



The Herald

Newsletter of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Regional Fraternity

Secular Franciscan Order
Summer—2008

100 Years of Praying for Christian Unity

By Fr. Henry Mair S.A.
Spiritual Assistant for Blessed Lucius Fraternity, Brockton, MA.

This year Pope Benedict XVI visited the U.S. and celebrated the 200 yr. anniversary of the Archdiocese of Baltimore becoming the first Arch-Diocese in the U.S. and also of the establishment of the Dioceses of Boston, New York and Louisville. However, there is another anniversary that is being celebrated this year and that is the 100 years of praying for Christian Unity. A Movement of Prayer begun here in the U.S. by an Episcopal Priest and Nun in 1908 in Garrison, N.Y.



The Stigmata of St Francis (Used with Permission)
<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/francis/>

Fr. Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White had begun their Franciscan Community there 10 years earlier and were convinced of the need for unity among Christians with the Pope in Rome as the Leader. Thus they began what was then called “The Church Unity Octave” and now known as “The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity”, held each year from January 18 – 25.

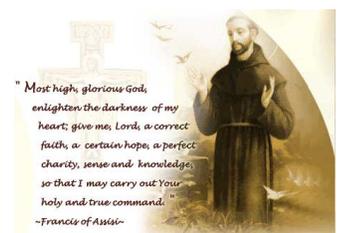
This Prayer Movement is now observed throughout the whole Christian World. It is an opportunity for Christians to come together and pray for the unity that Christ prayed for at the Last Supper, “That They All May Be One”. The first fruits of this prayer came only a year later when the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement were received into the Roman Catholic Church. One of the first to be received as a group that continues to exist in the R.C. Church.

The Spirit of St. Francis is certainly very ecumenical as attested to by the fact that he is revered by so many different Christian Denominations and indeed by many of other faith traditions. Also, the fact that Pope John XXIII chose Assisi as the site for his gatherings with Leaders of all major World Religions attests

(100 Years Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Christian Unity	1
From the Minister's Desk	2
Fair Share	2
Thoughts on Chapter	3
Year of St Paul	3
Did You Know	3
An Irreversible Change	4
Spirit And Life Team	5
Anniversaries	5
St Anthony Fraternity	5
St Mary's Fraternity	6
Regional Executive Council	6
Franciscan Center listings	7
Profession of Brother Giles LBSF	7
Regional Formation Team	7
Mission statement	8
Upcoming Events	8





(100 Years Continued from page 1)

to Holy Father Francis' spirit of peace and openness to all. I feel that it is no accident that the Society of the Atonement is Franciscan because of the spirit of openness and respect for all that is our inheritance as Franciscans.

LORD MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE!

LORD MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR UNITY!

From The Minister's Desk:

"The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the SFO as an organic union of all fraternities throughout the world." *SFO Constitutions – Article 30.1*

"The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal service, witness, prayer, and active collaboration, in accordance with each one's situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity." *SFO Constitution - Article 30.2*

Brothers and Sisters

I saw these words come alive as we came together to do the business of the region at our Visitation Chapter this past April. I thank you for your personal service and servant leadership to the region as well as your local fraternities, your witness to the world and to each other, your prayer and collaboration which was so evident.

I remind you that you were to bring home and share the Preparatory Document for the General Chapter, and to study the questions mentioned within. Take the time to rethink these questions – are you where you are supposed to be... are you living the promises of your profession? (see your minister for a copy if you don't have it already)

The General Chapter is to be held on the Feast of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, November 17, 2008, for the purpose of electing a new International Council; CIOFS – Council of International Order of Franciscans Secular. We have been requested to pray for the success of this election.

Along the same line, our next Regional Chapter on April 26-28, 2009 will be our Elective Chapter. I ask that you start now to look around your fraternity, your district, and even within yourself, for the qualities to serve on the Regional level. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will touch those persons to come forth. In a few months you will be asked to submit nominations.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the SALT Weekend September 26-28, 2008. Everyone should come, including Candidates. It will be a weekend you won't forget. (Information on page 5)

Peace and Love, Jackie

Fair Share Increase:

Late this spring, a letter was sent to all the local Fraternity Ministers regarding an increased basis for the Fair Share contributions in 2009, to be read at the local Fraternity gathering. The Regional Council (made up of the Regional Executive Council, and all the local Fraternity Ministers) voted to increase the basis from \$30 to \$35 per active professed member, starting with your next year's (2009) payment.

This is our first increase since 2003, and the reasons are ones familiar to us all as we struggle with high gas prices and the impact they have on nearly everything we need. There are further details in the letter sent to your Minister, but our focus in this article is the approach that Fraternities need to be taking with regard to collecting the money for their annual contribution to the Region's expenses.

Several Fraternities, large and small, shared at the Chapter that they had moved successfully from treating the Regional Fair Share as "dues" to be collected from each professed member, to seeing it as the basis for a Fair Share amount to be contributed by a given Fraternity from the Common Fund to the next higher Fraternity according to our National Statutes [Section III, Article 18-7]. They inform the brothers and sisters of what it takes to run the local Fraternity and how much needs to be set aside for the total Fair Share payment, and allow each to contribute to the Common Fund as they are able. They keep their members informed of the Fraternity's financial position in their monthly newsletter, or other means of regular communication to their members.

(Fair Share Continued on page 7)



Thoughts on Chapter, April 2008...

By Joan Ouimette, SFO, Burlington, VT

Ray and I were in Andover MA from Friday, April 25 through Sunday, April 28. Honored guests included Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv., national spiritual assistant from Los Angeles, Patrick Mendes, our national minister from Chicago, and Patricia Brandwein-Ball, former regional minister and now national councilor. Our regional spiritual assistant, Fr. Richard Trezza OFM, was also there and was pleased to see Vermonters again.

Our hostess for the weekend was regional minister, Jacquelyn Walsh. Ray and I worked at the registration table. The weekend business began Friday after supper, and resumed Saturday before breakfast. Each day began with prayer and included lectures, discussions, small group work, breaks for meals, and some free time. Each day ended with recitation of compline in the chapel, and an informal social hour with snacks after compline.

Some of the topics of interest were:

- Increase in fair share from \$30 to \$35, mainly because the region is operating at a loss. Many fraternities are shrinking, some merging or become satellites, or closing altogether.
- The Secular Franciscan Order is a true order.
- Friends of Francis are individuals who attend SFO meetings and participate in ongoing formation, but not initial formation, and do not intend to become Secular Franciscans. They need not be Roman Catholic.
- Transfers from one local fraternity to another no longer take place automatically.
- Every Franciscan requesting a transfer must go through a probation period of not less than 6 months in the new fraternity, and must be subject to a background check. Likewise, people requesting entrance into inquiry or candidacy must be subject to council review. Fraternities concerned about dwindling numbers in the past have made mistakes in both these areas, and have suffered as a result.
- The Council, locally, has a responsibility to help troubled members in its own fraternity. First it needs to set a proper example of conduct; then it is expected to reach out to the troubled soul in dialogue. As we know, this may be difficult when the troubled Franciscan has no interest in dialogue or

(Chapter, Continued on page 6)

THE YEAR OF SAINT PAUL

Pope Benedict said in his homily for First Vespers for the Solemnity of Ss. Peter and Paul in 2007:

“... in early times, today too, Christ needs apostles to sacrifice themselves. He needs witnesses and martyrs like St. Paul.” “Paul, a former violent persecutor of Christians, when he fell to the ground dazzled by the divine light on the road to Damascus, did not hesitate to change sides to the Crucified One and followed him without second thoughts. He lived and worked for Christ, for him he suffered and died. How timely his example is today!

“And for this very reason I am pleased to announce officially that we shall be dedicating a special Jubilee Year to the Apostle Paul from 28 June 2008 to 29 June 2009, on the occasion of the bi-millennium of his birth, which historians have placed between the years 7 and 10 A.D.”

His letters were the earliest works of the New Testament, predating the Gospels by several years. They give us an insight into the challenges of the first followers of Jesus Christ. More importantly, they bear witness to the faith of a man whose life was transFOrmed by his encounter with Christ. Paul was no paper saint: his letters, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, reveal a human being with difficulties and weaknesses, but one for whom Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body (Phil 3:21), was everything.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Lebanese Capuchin, Jacques – “Abunda Yaaqub” – Ghazir Haddad (in the secular world known as Khalil), was proclaimed Blessed on Sunday, June 23, 2008, in Beirut, Lebanon.

In his own country he is recognized as a giant in charity. All the friars admired him for his self-denial, piety, charity, and obedience, as well as his sense of humor that he never failed to use as an instrument of peace. His specific charism was preaching. He prepared his sermons at night in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

During World War I he worked with the Secular Franciscans, distributed bread to the hungry, and buried the dead abandoned on the streets.

Born on February 1, 1875, he died on June 26, 1954.



An Irreversible Change: Profession

By Francine Gikow, SFO, Staff Editor, Tau, USA
St. Francis Fraternity, Andover, MA

“I, by the grace of God, renew my baptismal promises and consecrate myself to the service of the Kingdom. Therefore, in my secular state I promise to live all the days of my life the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order by observing its rule of life.”

With this statement, we have made a permanent commitment- an irreversible change in our lives. We have chosen to hold fast to Jesus Christ, the Church and each other through the example of St. Francis. The evidence of this change is not readily apparent early on in our life as Secular Franciscans. However after many years, this change is revealed by the depth of our commitment and by the direction of our lives, our values, our subsequent decisions and even how we have lived our lives. Have you met an older Secular Franciscan who has been an inspiration for you in fidelity and Franciscan love? Well, that is the result of this change.

When we originally commit ourselves to God, we take the initial first steps in responding to the call of God in our lives. We might pray more, join a prayer group, or become more active in our parish. However at some point we realize that it is not enough for us. We want more. In time, we might realize that we cannot live without God in our life nor do we want to. He becomes so integrated into what we do and who we are that we become inseparable. God lives in us and we live in God. We are changed.

So we search for ways to become closer to God, his people and the Church. We seek the radical Christian lifestyle which we find in Francis. We find that the charisma of St. Francis of Assisi calls us as a way to deepen our spiritual life and share it among His people. St. Francis' way of life has spoken to us and we find real value in his methods.

Eventually we want to unite ourselves to God and His Church even more closely and we want to join others in this journey. We find that we need a community of like minded people to keep us going on the journey we have chosen. The decision to make our spiritual life a priority for the rest of our lives is not an easy one to make. In fact, we are continuously making that decision again and again as we renew ourselves and keep that commitment

in fidelity and truth.

In essence there are really only two choices in our journey as a Secular Franciscan: either decide to constantly pick yourself up and keep trying to live the Rule or become complacent and give up. We have all seen those of our brothers and sisters who start out strong as Secular Franciscans but slowly start drifting away. They start coming sporadically to the fraternity reunions and have other priorities in life. Sometimes they experience darkness of the soul and instead of sharing this with others of their brothers and sisters, they keep to themselves and thereby miss the wealth of knowledge and experience others might have to offer. They might find that community life is hard and would rather retreat than address issues. It is so easy to give up and forget about the promises we made when the honeymoon period is over and the real work of being a Secular Franciscan begins.

In contrast, you might see other Secular Franciscans, who although they are not especially gifted or graced, continue to persist and decide over and over and over again to be faithful. They keep trying, stumbling sometimes but always going back to what they have promised. They work things out lovingly and realistically and meet the challenges, sometimes more perfectly than others, but they never give up.

Those little decisions do add up! Eventually, they accumulate to a critical point where in hindsight the person has changed! Their life path has changed. Those seemingly unimportant choices to remain faithful have unconsciously changed the Secular Franciscan irreversibly! You find loving, joyful and faithful Secular Franciscans alive in the love of God!

Our life is not measured by big decisions but by the nitty gritty every day choices we make. That is the deceptive reality of Secular Franciscan life. Our small decisions make a big difference!

“Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”
Robert Frost—“The Road Less Taken”



Spirit And Life Team

“The Words I have spoken in you are spirit and life.” John 6:63

SALT is the name that has been given to an effort to bring Spirit and Life to the Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order and their fraternities. The ideal time frame for a SALT experience is a week-end. This event does not follow a traditional retreat format. You can expect:

- Insight
- Inspiration
- Encouragement
- Empowerment

SALT invites the Brothers and Sisters:

- To embrace those elements in their personal and fraternal lives that are truly life giving.
- To recognize and determine that what is no longer life giving, need not drain their energies any longer.
- To move out of their comfort zones so as to accomplish this.
- To move more freely toward courageous initiatives that bring vitality to their lives and fraternities.

SALT offers these possibilities by means of thought provoking presentations, personal and communal reflective time and practical applications of the Gospel.

September 26-28, 2008

Franciscan Center, 459 River Rd., Andover, MA

Please plan to participate in the full weekend program. SALT is open to All, including Candidates. SALT Team presenters will be:

- Patricia Brandwein-Ball, SFO (National Councilor)
- Richard Morton, SFO (Past National Minister)
- Father Stephen Gross, OFM conv. (National Spiritual Asst)

Registration: Friday after 3:30 PM

Sandwiches and salad available 5 to 6:30 PM
Program begins 7 PM, ends with lunch on Sunday.

Cost: Overnighters: \$140.00
Commuters: \$ 70.00

Ask your Minister for Registration Form.

Major Profession Anniversaries – 25+ years

St. Francis Fraternity, Andover, MA - John Finneran (25 yrs), Michael Scholastico (50 yrs).

St Anthony Fraternity, Boston, MA - Ann T. Gillis (25 yrs), James F. Sweeney (25 yrs), Constance W. McGrath (25 yrs), Elizabeth Maclennan (25 yrs).

Immaculate Conception Fraternity in Burlington, VT— Violet Casey (73 yrs), Veronique Gassette (51 yrs), Anne Cole (48 yrs), Pauline Trudell (36 yrs), Carmen Sibley (30 yrs), Joe Bouchard (25 yrs), Betty Bouchard (25 yrs)

Maximillian Kolbe Fraternity – Fair Haven, VT - Cassius Burlette (25 yrs), Phyllis Burlette (25 yrs), Patricia Maryan Foley Richards (25 yrs), John Killian (36 yrs), Kenneth Spaulding (34 yrs).

St. Mary Queen of Angels Fraternity, St. Johnsbury, VT – Tom Giblin (35 yrs)

Sacred Heart Fraternity, Plattsburgh, NY – all with 25 yrs. Lillian Cote, Aline Cote, Father Cote, Mary Scully, Marjorie Larose, Father McCashland, Paul Lafountain, Agnes Lafountain, Viola Lapierre, Jeannette Petrachune, Lena Whalen, Herling Sorrell, Bill Donnell, Gabrielle Bishop, John Farrell, Joan Farrell, Lorraine Farrell

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Fraternity, Ellenburg Center, NY - Phyllis Nadeau (25 yrs)

District I – Vermont and northeastern New York fraternities, will be holding a gathering on August 10th in Ellenburg Ctr. NY to honor profession anniversaries 25+ years of their members.

We thank all these brothers and sisters for their many years of service in the SFO. Please keep them in your prayers.

Update from St. Anthony Fraternity in Boston

By Cathy Consolazio, Secretary

Professions:

Adeline Jean-Louis - February 9, 2008
MariaThien Nga Thi Dinh - June 14, 2008

Deaths:

Margaret Barron, SFO (professed 1962), died on Friday 7/18



ST. MARY'S OF THE PORTIUNCULA FRATERNITY IN HANOVER, MA

Carole Reilly, SFO

At my local church, our Pastor, Father Doherty, asked Sr. Clare, a Chaplain from the Boston Medical Center, to speak about the need for knitted/crocheted baby blankets at the hospital. She knitted as she spoke. I was sitting there listening and experienced first-hand the beauty of these baby blankets. A month prior, my daughter had given birth to premature twins at the Brigham and Women Hospital in Boston. While visiting Kathy and the babies, I had seen these soft, unique, hand-made blankets covering the isolettes. I marveled at the love, talent, and time people had given of themselves. Although I hadn't crocheted since my children were small, I knew that God was speaking to me. I took a six week refresher course at the local high school and approached several members of our Franciscan fraternity to join me in making baby blankets for the Boston Medical Center.

About seven years ago, we began making these baby blankets for the NIC unit, Pediatrics and Maternity floors for the Boston Medical Center in Boston. There is such a great need in this city hospital, as there are so many immigrants, people/children injured and med flighted from all over the state, uninsured, and yes, even homeless. We started off with a few fraternity members and then reached out to a lot of retired senior citizens. This has been a rich and rewarding ministry. We found that we not only helped the hospital, but brought a new fulfillment to these seniors ---they love to give, and feel productive again.

As the years have gone by, we now include St. Elizabeth's in Brighton and South Shore Hospital in Weymouth-- (Chaplain's office for the deceased babies only). We now donate more than 500 blankets a year.

When I deliver the blankets of various sizes---small for the preemies, larger for the other floors, we get to meet the wonderful nurses; give out blankets to the new parents and get to see the darling new babies---such a miracle!!! The nurses are like children that fight over the blankets and keep this and that for their favorite patients. Also I delight in hearing the various stories of gratitude from the parents. These stories keep us motivated to continue knitting/crocheting, as we know they are thrilled with the blankets, especially the less fortunate.

Also, there are a few women who like to make hats and

scarves for older children and adults. The hospitals were overwhelmed with joy, when we brought in the hats. It seems that in the Outpatient department, when a parent comes in during the winter and the children are without hats or even scarves, out comes a hat/scarf. The Chaplains are so delighted that they can make a difference.

We also have some women who make small sock dolls. These are tube socks that are stuffed; the cuff is rolled into a hat and includes cross-stitched faces. They are used primarily in the NIC unit for the little babies who have IV's, to prevent skin chafing sores.

This ministry has so many stories to tell and so many wonderful, wonderful people who give of their time and talent. To give of one's time and talent has its own rewards, but I know God will reward each and every one of them for their service to the unborn.

Regional Executive Council

- Jacquelyn Walsh SFO - Minister
- Vincent E. Corsano, SFO - Vice Minister
- Susan M. Ronan, SFO - Secretary
- Miriam Kennedy, SFO - Treasurer
- Theresa Pratt, SFO - Formation Director
- Claire Reid, SFO - Councilor District 1
- Steve Shields SFO - Councilor District 2
- Joseph Makley, SFO - Councilor District 3
- Roselle Neely, SFO - Councilor District 4
- David Amara, SFO - Councilor District 5
- John Sheridan, SFO - Councilor District 6
- Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM - Spiritual Assistant

(Chapter Continued from page 3)

acts to block it. If members of the fraternity are not leading Franciscan lives, and if repeated attempts at dialogue fail, the council can prayerfully examine initiatives to keep those brothers and sisters connected with the fraternity when life circumstances work against participation.

- The minister and council should be aware of the contents of the Rule and Constitutions, the Handbook for Spiritual Assistance, and the Handbook for Servant Leaders (now being revised) and be able to use them to solve "little" internal fraternity problems. It is important that the council not spend all its time putting out fires in the fraternity, but be able to focus on its reason for being a fraternity: "to follow Christ aided by the example of St. Francis of Assisi."



The Franciscan Center
459 River Road, Andover, MA
Program Listing Fall2008

Sat, Sep 13th – “*Breaking Open the Psalms*” – Day of prayer with Marcy Venskus MA, MTS. 9:00 – 3:00 pm. Cost \$35

Sat, Nov 8th— Day of Prayer for Secular Franciscans and their Families: "Preparing Our Hearts for Christmas". John Finneran, SFO and Father Roland, OFM. \$35 includes breakfast and lunch. 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Nov 14th – 16th – “*Pondering the Questions of Jesus*” – Guided Weekend Retreat with Marcy Venskus MA, MTS. Cost \$150. Retreat begins Friday evening with dinner at 5:45.

Each Wed, rosary and adoration follow the 8:00 AM liturgy.

Each First Fri, adoration, benediction and lunch are offered. Adoration begins after the 8:00 am daily Mass. Free will offering for lunch.

Franciscan Center Wish List:

Donations of the items are a great help to the Center in controlling costs.: **Coffee, Dinner Napkins, Paper Towels, Laundry Detergent, Windex and Pledge.**

(Fair Share Continued from page 2)

It is clear that some professed members can contribute more to the Fraternity’s Common Fund than others, and undue burdens should not be placed on our brothers and sisters of lesser means. More importantly, we need to learn to trust in the goodness, fairness and generosity of our brothers and sisters – the gift of the Holy Spirit to our Order.

Please note that because the Fair Share payment is due to the Region on March 31st, 2009, you need to plan for the increase this year in order to be prepared. As an example, if your fraternity is expected to have 25 active professed members by 12/31/2008 [you need to plan for anticipated professions during the year], your fraternity needs to set aside about \$73 per month out of the Common Fund collections for your Regional Fair Share. You do not need to have a separate bank account. You can just keep track on paper of what needs to be set aside for the Fair Share, and how much is available for other Fraternity expenses.

For more information, or help in making this transition, contact our Regional Treasurer, Miriam Kennedy, SFO at meksfo@yahoo.com.

Profession of Brother Giles, LBSF

Fr. Richard Donovan, OFM, concelebrated the Religious Profession Mass of Brother Giles-Michael Gilbert, LBSF, a Little Brother of Saint Francis on Friday, May 30th at the Basilica of our Lady of Perpetual Help in Boston.

The main celebrant was His Eminence, Sean Patrick Cardinal O’Malley, OFM, Cap. Father Richard is the Provincial Spiritual Visitor for the Little Brothers, representing the Immaculate Conception Province.

The Little Brothers were founded 30 years ago by Brother James Curran, LBSF, who also serves as Spiritual Assistant to the St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity, SFO in Boston.

The Little Brothers invited all the local SFO fraternities, as well as other religious communities, family, friends and benefactors to their beautiful celebration.

Regional Formation Team

Please keep Loring Crossman in your prayers for strength and healing of cancer.

- **Tom Giblin, SFO** – District 1
- **Alice Aubuchon, SFO** – District 2
- **TBD** – District 3
- **Lisa Cyr, SFO** – District 4
- **Vacant** – District 5
- **Theresa Pratt, SFO** – Formation Chair & District 6

Thank you all for the willingness to serve your brothers and sisters. May the Lord bless you abundantly.

The Herald

Franciscan Center, 459 River Road, Andover, MA 01810

Email submissions to:

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Schedule of Newsletter Deadlines:

Next Issue Nov 1, 2008

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Regional Fraternity of
the Secular Franciscan Order
Franciscan Center
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Andover, MA 01810

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Mission Statement

The Mission of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Region of the Secular Franciscan order is to proclaim and witness to the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, inspired by the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, by promoting and supporting the local fraternities in the Northern New England area.

Together, through the lives of diverse Catholic men and women in local fraternities, we profess commitment to these ideals. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we strive to humbly serve all people, especially the poor and forgotten.

We celebrate joyfully the gift of life in all creation and recognize God's living presence in the world.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spirit & Life Weekend

September 26-28, 2008

See article inside...

Transitus Services

October 3, 2008

Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary & General Chapter Election of International (CIOFS) Council

November 17, 2008

Chapter of Elections in Andover

April 26-28, 2009 for a new regional council

Please pray for the Holy Spirit in these two elections.

A Summer Seminar for SFO's "Franciscan Spirituality"

June 25-28, 2009

Saint Francis University

Loretto, PA