

FRANCISCAN MIRROR

WINTER
2008-09

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



FRANCISCAN DAY AT SHRINE FEATURES THE DISCIPLE JOHN

The annual SFO Day at the National Kateri Shrine in Fonda on Aug. 17 drew a crowd of Secular Franciscans from fraternities across the region.

Immediately following Mass, celebrated by Shrine Director Kevin Kenney, OFM Conv., attendees were treated to a dramatic Biblical presentation. Matthew Zawisza (left) portrayed “John, the Beloved Disciple.” Zawisza and his wife, Tina, operate a non-denominational drama ministry known as “Act 4 Him.”



LEADERSHIP AND PEACE

The Regional Annual Gathering featured International Councilor Anne Mulqueen, SFO, speaking on servant leadership, and the presentation of the Franciscan Peace Award to Sister Caritas Barajingitwa (inset).

A report on the gathering starts on Page 3. A story about the African nun is on Page 7.

NEW SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT – back cover

BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA REGION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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Youth/Young Adult

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**Justice, Peace & Integrity
of Creation Commission.*



Regional Minister's Message

By MARY FRANCES CHARSKY, SFO

Greetings to all Secular Franciscans and Spiritual Assistants. Pax et bonum! Thanks be to God!

We are planning the SFO Regional Annual Gathering scheduled for April 24, 25, & 26, 2009, at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaneateles, NY. **This is the Chapter of Visitation. Fraternity Ministers or their delegates have the responsibility to attend.** National Minister Patrick Mendes, SFO, and National Spiritual Assistant Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv., plan to be with us.

We encourage all of you to consider joining us for all or part of the weekend since it will be an opportunity for formation, information, fellowship and prayer. Your participation is one way for us to get to know the needs of the region. It helps the Regional Executive Council know how to best serve the Secular Franciscans and their Fraternities.

We are so happy to have Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, join us as our Regional Spiritual Assistant. *Welcome Father Richard!* He is a blessing to us all.

Let us continue to pray for each other and for the Spiritual Assistants who are helping us live from Gospel to life in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare.

FRANCISCAN MIRROR WINTER 2008-09

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NEXT DEADLINE: FEB. 15,
MAY 15, AUG. 15, NOV. 15.

REGIONAL GATHERING FOCUSES ON LEADERSHIP

“Community turns longing into belonging,” and that’s one reason why the fraternity is a vital place for Secular Franciscans, noted Anne Mulqueen, SFO, in her leadership presentation at the regional gathering, held April 25-27 at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaneateles, NY.

She spoke of natural and spiritual gifts of servant leadership, spread among members of the fraternity, and how exercising those gifts “is all about becoming a disciple.”

She related the New Testament story of the Transfiguration to truly “becoming a fraternity.” On the mountain, the disciples saw Jesus in his glory, and experienced a state of spiritual joy. But their commitment to follow Jesus meant they had to come down from the mountain and get to work.



Anne Mulqueen, SFO

Likewise, in the fraternity, it’s “about people as clueless as we are” making the effort, “it’s about taking the next step, about going from good to better.”

“That’s what’s called conversion,” said Mulqueen, former national formation co-chair and current international counselor for the Na-

tional Fraternity.

Fraternity is also about “bringing the reign of God into being. That’s our mission.”

The regional gathering featured several presentations. Among them:

- Awarding the regional **Peace Award** to Sr. Caritas, and declar-

ing the sister and her orphanage “Family of the Year.”

- Regional Minister Mary Frances Charsky, SFO, gave a **State-of-the-Region** report, noting that there were more than 15,000 Secular Franciscan across the U.S., with membership in the region’s 32 fraternities ranging from 5 to 50. She emphasized the connectedness among the local, regional, national and international fraternities. “We are an order... We’re part of the Franciscan Family... We have a vocation and calling, the same as the friars and sisters.”

- Regional Treasurer Donna Roberti presented a **2009 proposed budget** of \$29,600, with a fair share (per capita) of \$40. The budget was unanimously approved.

- Regional Youth



Mary Frances Charsky, SFO



Donna Roberti, SFO
Treasurer

and Young Adult leader Rob Breen, SFO, offered a vision of a vibrant **Youth/Young Adult ministry**, with a network of teen clubs, college student groups and young adult groups. The groups fall under the term, YouFra (short for Franciscan Youth). Progress so far includes a Young Adult group and a Franciscan Earth Corps at Siena College, with four Franciscan Earth Clubs under development in the Eastern area. A goal is to get YouFra groups started in all areas of the region.

• Rob Breen reported on an **Ad Hoc Panel**, tasked with looking at ways to transition the region to more fully living the Franciscan Rule. The panel zeroed

Wall of Honor

In Memory Of

Fr. Germain Williams, OFM Conv.
30 years as spiritual assistant of
St. Elizabeth-St. Louis Fraternity, Albany, NY
remembered by
Rose Mary Slavin, SFO

Eileen O'Brien David
remembered by
St. Agnes of Assisi Fraternity, Afton, NY

Mary T. Lynch, SFO
remembered by
Immaculate Heart of Mary Fraternity,
Rochester, NY

In Honor Of

Yvonne Kirschner, SFO
of Grogan, NY on her profession
by Katie Koscinski, SFO

James Casey, SFO
in appreciation for service and kindness to others
by St. Patrik Fraternity, Bffalo, NY

How to participate in the Wall of Honor – Page 11.

in on 11 points for action, including developing financial strategies and resources. He said it would cost \$2,000 to \$3,000 to put plans in place to do some major fundrais-

ing and provide resources for implementing the panel's vision. The ministers and delegates authorized the panel to move ahead with plans to raise seed money.



Rob Breen, SFO
YouFra Leader

• The Work, Family, Ecology, and Peace & Justice commissions have been reorganized into one commission known as **Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)**, following a similar reorganization on the national level. Rob Breen, a JPIC commission leader, offered a vision of a region with a “core of JPIC leaders in each area – a critical mass of SFOs literate in the Franciscan tradition” and witnessing “wherever and whenever injustice, conflict and environmental degradation occur in our region.”

Next steps include working with interested fraternities, creating a JPIC web presence and writing Mirror articles.

FACES OF THE REGIONAL FRATERNITY GATHERING



Formation Director Patti DeWitt with Anne Mulqueen in background.



Betty Mayerhauser



Bill Geary



David Green



Don Watkins



Burt Weigen



Ceil Beard



Cathy Feheley



Kim Marks



Fr. Adam Keltos, OFM Conv.



Betty Frank, Anne Mulqueen, Katie Koscinski



Mae Schneeberger



Rita Mandyck and Frank Guglielmo

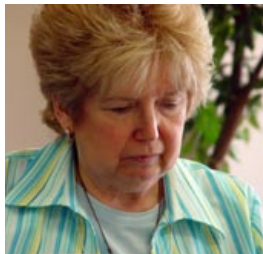


Jane Meissner



Fr. Robert Amrhein, OFM Conv.

FACES OF THE REGIONAL FRATERNITY GATHERING



Margaret Mannon



Sheila Obzud



Peter Wooschlager and Ceil Beard



Linda Quaranto



Mary Smith



Candle ceremony remembered deceased Secular Franciscans.



Walt Chura



Tutti Wagner



1. SING GOD'S PRAISE
2. TALK WITH THE LORD OFTEN
3. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES
4. SEEK JUSTICE AND PEACE
5. BE STEWARDS OF CREATION

4 PROFESSED AT ST. ANTHONY

St. Anthony Fraternity in Lockport professed four members June 13, the feast of St. Anthony, at Holy Family Parish on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation in Sanborn, said Minister Rob Goodlander. The newly professed are: **Ann Albee**, SFO; **James Dacey**, SFO; **Janice Howell**, SFO; **Philip McCanna**, SFO.

KATERI MASS AT TUSCARORA

The annual Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Mass at the Tuscarora Indian Nation took place July 14 at Holy Family Chapel, Sanborn, NY. The celebrant was Fr. Peter Calabrese, CRSP, pastor. After mass, there was a Franciscan gathering for dinner at the Church, reports Bill Heinz, SFO, past regional minister.

AFRICAN NUN RECEIVES FRANCISCAN PEACE AWARD

SKANEATELES, NY -- Sister Caritas Barajingitwa, LSOF, temporarily assigned to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Binghamton, dreamed of providing a loving home and practical education for orphans in Africa. That dream came true when she opened Holy Family Vocational Orphanage in Southern Uganda in 2003.

Secular Franciscans surprised Sister Caritas with the regional **Franciscan Peace Award**, citing her for “creating a future for children of AIDS victims.”

They also named her and the orphanage as the **2008 Family of the Year**, dubbing her “Mama Caritas.” In conjunction with the awards, Secular Franciscans donated \$1,000 to the orphanage.

The orphanage houses 30 children, and includes 13 acres for farming plus 26 acres



Sister Caritas at the Regional Gathering.

for future dormitories and a school, eventually to accommodate 100 children.

Sister Caritas, a member of the African-based Little Sisters of St. Francis, was honored at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaneateles during the annual regional gathering.

Sister got the idea for the orphanage while pursuing a master’s degree in education in the late 1990s at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. In fact, the idea became her master’s thesis, she said.

“Going back to Uganda, I thought it would be just a matter of putting the project into place,” she recalled. “I went door to door begging, to no avail.”

But God opened another door, as she would put it.

The pastor of St. Mary’s in Binghamton wrote a letter to the mother superior of the Little Sisters, asking her to send one of her sisters to work in his parish. The mother superior summoned Sister Caritas and told

her she was going to the United States. She arrived in June 2001. Two years later, thanks to donations by American Catholics, she was able to open Holy Family Vocational Orphanage and welcome 30 children into its protection. Her fellow sisters run it. She has been returning to Uganda a couple of times a year – especially around Christmas and during the summer.

A proponent of teaching practical skills as well as academics, sister said the orphanage teaches home economics, carpentry, basket weaving, sewing and tailoring, and more recently farming and animal husbandry. And a fishery is in the offing.

However, sister added, for the orphans, “knowing that they are loved is most important” because “then they will be able to love others.”

INSIGHTS FROM KATERI PEACE CONFERENCE

By WALT CHURA, SFO

John Amidon, of Veterans for Peace, and Maureen Aumand have been organizing the Kateri Tekakwitha Peace Conferences at the Fonda Shrine for ten years. The theme of their first Conference was on the rights of indigenous peoples.

I'm not sure how long we Secular Franciscans have been making our pilgrimage there, but I offered a *Te Deum* when I was able to attend both events these past two Augusts. They occurred providentially on the same weekend both years, the Peace Conference on Friday evening and Saturday morning and afternoon, the SFO gathering on Sunday.

The Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region SFOs ought to arrange for this “coincidence” to continue! In fact, I propose making the Kateri Peace



Conference an integral part of our Regional pilgrimage and invite Peace Conference participants to our Sunday gathering as an apt conclusion to the Conference.

While the Kateri Peace Conference is non-sectarian, the location, the organizers' spirit, the choice of conference topics (e.g., “Hope and Resistance” ’07; “Nurturing Peace” ’08) and of presenters all exhibit a congenial appreciation for the intrinsic part that spiritual values and religious traditions, particularly those of Franciscans, must play in building the just and peaceful world our Rule points us toward.

Our Rule calls us “individually and collectively [to] be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of [our] human lives and [our] courageous initiatives,” (para. 15). We are to be “bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, . . . seeking 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,” (para. 19).

Gathering as Secular Franciscans with those who typically attend the Kateri Peace Conference, many of whom are, or once were, Catholics, most

of whom are people of faith, would put us “in the forefront in promoting justice.” We would be able to learn of and from others engaged in “unceasing” works of peace-building, and to network with others pursuing “creative initiatives” for justice. In turn we would have the opportunity to dialogue with others on the values of our Secular Franciscan vocation.

We would not be “strangers in a strange land.”

Retired Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, a major Catholic voice for peace as former co-chair of Pax Christi USA, has twice been a keynote speaker at the Kateri Peace Conference, including this past August. (Albany's Bishop Howard Hubbard also spoke briefly this year.) Last year, Franciscan Friar Louis Vitale, OFM, a Korean War veteran, co-founder of Pace e



Fr. Louis Vitale, OFM

Bene Non-Violence Service, presented a keynote address on the immorality of the torture now sanctioned by the current U.S. Administration. He told the story of his arrest and imprisonment for five months for his non-violent “creative initiative” in protest against the policy -- all with the energy and joyful spirit you would want from a follower of God’s Troubadour, even at age 75.

This year’s keynote speakers also included Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois, a Vietnam War veteran, on his 20 years of work to convince Congress to close the “School of the



Fr. Roy Bourgeois

Americas” at Fort Benning, Georgia, where Latin American dictators and their security forces have been and continue to be trained in methods which they use to oppress their people. Father Bourgeois has also spent time in prison for his non-violent “creative initiatives” in protest

against the SOA.

Both Fr. Louie and Fr. Roy emphasized the need for contemplative silence and solitude in discerning what actions to take in pursuit of “peace and all good,” and in enduring the consequences.

Several of the workshops this and other years were presented by people from a variety of faith communities. I was cordially asked to speak each of the past two years on Thomas Merton’s insights into the contemplative foundations of peace-making.

Conference co-sponsors include the Commission on Peace and

Justice of the Albany Diocese and the Interfaith Alliance of NYS.

Participating in the vital dialogue that is the foundation of the Kateri Tekakwitha Peace Conference, I suggest, would be a fitting prelude to our annual Sunday gathering at the Kateri Shrine. Likewise, I think many Conference participants could benefit from the experience of interior peace we enjoy at our Sunday pilgrimage. Where better to experience the quiet needed to integrate into one’s life what we have learned in dialogue with fellow peacemakers than the Peace Grove at the shrine of Blessed Kateri or on the prayerful paths that wind about the grounds? We Franciscans could choose the Sunday presentations to echo or reflect some of the concerns addressed at the Peace Conference from a specifically Franciscan point of view.



Peace Grove at Kateri Shrine

'SMOKE SIGNALS'

WHERE IS THE DOCUMENT?

Much time and energy have been spent in the past, in the process of developing guidelines for adequate and proper management of fraternities. And yet, it seems there is often a failure to appreciate the importance of good record-keeping – particularly the long term preservation of legal documents. At the local level, the document of establishment often fails to receive the attention that it should get – to make it readily accessible at any crucial time.

Typically, after a chapter of elections, the document is transferred along with other pertinent properties, from the out-going officers to their newly elected successors. But because an establishment document is seldom consulted in the ordinary transaction of business, it tends to be ignored and is soon forgotten or misplaced. When for any reason it



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

is sought, it is then realized by all concerned that no one remembers seeing it for the length of a term of office, if not longer! (St. Anthony probably receives numerous appeals from embarrassed clients every election year.)

Ironically, beyond all this, it is a canonical record and ought to be diligently safeguarded and preserved, for *other* reasons. Consider carefully the following:

1. The canonical life of this document is of surprising duration. It is viable for a century after the death of the last surviving professed member, registered in that fraternity. There-

fore, it may be used to reactivate the dormant fraternity during this same time period.

2. It sometimes happens that when an emerging fraternity is in its forming stage, it is beset with numerous cares, difficulties or delays, as the group of hopefuls strive to meet all the criteria required by the sponsoring fraternity, as determined by the higher level. This may discourage, and sometimes results in failure. If a viable document of an inactive fraternity is available, however, this stress can be avoided by simply reactivating the old fraternity instead of

building a new one. In such case, a change in fraternity location can be arranged. It is generally easier to reactivate an old one, than to build a new fraternity.

3. In recent months, when the new *History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States* became available, it was heart-warming to find in it a photo of the Diploma of Aggregation for St. Joseph Fraternity, Utica, NY. The document was dated March 12, 1926. The members of one of our regional fraternities can now humbly boast: *We were there!*

A properly stored document of establishment will provide a sense of history while engendering a bit of *fraternity joy*.

We need to exercise proper diligence and care in preserving these auspicious records for the benefit of future generations. They will need to know... and thank the Lord with us.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Brother Moe and St. Patrick Fraternity in Buffalo congratulated three members on the anniversary of their profession. Honored were, from left: James Casey, 35 years; Margaret Andrews, 45 yrs, and Monica Kwiatkowski, 30 yrs.

-- Marie Meyer

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*.

Individuals, fraternities and businesses may sponsor one or multiple issues, and receive recognition in a 6"x1" ad.

\$100 – ad on inside page.

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Mail your message/ad, with check made out to BKTR, c/o Franciscan Mirror, PO Box 232, Marcy, NY; or contact Mary Stronach at 315-796-9284, or at stonach@kateriregion.org.

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

Continued from Page 12
traveled to Christ the King Retreat Center in Syracuse Oct. 24 to meet with the Executive Council and the new members of his team.

The team approach was passed by provincial spiritual assistants of orders that are bonded to fraternities in the region, including Father Richard, Fr. Peter Knaapen, OFM Conv., of Immaculate Conception Conventual Province, and Fr. Tom Washburn, OFM, of Immaculate Conception OFM Province.

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE WALL OF HONOR

A Wall of Honor page offers a way Funds 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

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Name of Person/Group Doing the Honoring (if different from above) _____

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FR. RICHARD & TEAM NOW SERVING THE REGION



Regional Spiritual Assistant Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, with his regional spiritual assistant team -- Anne Thomas, SFO, Karen Szczesniak, SFO, and Bill Geary, SFO.

Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, is the region's new spiritual assistant, Regional Minister Mary Frances Charsky, SFO, announced. The friar, she said, will head a spiritual assistance team that includes three Secular Franciscans who have been delegated to help the first order friars do pastoral visitations around the region. All three -- Bill Geary, SFO, of Vernon; Karen Szczesniak, SFO, of Utica (and Deland, FL), and Anne Thomas, SFO, of Watertown -- had been trained and approved to be local spiritual assistants.

Father Richard, who is also a national spiritual assistant and Provincial spiritual assistant for Holy Name OFM Province,

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