



LAVERNA VISION

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many cultures / through Francis / in Christ

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The LaVerna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA consists of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. The area is divided into four districts: Southeast, Central, Fox Valley and Upper Michigan. *La Verna Vision* is a vehicle of communication with the LaVerna Region. It presents a forum for presenting information and insights that relate to the SFO way of life. Permission to copy materials printed in *LaVerna Vision* is freely given except where the copyright is specifically reserved to the author or artist. Please credit *LaVerna Vision* if you copy any of the articles

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LaVerna Vision editor – Ed Boss, ed-joann@execpc.com

Ecology: Insect Control by Judy Stouffer, BS, MS, SFO



Secular Franciscan Order Rule: Chapter 2, Article 18 states: "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." Unfortunately, there are times where creatures around us, such as bees, hornets, wasps and other stinging insects are dangerous when they get in our homes.

If an individual bee, hornet or wasp appears inside your home, and you can't safely remove it alive, you can use an inexpensive simple spray you can make yourself. This spray is deadly to these insects but has low toxicity for you and the environment. This 'recipe' was given to me by a beekeeper, and we have used it for several years. Make this spray ahead of time so you have it handy when you need it!



Mix together three quarters of a cup of rubbing alcohol and one quarter cup of your favorite dishwashing soap. Put this solution into a clean spray bottle and label the bottle so you know what is in it. When you need it, a couple of good squirts that directly hit the insect (even if it is flying) will kill it within a few seconds. Use the same cautions you would with any spray - be careful to not get it in your eyes, and don't inhale the actual mist while you are spraying. Copyright © Judy Stouffer

Judy Stouffer is our *La Verna Vision* web master editor and member of St. Joseph Fraternity in Appleton, WI

Franciscan Formation by Jean Platz, SFO

When we talk about formation most of us think immediately of initial Formation, which is critical to get one grounded in Franciscan spirituality.

We have a number of good books that directly address initial formation and its content. Some of the more recent ones are *Come and See*, *Catch Me A Rainbow Too*, *Fully Mature*, and *To Set Themselves Free* - just to mention a few.

However, we only spend a few years in initial formation and the rest of our lives (which is what it takes) trying to absorb and practice the totality of Franciscan spirituality. Friars and sisters spend their entire lives trying to assimilate the Franciscan charism. We have only 1-2 hours a month. Therefore it is critical that we choose and discuss appropriate material each month that deals specifically with the Rule and its application to life.

If we don't get it at our gatherings, we won't get it at all. Any initial information book that is not being used currently in your primary formation program is appropriate for ongoing formation, especially in older fraternities where the membership has been reared in the "old rule." The 1978 Rule is more demanding than the older Leonine Rule and sometimes the cause for discord with-in Fraternity by persons looking at the Order as a

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pious society rather than the demanding “way of life” that it actually is. We never reach the end! There is always room for us to grow. The monthly meeting is the critical place for this to occur. It is the responsibility of the Fraternity Council to decide what material to use. If you have a need for ideas, suggestions, etc, please contact Jean Platz, Regional Formation Chairman at (715) 362-6562.



SFO NEWS NOTES

International

ASIA-OCEANIA CONGRESS 2007

The 2007 Asia-Oceania Congress participated by Secular Franciscans, Franciscan Youth and Spiritual Assistants held March 24-30 in Penang, Malaysia drew together a total of sixty participants from 12 countries in Asia and Oceania.

At the moment, there are seven constituted national fraternities in the region, namely: India, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Vietnam, Oceania and Indonesia.

The Secular Franciscan Order is likewise present in development in the following countries: Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea – all of which were happily represented in the Congress. Reports also indicated the presence of the SFO in Bangladesh and initial steps are being undertaken to begin the SFO in Myanmar and East Timor.



■ Photo courtesy of SFO International Council - *Quarterly edition* – May 2007

National

Quinquennial Congress 2007

A Franciscan Story: Beauty Loves the Beast

PITTSBURGH, PA, July 4, 2007 – On the birthday of this nation of Native Americans and immigrants, a Mass featuring Korean song and culture capped an afternoon of small group sessions exploring sensitivity to cultural diversity at the Secular Franciscan Order's 17th Quinquennial Congress, held at the Radisson Hotel Pittsburgh Green Tree.



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In his homily, Fr. Francis Kim, OFM, related the tale of a prince who lived in a beautiful castle, and whose compassion was tested one winter evening by an old woman who knocked at the door and begged for shelter from the cold lest she die.

“ ‘Get out!’ shouted the prince.” For that, the old woman placed a curse on the prince, turning him into a beast; and saying the curse would only be lifted if someone fell in love with the beast. With tears in his eyes, the prince wailed, “Who could ever love a beast?”

It sounds like a story of beauty and the beast, Father Kim said, adding: “We Franciscans have a similar love story – St. Francis and the leper. It is better, because St. Francis passed the test,” and, in doing so, he gave a heritage to his followers through embracing the outcast.

In the day’s gospel reading, “Jesus drives out demons,” he noted. “Demons of our world are called hatred... violence... oppression... hunger... Make you own list.” Suggesting that everyone is part of such a demon, he said the good news is that “we are transformed” by the unconditional love of Christ and St. Francis. “Who could ever love a beast? Jesus. That is who transformed our father Francis from a demon to a saint.”

Looking out at the 430 attendees, he added: “It is a joy to see irrepressible people who look beyond appearance” and who work together to transform a world that can be ugly.



■ article written by BOB and MARY STRONACH, SFO

La Verna Regional

La Verna Region Chapter & Visitation June 15 – 17, 2007
St. Anthony Retreat Center, Marathon, WI

A BRIEF NOTE ON EARLY FRANCISCAN HISTORY: “WHAT IS A FRANCISCAN CHAPTER?”

In the early 1200’s, it was actually called “Chapter of Mats.” St. Francis gathered over 3000 friars at the Portiuncula Chapel in Assisi. He told them to bring their mats. At that time they lived in huts and tents made of reeds. A Chapter of Mats was a time of renewal and an occasion to make decisions for their community. It was also a time to get to know one another and to learn from each other. Franciscan Religious communities have repeated this experience ever since.



Left to right Patrick Mendes, SFO
and Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR

Our La Verna Region 2007 Chapter followed in traditional Franciscan footsteps with inspirational and life giving renewal. We did not need to bring our mats as we had comfortable accommodations at St. Anthony’s. It was wonderful to meet our Franciscan brothers and sisters. Patrick Mendes, SFO national minister, and Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, national spiritual assistant, were our national council visitors. This year’s Chapter started with “We Are the Living Water” theme at our Friday evening Opening

On Saturday Patrick Mendes and Fr. Queally gave a review on the regional council books and listened to our concerns. Each local fraternity minister or their delegate gave a public report on what their fraternity has been doing in their area and future goals.

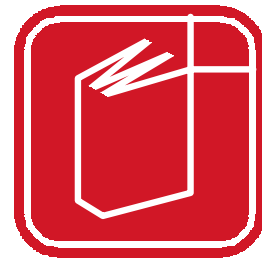
Patrick Mendes and Fr. Kevin Queally addressed the group on the purpose of a National Visitation (to support the fraternity and its members); they also talked about lapsed, active, and active excused SFOs; Fair Share contributions, fund raisers, and much more.

In addition, Sr. Jolynn Brehm gave a presentation titled "Living the SFO Rule." Our Secular Franciscan Rule will be 30-years old on June 24, 2008, she said. The Rule was approved in 1978 and it brings us back to our roots. The current Rule removes traces of monastic thinking, incorporates Vatican II; Profession is not to religious life but an affirmation of Baptism and Confirmation, Sr. Jolynn said.

■ Editor's note: Special thanks to St. John Neumann and St. James Fraternity newsletter notes and quotes on our June 2007 Chapter.

FRANCISCAN ON-GOING EDUCATION

St. Francis University in Loretto, PA currently offers distance learning programs as part of its Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life outreach ministry for Secular Franciscans interested in on-going formation. Courses will cover the study of Franciscan theology, spiritual roots, historical development and current interpretations of Christian values for living in the contemporary world.



Curriculum study cover Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings, The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, and Interpretation, Franciscan Prayer, Franciscan Family History, Servant Leadership and more.

The distance learning course is authored by OFM, OSF, SFO and TOR. Each study course offers many learning opportunities that can enlighten your spiritual journey. Registration and enrollment can be made at anytime of the year.

On-line registration and program curriculum are available at www.francis.edu or call the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life at St. Francis University at (814) 472-3299.

Cardinal Stritch University offers a Franciscan Studies and Spirituality certificate program on their main campus in Milwaukee. The program is for anyone who is interested in learning more about St. Francis and St. Clare and their legacy to the men and women of the 21st Century.

Open to all ages, the program provides an introduction to the life and spirituality of Francis and Clare and study on how Franciscans look at God, the world, Jesus Christ and the human person. Cardinal Stritch academic courses for this certificate will be held only in the 2007 fall and 2008 spring semesters. Please contact the University Outreach Department at (414) 410-4428 for a current course schedule.

HISTORY OF ST. JOHN NEUMANN'S FRATERNITY

The St. John Neumann Fraternity celebrated 30 years as a fraternity on June 10th in Rhinelander. The fraternity attended Mass together then afterwards celebrated with refreshments for the entire parish.

Fr. John Gerritts stopped in and presented a letter from Bishop Raphael Fliss to our fraternity as well as three individual members. All members of the fraternity were honored for their years of service by receiving a certificate of recognition. Most notably were Jean Platz, Eileen Bosshart, Marge Huser, Ruth Mason and Terese Zellinger. Jean was recognized for 56 years as a member of the SFO.

Jean received a jubilarian certificate and currently serves the region as head of formation and is an inspiration to the fraternity with her spirit of self-sacrifice. Eileen has served 44 years and is currently active in prison ministry as well as the life of the fraternity, also a valued member. Marge was honored for 40 years and is an active member helping out in ways too numerous to mention. Ruth and Terese were both instrumental in starting the fraternity. Both are active and generous in their giving to their fraternity. Our fraternity is blessed in knowing all of these incredible women of commitment and strength.

The fraternity then prayed together a renewal of commitment and received a blessing from Deacon Mike Harvey and words of encouragement. Also our spiritual assistant Sr. Dorothy Ann Dirx spoke with us and was there to congratulate each member for their years of service. We continue to move forward with 19 members, two newly professed and one preparing for profession. We praise and thank God for his many blessings upon our fraternity this past 30 years and humbly ask for His continued blessing.

THE PARADOX OF TIME

by Joan Puls, OSF

**"Time is money.
People in my world
always seem to be in a
hurry, even when there
not being paid by the
hour. Cars rush past me
on well traveled streets
trying to beat the traffic light
ahead. People push their way**



**through department stores and
onto buses. We are timed
people, almost as if a delay
might trigger a bomb, or
our compact cars
might turn into a
pumpkin if we are
one minute late."**

■ passage taken from Joan Puls' *Seek Treasures in Small Fields – Everyday Holiness*

PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL

From Gospel to life – From Life to Gospel

We value our life as Secular Franciscans and wish to have our way of living the Gospels continued through generations. If you as an individual feel strongly about this, we ask you to remember the La Verna Regional Secular Franciscans in your will. Please advise your attorney to have the request read:

"I give and bequeath the sum of \$_____ unto the La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order for the purpose of furthering the ideals of the Secular Franciscan Order." Correspondence can be mailed to:

La Verna SFO Regional Council
c/o Ken Beattie. SFO
Regional Minister
2951 W. Bridge Street
Greenfield. WI 53221- 4823

Your generosity will be remembered for years to come by those following the Franciscan way of life. Feel free to call Ken at 414-281-9856 / or e-mail at beatiesfo@aol.com, if any questions

CLARE'S NOVENA PRAYER FOR PEOPLE OF DARFUR

Merciful Father, Prince of Peace, Spirit of Wisdom and Compassion, please look upon our brothers and sisters in Darfur. We humbly pray:

--For those who have been subjected to violence: women, children, young and old men, we ask for healing, consolation, and relief of further suffering.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

--For those who have done violence, we ask for healing, forgiveness, and the grace of conversion.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

--For those in authority throughout the world, we ask wisdom, creativity, compassion and courage in addressing this situation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

Lord Jesus, Your Sacred Heart burns for love of all your people. Please place in our hearts that same love and inspire us to have the courage, wisdom and ingenuity to take what measures we can personally to relieve the suffering in Darfur. We pray this in the Name of Jesus, our Lord, through the intercession of the sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Memorare: Remember oh most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, oh Virgin of Virgins, my mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. Oh mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR REGIONS TO PRAY FOR DAFUR

	Dec/June	Jan/July	Feb/Aug	Mar/Sept	Apr/Oct	May/Nov
Week 1	St. Elizabeth of Hungary	Bl Kateri Tekakwitha	Fr Solanus	The Tau Cross	Our Lady of the Angels	St. Katharine Drexel
Week 2	Lady Poverty	St. Margaret of Cortona	Bros. & Sisters of St. Francis	Five Franciscan Martyrs	St. Maximilian Kolbe	Holy Trinity
Week 3	Divine Mercy	Our Lady of Indiana	La Verna	Mother Cabrini	Franciscans of the Prairie	St. Clare
Week 4	St Joan of Arc	Queen of Peace	Juan de Padilla	Los Tres Companeros / 3 Companions	Our Lady of the Rockies	Santa Maria de las Montanas
Week 5 or Week 1	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Troubadours of Peace	Bl. Junipero Serra	St. Francis	St. Thomas More	Ohana O Ke Aneunue

Book Review by Pat Schoonover, SFO

The Soul of Elizabeth Seton, A Spiritual Portrait

written by Joseph I. Dirvin, c.m.

Elizabeth was born in 1774, of a wealthy and distinguished Episcopalian family. She grew up with the love of Scriptures. At age twenty, Elizabeth married William Seton, a wealthy merchant and the couple had five children. She seemed to have it all, but within a few years her life was to take a drastic turn into tragedy. This was her time of darkness, a blankness of Spirit. William's business failed and so did his health. Elizabeth and her husband traveled to Italy seeking a cure for his tuberculosis, and there William died. After her husband's death, the Filicchi family, life-long friends, welcomed the grieving widow into their home in Italy.

While in Italy, Elizabeth became acquainted with Catholicism. On her return to the United States, she made a profession of faith in the Catholic Church, although in doing so she lost the support of her wealthy family. She ran a boarding house and other jobs to support her family. However, her primary vocation was mother to her children. Inspired by the life of St. Vincent de Paul, Elizabeth founded the first religious community in the United States – The American Sisters of Charity – in 1809.

Mother Seton opened the first parochial school. She became very ill but did not fear death. She welcomed it. Her favorite psalm was Psalm 23. She always said "Eternity = God, happiness and reunion of her loved ones."

At the time of her death there were many communities of Sisters in North and South America, as well as in Italy. The American Sisters of Charity continue to serve to this day. Elizabeth was canonized in 1975, the first native born American to be canonized by the Catholic Church.

KENYA WATER PROJECT **for the Maasai Community**

In Kenya, Don Ryder wore his Tau cross. During his African mission trip, he and church members joined up with Helping Hands to build a physical church and replace a roof on a tribal hut. Once the team construction work was finished, Don heard words of gratitude: After seeing the church mission's good works, a grateful tribal member told the Secular

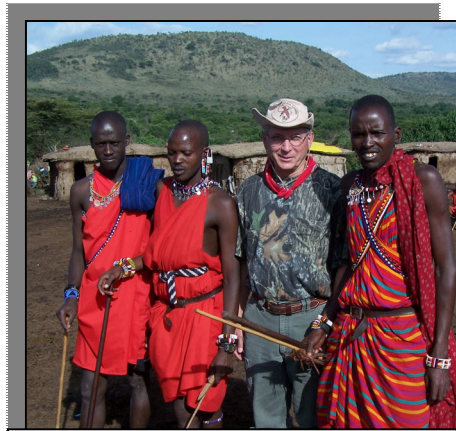
Franciscan... "I know God is alive because of the work you are doing here."

The nomadic Maasai tribe raises cattle and goats. The tribal women may walk 15 miles through dangerous territory to fetch water, which may not be sanitary enough to drink. But they have to drink it. They share their water with their goats and cattle. Don learned about the lack of water via an e-mail alert. The Maasai have a drastic water shortage the letter said. The lack of water has killed much of their livestock, crops and tribal members. Thus began the Secular's passion called the Kenya Water Project for the Maasai Community.

And the passion still carries on because "our Maasai sisters and brothers still thirst," he said. Don had to make the decision about the Maasai. He could easily say no,

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Don Ryder with Maasai community in Kenya

but he gave the example of Mary's Annunciation with the archangel Gabriel. "What if Mary said no to Gabriel," he asked. History would be a lot different for many of us.

Saying no to the African tribe in need of irrigation in an arid land was not part of his plan.

In a July news release to the Unrepresented Nations and People Organization website, Don said, "We're involved because we saw the plight of these people."

Don is the co-founder of the Kenyan Water Project. "We could just not walk away from there and just do nothing," he said. Together with his partner Romey Wagner they established the Project to help bring life giving water for their Maasai sisters and brothers.

Phase one is to drill up to 980 feet deep for water, and phase two is to install a 12-mile water distribution system. Completion will bring safe clean drinking water to about 5000 Maasai and about 56,000 head of livestock. The Maasai "had no way to fund this," Don said, "so we put our heads together to see if we could help raise money to drill this hole for them."

As of July 2007, about \$50,000 out of a needed \$112,000 has already been raised and the passion still continues. An online tax deductible contribution can be made through the *Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin*: go to www.cfncw.org and click on to the website's "piggy bank." Then click on "J-L" and select Kenya Water Project.

■ Don Ryder is a member of St. James Fraternity in Wausau. He gave the Kenya Water Project presentation at the LaVerna Regional Chapter, June 2007. Don will return to Kenya in January 2008.

Editor's Notes: by Ed Boss, SFO

I like to introduce myself as your new *LaVerna Vision* editor following the fine works of Jean Platz. During our June 2007 Chapter, Jean supplied me with her typed and hand written notes, verbal instructions, and writing experiences. In the mixture of business, typesetting logistic details and tid-bits of interesting news stories, I began to understand the culture of the *Vision* newsletter. Before passing on her dedicated years as editor, she smiled, brought a twinkle to her eye, and said, "good luck, Ed, it's all yours now."

And so, here I am...at your service. In the *LaVerna Vision* summer edition, I hope you got the chance to read articles about your Franciscan brothers and sisters' thoughts, works and dreams.

Their spirit and good works reach out to you from LaVerna regional, national and across the world. In addition, I want to thank the contributing *Vision* writers, SFO photographer Bob Henning, and Don Ryder. Their journey and dreams share news and communication. Ken Beattie, who normally writes *Minister's Thoughts*, was unable to add his article because of illness. Add Ken to your daily prayers.

Finally, a favor to ask: don't forget to send your news and views to the *LaVerna Vision*.

Pax et Bonum.

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COMING EVENTS

August 2	St. James Fraternity – Wausau Jubilee House cook-out
August 25	Executive Council Meeting at Green Bay
August 29	On going formation study of <i>Catch the Spirit of Francis and Clare</i> (every fourth Sunday at St. Josaphat Basilica Parish House, Milwaukee)
September 28 – 30	Franciscan Retreat St. Anthony Retreat Center, Marathon
September 28 – 30	Annual fraternity retreat: St. Paschal Baylon Racine
October 3	Transitus Service, St. Anthony Fraternity, Marathon
October 9	Pastoral & Fraternal Visitation, St. James in Wausau
October 16	Visitation at St. John Neumann's Fraternity in Rhinelander
October 26 – 28	Executive Council Meeting at Marywood