studies and Br. Ed serves as VP for the Franciscan Mission. Both friars are well known for their many articles, presentations and contributions on Franciscan topics. Schedule:

Fri.: 6 p.m., Registration; 7p.m., Welcome/Presentations/Prayer.

Sat: 8 a.m., Mass

(optional); 8:30, continental breakfast; 9:15 prayer/presentations. Noon lunch, 1p.m., presentation; 3 p.m., conclusion; 3:45, closing liturgy (anticipatory for Sunday).

After March 1, cost for the program with lunch will be \$30 per person or \$40 per husband/wife.

To register, send name, address, phone number and fee to: Franciscan Experience, Generalate Offices, 2500 Grant Blvd., Syra-

cuse, NY 13208-1713. Make check payable to Sisters of St. Francis. For more information, including accommodations for Friday and Saturday nights, contact Sr. Patricia Larkin at 315-634-7019, or plarkin@osfsyr.org.

READ TAU-USA ONLINE

Since many in formation may not receive TAU-USA, which goes to all professed members, there is another way inquirers and candidates can enjoy the features and stories in each issue of our national newsletter. In fact, it is important that people in formation have the opportunity to read TAU-USA; and if you don't have a copy to pass on to them, you may point them to the national fraternity website. They can download an entire issue (if they have fast internet access) or simply click on articles from the issue. The web address is: www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa.html.

-- Frances Wicks, Editor,
TAU-USA

GREAT WORDS FROM PAST

Continued from previous page

charity, grant that every family on earth may become for each successive generation a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that your grace may guide the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good of their families, and of all the families in the world. Grant that the young may find in the family solid support for their human dignity and for the growth in truth and love.

Grant that love strength-

ened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage, may prove mightier than all the weakness and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that the Church may faithfully carry out the worldwide mission in the family and through the family.

We ask this of You whose Life, Truth and Love is with the Son and with the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Pope John Paul II is no longer with us, but he is still active for us in his present state. May our new pope, Benedict XVI, and those who work with him, lead us in our divine family, as led by the Holy Spirit in the Blessed Holy Trinity. Let us look to Him and trust His supreme love for His family. Let us likewise listen to Him and happily regard His instructions.

ASSISI TALKS

Continued from Page 1

Madison, WI, a national spiritual assistant and author of spiritual formation books for the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.

“Francis’ spirit seeks to transform these destructive elements in our world and among its people,” the priest continued. “Secular Franciscans, in particular, are expected to be in the middle of things in the world and bring Francis’ Gospel spirit wherever they are.”

The challenge for people of faith, particularly Secular Franciscans, is to share the message of Christ; in fact, “to BE his message,” added Carol Gentile, SFO, of Monaca, PA, the order’s U.S. national minister.

The answer to that challenge is in the Gospels and in St. Francis’ Rule for Secular Franciscans – and the time for action is now, she said.

The priest gave a series



Carol Gentile, SFO, and Lester Bach, OFM Cap, listen to General Chapter proceedings in Assisi, Italy. The world gathering took place last November.

of keynote talks at the November week-long Assisi gathering, which included a day at the Vatican for a general audience with Pope Benedict XVI, who greeted the order’s general minister, Encarnacion del Pozo of Spain, after urging Secular Franciscans to witness to the Gospel in the world with a “renewed apostolic drive.”

“We cannot receive Christ in the Eucharist and go back into our homes, our places of employment and be uninvolved with the

world around us,” Mrs. Gentile said. Referring to the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (Light of the Nations), she said Secular Franciscans must be in the forefront of taking the part of the poor, advocating for the powerless, and acting with humility and self-sacrifice for the good of all.

Just as Francis received the call to holiness in the 13th century – a call to rebuild the church and live the Gospels in a

radical way – “at this Chapter we will hear the call to holiness and move forward,” Mrs. Gentile said. After 25 years, it is time to fully live the new Secular Franciscan Rule approved by Pope Paul VI in 1978 so that, as the Rule proposes, “Christ is the center of our life” with God and with the world.

Father Bach noted several elements that St. Francis brought to the church: devotion to the Trinity, return to the Gospel as a sense of Christian vision of life, the laity regaining

an evangelizing role, a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, and a hierarchy of authority that “serves the brothers and sisters” rather than dominates them.

“Our goals are love and forgiveness, dialogue and mercy, hope and charity, sharing and compassion, conversion and new life,” Father Bach said. “We choose not to dominate people with our vision, but to befriend them and create a situation that will allow them to listen to our vision with openness. Even if they do not change (since conversion is the work of the Spirit), we plant the seed of conversion through our words and our Franciscan lives.”

And, he said, the Secular Franciscan Rule shows the way.

Added Mrs. Gentile: “Today, at this very moment in history, we need to see with the eyes of Christ and hear with the ears of Christ, and speak with the words of Christ.”

How? Articles 15-19 of the Rule offer

‘I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK OF THE DIRECTION WE HAVE TAKEN IN THE UNITED STATES...’ IN AN ATTEMPT TO FOSTER PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE RULE, AND THE GOSPEL VISION BEHIND IT, SHE SAID THE U.S. NATIONAL FRATERNITY CREATED FOUR APOSTOLIC COMMISSIONS – PEACE AND JUSTICE, WORK, FAMILY, AND ECOLOGY.

direction based on scripture, she said. “I would like to speak of the direction we have taken in the United States of America, not because it is the best practice, but because it is one with which I am familiar.” In an attempt to foster practical applications of the Rule, and the Gospel vision behind it, she said the U.S. National Fraternity created four “apostolic commissions” – Peace and Justice, Work, Family, and Ecology.

These national commissions offer documents, on-going guidance, and practical suggestions to the regional and local fraternities throughout the U.S.

She explained how these four apostolic commissions reflect the Rule and are “at the core

of our mission.”

“**Peace and Justice**” is reflected in Articles 15 and 19 of the Rule.

“Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives.”

“Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.”

She listed 25 practical ways to fulfill the living of “Peace and Justice.” A few examples -- pay attention to news reports about problems in the world where peace

and justice is needed; volunteer to work in a soup kitchen; participate in a non-violent peace demonstration; pray daily for peace; write or visit someone in prison; send a letter to legislators on a peace/justice issue; attend a program or read a book about world hunger.

The **Work Commission** is given voice in Article 16 of the Rule, she said.

“Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in creation, redemption, and service of the human community.”

Mrs. Gentile listed 25 practical ways to live out the Work Commission. Some examples – tutor a person in preparation for a job; help complete a job application or resume; assist with support groups and material resources for the unemployed; mentor a student; hold a fraternity workshop on the spirituality of work; write letters to the editor on work-related issues; see the presence of Christ in others at work.

Family Commission is reflected in Article 17 of the Rule, which, she said, “identifies the family as the core of our activity at home and in the world.”

“In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

She listed 25 practical ways to live out the Family Commission. A few examples -- watch a movie with family; teach a child how to

pray; hold hands while saying grace; laugh and smile often; plan a weekend with family; call a grown child to say how much you love him/her; share a compliment with each other.

Ecology Commission comes from Article 18 of the Rule.

“Moreover, they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which bear the imprint of the Most High, and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.”

Again she listed 25 practical ways to implement the Ecology Commission. Some examples – pick up trash when you see it; substitute one organically produced item for a conventionally produced product

when you shop (to support environmental stewardship and family farms); spend time outside with nature giving God praise for its variety; turn down air conditioning and heating to conserve energy (within healthful limits); participate in a group that adopts a highway to keep it free of litter; support land conservation; bring your

own mug to fraternity meetings to reduce the use of plastic and paper products.

She concluded: “This vision and mission, lived out in practical ways day in and day out, would ultimately ‘build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the Kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively’ (Rule 14).”

THE H₂O PROJECT

Continued from Page 3

- For 2 weeks *make water your beverage.*
 - *Contribute the money you would have spent at the soda machine and coffee shop toward the drilling of water wells.*
- THE PROCESS:
- Pick one 14-day period during Lent.

- Email (or mail-see address next page) Jeanie at scottish.wench@cox.net to let her know you have accepted the challenge; you must list your Fraternity and Region.

- Start fasting...start saving...save the children!

Continued from next page

MIRROR SPONSOR: PHYLIS BRUNO, SFO

In thanksgiving for Fair Share contributions by local fraternities.

“The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the SFO as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world.” – Lester Bach, OFM Cap/Pick More Daisies’

Continued from previous page

TO SEND THE MONEY COLLECTED:

• Make all checks payable to: NAFRA (National Fraternity). Note on the memo line: H₂O Project, and names of your Fraternity and Region.

• **Announce your fraternity's results at the Bl. Kateri Regional Gathering May 5-7.**

You may even want to present a check to Regional Minister Bill Heinz who will forward it to National Youth/Young Adult Commission. Or you may mail your check to: Jeanie McLees, SFO, 808 Angela Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23455. She is a member of NAFRA's Youth/Young Adult Commission.

Money collected will be donated by sending one check in the name of US Franciscan Youth to Living Water International. The Region that collects the most will be recognized at the 2006 NAFRA meeting. *For a scorecard* to keep track of your sacrifices, go to www.franciscanyouthusa.com/h2o/.

HOW YOU CAN HELP SPONSOR THE MIRROR

We are looking for sponsors to help defray the cost of printing so that the Regional Fraternity can continue to improve your Franciscan Mirror... with more color, more pages, more features.

Individuals, fraternities and businesses may sponsor one or multiple issues, and receive recognition in a special ad. The sponsor ad is a one inch strip across the bottom of a page (6" x 1"). Sponsors may use this space to offer a message or

advertise something. The sponsorship cost is as follows:

\$100 – ad on regional/feature news page.

\$150 – ad on inside back cover.

\$200 – color ad on back cover.

To reserve a sponsorship, mail your message/ad, with check made out to BKTR, to Franciscan Mirror, PO Box 232, Marcy, NY; or contact Mary Stronach at 315-796-9284, or at stronach1@adelphia.net.

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE WALL OF HONOR

The Regional Fraternity started a Wall of Honor page in the Franciscan Mirror to provide a way to memorialize or honor Franciscans, family members or friends.

For example, you may want to remember a Secular Franciscan who has embraced Sister Death, or honor someone for such things as an achievement or anniversary, or to publicly thank

him/her for something done for you or the fraternity.

To submit a name for the Wall of Honor, fill out the form and mail it along with a \$10 donation. Funds raised through the Wall of Honor will be used by the Regional Fraternity to help pay for publications aimed at benefiting the region's fraternities (such as *The Mirror* and formation materials).

WALL OF HONOR FORM

Name of Person Submitting Form _____

Contact info: phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

Name of honoree _____

Select one: ___ in memory of ___ in honor of

List reason/occasion _____

(e.g., profession anniversary, gratitude for service, etc.)

Donation: \$10 per name.

Please make checks payable to Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha Region (BKTR).

Send completed form with check to:
The Franciscan Mirror, P.O. Box 232, Marcy, NY 13403

FRANCISCANS WITH A CAUSE TO SPEAK AT REGIONAL GATHERING



Franciscan Ecology Center Founder Rob Breen, SFO, left, and Amazon Relief Founder Jim Flickinger, SFO, right, will speak at the Regional Annual Gathering May 5-7 at Stella Maris Retreat & Conference Center in Skaneateles, NY. While local fraternity ministers are expected to attend, the meeting is open to all members. See Page 3 for the tentative agenda and how to register.

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