



# LAVERNA VISION

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## *A Christmas Blessing*

*"...Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come adore, on bended knee,  
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King"*

## LA VERNA REGION

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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

## Ministers Views:

Greetings to each of you. I pray you were able to enjoy this past summer and now the beautiful colors of fall. It's like looking at a great masterpiece: the green of summer but more so the colors of the fall change. God is good in giving us such beauty.

Having just returned from the National Fraternity Chapter, I am so excited with all that has occurred throughout the US with our fellow Franciscans. There are so many great things that have occurred but also a great many things that will be coming up next year. I would like to spend a little time telling you about them – but I feel there is something most vital to our survival as a Franciscan Family here in La Verna that first needs your attention.

As you most likely know, many of our fraternities have had elections this past year and pray for your cooperation with the new council members. It is good to hear from our council members about the activity that took place with each fraternity. There are so many things that each of us can and should do for the life of our local family of Franciscans.

As Region Fraternity, each of us is called to action by doing our part. Each of us has a responsibility to their local fraternity, Regional Fraternity, as well as the National and so on. We are called to serve each other in the way that our Lord Jesus Christ called the Apostles and the first Christians into to service to the Church.

So many times we will hear ourselves say – not me, I don't know enough, not me -- I don't have the time, not me -- I did my part, and so on and on it is said. Do we really stop and listen to the Holy Spirit calling us? What is our response to that call? How are we doing our part as members of the Family? The need is now and we are to respond in action now!

Service is our way of life – there are many ways this service can be carried out. Look around and see – how do others respond to this call? We should remember all those who have inspired us from the past – so many of them we recognize as leaders, saints, great people in our Franciscan Order as well as our Catholic Church; they all have lives of service to each other in their community.

We too can and should do our part in service to each other. This coming year is our year for elections to Regional Council. Are you being called to serve? Do we see members in our local fraternities who can serve on the Regional Council? Do we take the step and ask them to serve? Do we give them the support needed to serve? Do we respond to the call to serve by saying yes?

Place ourselves in the Grace of the Holy Spirit and He will guide us. Do we each take the time to pray and respond to this call from the Holy Spirit? Do we place our trust that He will come to our aid whenever we need it?

Mary Jane Henning is serving as the chairperson for the LaVerna region nominations committees. When a call comes from Mary Jane requesting your service on the next regional council, how will you respond? Yes, I would be honored to serve!

As we pray for you, please remember in your daily prayers those who are able and willing to serve our Region at our Chapter of Elections in June 2008.

*Peace and All Good,*

Ken Beattie T



## REFLECTIONS

Regional Spiritual Assistant  
Lester Bach OFM Cap

### REPEAT

*If secular Franciscans put their Franciscan lives in second or third or fourth place in their lives, our Franciscan Order is in jeopardy. We cannot continue with half-hearted commitments. Profession in the SFO requires that the SFO is the primary choice in the lives of Secular Franciscans. Though there may be times when this does not apply - it remains a primary commitment.*

La Verna Vision - Spring 2007

**COMMENT:** Franciscans choose SFO commitments in preference to other commitments. We are NOT just another parish organization nor a once-a-month commitment. Profession calls us to service of the SFO, the Church and the world for each day of our lives. The SFO Rule points out ways in which we serve the Church and the world.

Total commitment is what we are about. Indifference, ignorance of the Rule and Constitutions, laziness, or easy excuses are NOT acceptable reasons for a lack of faithfulness to the SFO way of life embraced at profession.

Of course there are times when attending gatherings will be difficult or impossible. Absence then makes sense. No one expects the impossible. But Franciscans are to bring Francis' spirit to the Church and the world. We continually deepen our commitment. We bring our gifts, ideas, time, financial resources, and prayerfulness to contribute to fraternity life. Recognizing the call to conversion (Rule #7) makes it obvious that we readily offer one another the help, support and sharing that will keep us faithful to our profession.

Every secular Franciscan, even those who are legitimately excused from gatherings, contribute what they can to fraternity life. Shut-ins, those with chronic illness, those living in nursing homes and others may be unable to attend gatherings. *As they are able*, the SFO depends on their prayer, their interest, their readiness to respond and their contributions both personal and financial.

Local councils take special care of excused members. Local councils take special care of newly professed members. *The fraternity has the*

*duty to give special attention to the formation of the newly professed ... to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging.* (Constitutions - Article 44.2) Local councils make special efforts to create informative, helpful and prayerful regular gatherings.

All SFO members are expected to become familiar with the SFO Constitutions and our National statutes. Frequently one or the other has answers to problems that may arise. Service to the fraternity is helped by knowing these basic Franciscan documents.

### IN ADDITION!

To be a Secular Franciscan in the spirit of the Rule of 1978 requires us to delete some of the things we followed and practiced before 1978. We are human and tend to stick with what we know. New directions, fresh ideas, different practices are not easily embraced. All of us need to recognize the personal ideas, practices and perceptions that fit the Rule of 1978 and those that do not.

Each of us has a personal responsibility to change whatever hinders living the 1978 Rule. We don't keep things *because we always did it this way!* We delete hindrances in order to create room for what the Holy Spirit gives us in the Rule of 1978. It doesn't take a genius to know that change is not something sudden and wonderful. It takes time, work, prayer, study, experience, dialogue and a good dose of humility to embrace the newness being given us by the Holy Spirit.

I rejoice that you continue to enrich your ways of Franciscan living. I rely on your prayerfulness and offer you mine in return. Together we are called to bring a Franciscan flavor to the Church and the world. To do so we help one another to understand what we have professed and find practical ways to show it. Our integrity and faithfulness are God-given. We are never alone but challenged by the Spirit to deeper faithfulness.

*With this in mind we pray for you always, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and that his power may bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every act inspired by faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

**WE ARE CALLED TO BE WITNESSES, NOT LAWYERS OR JUDGES.**

## ECOLOGY: AN INTERVIEW WITH JUDY

*I was asked to do an article on our LaVerna Vision webmaster, Judy Stouffer. Since many of us have seen her work from a distance but most of us don't know her as a person, I thought I'd take a look into her life. This is a glimpse into the person we call Judy Stouffer who serves to try to keep our website current.*

by Peter J. Bekkers, SFO.

Q. Judy, Where were you born?

A. Rochester, Michigan, where I lived until I went to college.

Q. Where were you educated?

A. I received my B.S. from Michigan State University, earning the Trustees' Award for second highest GPA in my graduating class, then went on to obtain a Master of Science degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I'm a professional researcher and specialize in experimental design and statistical analysis for scientific studies. I have conducted studies for and provided research and expertise to major universities, non-profit organizations, and Fortune 500 companies for over twenty-five years.

Q. How long have you lived in the Fox Valley?

A. Twenty-two years.

Q. How did you become disabled?

A. I became disabled after a number of exposures to commonly used toxic chemicals, primarily pesticides.

Q. How did you become interested in ecology?

A. I've always been fascinated by the intricacy and beauty of creation, from quarks to quacking ducks!

Q. How did you and Michael meet?

A. Ah, now that's a tale! I met Michael when he came to visit his cousin (my college roommate), and he couldn't get in to see her, as the doorbell was broken and the building had a security lock.

So he climbed two stories up the face of the building and knocked on our patio door so he could visit anyways! My roommate assured me that we didn't need to call the police, that the

crazy athlete on our balcony really was her first cousin, and let him in.

Michael and I went out on our first date the very next day.



Judy Stouffer, SFO

Q. How long have you two been married?

A. Twenty-seven years.

Q. What is your background in computers?

A. My minors on my master's degree are statistics and computer science. At the time I became disabled, I was the Director of AAL's strategic information systems (computer) planning unit within their data processing division. So I've been working with computer systems, big and small, since the 1970s, when a disk drive was the size of a washing machine! Nowadays, I use special braces on my hands and voice activated software to run my computer.

Continued on next page

Q. What are your goals for the future?

A. I want to help shape a future where all of us, especially children, are safe from exposures to toxic chemicals. I currently devote my energy and expertise to this as my health permits. And - I'd love to get my just-finished novel published, once I figure out how to get a good agent who will take on an author who can't travel or attend book signings!

Q. How did you get involved in the SFO?

A. We were invited by friends to join an inquirers and formation group, and knew by the end of the first session that we wanted to become Secular Franciscans.

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## SFO NEWS NOTES

### REGIONAL

#### "...Now and at the Hour of Our Death" - A Franciscan Perspective

St. Paschal Baylon fraternity presented a five-part production which explored the sacred moments in Francis and Clare's life and re-examined their perception for fraternal and personal end of life decisions. The sessions blended in with St. Paschal Baylon's annual retreat held at the Dominican Sisters Siena Center in Racine, WI, from September 28 – 30. Secular Franciscans from the S.E. Wisconsin district attended this retreat.



***"Secular Franciscans should create in their fraternities a climate of faith and hope so that "Sister Death" may be regarded as a passage to the Father, and all may prepare...with serenity."***

SFO Constitution, Article 27

As we have struggled to identify the 'right' way to die, the reality is that there is no right way, said Karen Nehls, SFO. Karen's opening presentation talked about the spiritual concerns related to

end of life issues, such as fear, reconciliation, the welfare of those left behind, and integrity issues. Karen said that each person has their own path and our role is to companion them. We can companion best when we listen and ask the 'right' questions.

#### **FIVE TASKS OF THE DYING**

For family/ friends. Karen talked about the five important concerns to think about when someone you know is about to die: 1) Be able to say, "I am sorry if I hurt you in any way." 2) Be able to say, "I forgive..." 3) To be able to say, "I thank you for all that you have done for me and what you have taught me." 4) Share the feelings in your heart: "I love you" "you are a treasure" "I will miss you." 5) To be able to say "Good bye" "I will be OK because you have taught me well."

Each session throughout the retreat provided guiding steps in legal preparations such power of attorney (POA), end of life issues (*do not resuscitate order*); physical and spiritual suffering. How do we face death in our family and ourselves? How do we suddenly discern emergency or modern medical technology, ethics, and funeral arrangements, blended with Franciscan thought?

Jim Carlson spoke on the importance of drawing up an estate will and disability planning. JoAnn Boss continued with discussion on a patients' planning a POA healthcare document and how to honor their final wishes.

## REFLECTIONS ON PAIN AND SUFFERING



The following helped research, create, and write "Now and at the Hour of Our Death" for St. Paschal Baylon's annual retreat: Photo left to right: Ed Boss, SFO, Fr. Linus Kopczewski, OFM, Jim Carlson, SFO, JoAnn Boss, SFO, and Audrey Ricard, SFO. Absent from photo is Karen Nehls, SFO.

Fr. Linus Kopczewski, OFM spoke about the journey of the sacred. In the beginning of our lives, "God's breath is breathed into us, and when we die, that breath returns back to God." He added that suffering can build character but it can also paralyze the human spirit. "We can learn about our mortality," Fr. Linus said, "through suffering and that makes us more dependent on God. The bible say that God feels pain though our rejection of His love for us."

"The book of Romans speaks about the groaning of creation of all living things waiting to be liberated. And this text says that one of God's purposes of the world is for us to live with this kind of reality: we don't know about our future. That's the way God's wants us to live because there are so many

individual things that have to fall into place. So, we live in faith."

After the main talks were presented to the group on Saturday afternoon, small break out stations were set-up in a room where Secular Franciscans stopped and ask questions or discussed their end of life concerns. The individual stations occupied by Secular Franciscans who work professionally in respective legal, hospital or spiritual fields were meant to counsel with members having further questions.

The retreat evaluation reports stated that this type of workshop proved very useful in end of life decision making and funeral arrangements. One Franciscan said that the "Now and at the Hour of Our Death" should be presented to Secular Franciscans in the LaVerna Region at the 2008 Chapter gathering.

Even though the topic may seem a little depressing, death is inescapable and our SFO Rule (19) states we are "*immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death [and] the ultimate encounter with the Father.*" Editor's note: additional presentation support and credit: Bob Witek, SFO, and Deacon Pat Frye.

## BOOK REVIEW The Disciple and The Master,

translated by Fr. Eric Doyle, OFM



**This is a fine study of Francis and his philosophy by St. Bonaventure through a presentation of sermons, which are luckily preserved for our edification.** Bonaventure neatly explains St. Francis through major sermons. The first sermon centers on the Mendicant controversy. Bonaventure

defends Francis as a model of gospel holiness, and establishes the reality of the stigmata against an obvious and open attack. Sermon two opens with the assertion that the Francis' stigmata was God's gift. In the third sermon Bonaventure compares St Francis to Zerubbable an Old Testament figure who leads his people from Babylon and rebuilt the Temple...Francis led people out of the captivity of sin to Christ, and founded a religious order for God's honor.

In the introduction to sermon four, Bonaventure reflects on the qualities of fidelity and wisdom required in the preacher of God's word. Bonaventure then expounds the root of St. Francis' holiness, its' loftiness, its' considerable virtues. Sermon five explains why the word of God must be preached often, and

about St. Francis' humility, lowliness, and purity of heart. The final sermon, by Cardinal Odo of Chateauroux, develops a theological reflection of St. Francis in the light of Trinitarian theology and in the light of selected areas of Christology. This is a fascinating book and required several readings, but I learned quite a bit and enjoyed it immensely. I'm certain that I will read it again...probably several times.

**Editor's note: Book Review**

by Ed Multhauf, SFO, St. Paschal Baylon fraternity – Wind Lake, WI

## FORMATION THOUGHTS

### TOO BUSY

by Jean Platz, SFO Regional Formation Director

Article 7 of our Rule states: ***"Let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel call conversion."*** In our day and age, it seems that everyone is so **"busy."**

We hear this as an excuse for lack of attendance and/ or participation at the monthly meeting, days of reflection, retreats, apostolate, socials, etc.

I wonder if it isn't time to re-evaluate our priorities. In his book *Journey to Daybreak*, Henri Nouwen

writes about the year he left the academic world of Harvard University to live and work with the L'Arch Community: community living with the developmentally disabled. He felt he had to get away from the "busyness" of the university setting. He wrote in his book that we need to be able to attend to the "important" and be willing to delay the "urgent" or let go completely. However, even at L'Arch he was soon "busy."



A Jesuit friend told Henri that was his character defect. The place was not the key to his busyness. Henri Nouwen created the same busyness at L'Arch that he experienced at Harvard.

Maybe it's time to re-evaluate our lives and determine what's "important" and what "urgent" things can be put off or let undone, and birth that radical interior change in which we are called.



## FORMATION NEWS

Theresa Shin, SFO, has not only been instructive in formatting Secular Franciscan education but she has worked into her lessons to continually gather interested students..

Over the years, Theresa traveled from her Racine home to teach formation classes in Chicago. This year she teaches a formation class once a month to Koreans interested in becoming Secular Franciscans at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic church in Milwaukee. Her class recently underwent the Rite of Welcoming Ritual into Inquiry formation on November 11.

St. Paschal Baylon council members and their spiritual assistant have visited the Korean class at St. Mary Magdalen, and the Korean students have in return visited Paschal Baylon for two regular monthly meetings. One goal is joint communication, despite language difficulty, with fraternal, social, and spiritual events. Theresa and the council agreed that her class will profess with St. Paschal Baylon sponsorship.



Photo left to right: back row :Theresa Shin, Rosa Sookhee Han, Catherine Park Bohné, YoungJa Park. absent from photo: Marie Goretti AeKyung Jang

## ON GOING FORMATION NEWS

On October 3rd St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Marquette, Michigan had Transitus ceremony with Fr. Tom Schmied as our Presider, and St. Francis Fraternity guests from Escanaba, MI and two Franciscan Sisters from St. Christopher's parish, where we meet for our monthly gatherings. There were a total of 42 people! That evening we remembered Fr. Schmied in a special way. It was his going-away party as our Spiritual Assistant of 17 years. Marie Bernier, from St. Anthony's fraternity, crocheted a special Stoll with the TAU design for him. It was beautiful. Father Tom is a very humble person and we will miss him. In addition the Rite of Admission for Alexandra Vernie was observed by St. Anthony of Padua members.

**Profession:** St. James Fraternity in Wausau will welcome Greg Zajackowski, Mary Mizwinski, and Marion Schroers into the Secular Franciscan Order on December 11. During their time of study and discernment, they have been an inspiration as they participated in many of the apostolates of the fraternity.

St. Clare Fraternity in Greenfield, WI celebrated Profession of one of their members on July 26, 2007. James Burg was welcomed into the Fraternity. St. Clare Fraternity will celebrate their 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of fraternity establishment in January 2008. A Mass will be celebrated on January 24, 2008, at 8:00 a.m., at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, for the intention of the St. Clare Fraternity. A social gathering will follow the Mass.

## LAVERNA REGIONAL ELECTIONS

*Dear Fraternity Members,*

*As you may know, I'm the nominating committee person for the La Verna Regional elections in May or June of 2008. Over the past few weeks, I have had the wonderful opportunity of talking with many members throughout our La Verna Region. It's been a real joy for me because these people have been great to visit with. I want to thank everyone of them for the time they gave me to address my call. This made the calls much easier to make.*



*This letter is a reminder to you that I'm still in need of more people saying YES to this call. As we know, in order to have an official election, we have to have at least two names for each position. The La Verna Regional council positions on the ballot are: Minister, Vice-Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, and four District Councilors.*

*I'm asking each of you to let the Holy Spirit guide you with your decision. I believe the only way for things to run smoothly, is to let the Holy Spirit do the work. We're only His servants. He'll guide us as to what is best for our regional council; we just have to go*

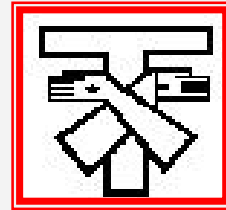


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to Him in prayer. Please trust in Him and be on watch for His message to you any time of day and night.

For your information, our final deadline on getting the ballot finalized is February 18. By then I must have the names of each candidate, along with their biography. This information has to be sent to Ed Boss, our LaVerna Vision editor, before March 1<sup>st</sup> for the April 1<sup>st</sup> publication. Thank you for helping me with this, and I look forward to hearing from you.

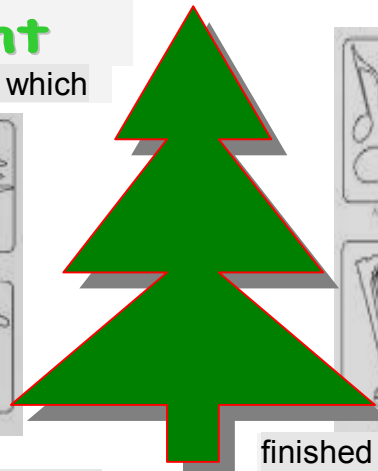
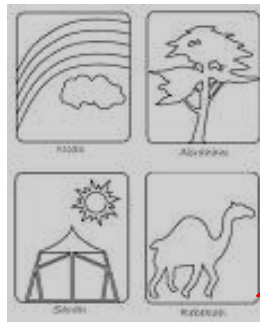
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## HOW DOES THE LAVERNA REGION CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

### Jesse Tree for Advent

Two years ago, we had each person received a small bag which had a 3-inch white paper circle with a hole punched, a piece of ribbon to make a hanger, and a bible passage. On one side of the circle was a name of a person or event in Jesus' heritage, the symbol and several Bible references for that person or event. Using magic markers, each person drew their symbol on the other side of the circle. When everyone was finished drawing, a prayer was said to introduce The Jesse Tree. In sequence, each person came forth, read the Bible passage from their bag, showed their symbol, and placed it on a tree. (We used a 24 inch artificial Christmas tree.) When all of the ornaments were placed on the tree, we sang "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"



finished drawing, a person came forth, read the Bible passage from their bag, showed their symbol, and placed it on a tree. (We used a 24 inch artificial Christmas tree.) When all of the ornaments were placed on the tree, we sang "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Pauline Riedl, St. James Fraternity – Wausau

On December 5th, we will bring wrapped presents to our gathering for an adopted family in our area that we are taking care of for Christmas. This is in support of a program of the Diocese of Marquette.

Mary Jane Henning, Minister, St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Marquette, Michigan

The Christmas tradition of the St. Clare Fraternity has been to celebrate the birth of Christ at our December meeting with Holy Mass, followed by a festive celebration of fellowship, and a light lunch of Christmas gifts from the kitchen.

Kathy Kaczynski - Secretary, St. Clare Fraternity, Milwaukee

## OUR THIRD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Tradition has it that as Francis and the townsfolk prayed before the first living Crèche, Baby Jesus smiled so sweetly that the crowd burst forth in joyous songs of praise to fill the delta below Greccio.



Well, we don't have any mountains near our flatland around Lake Winnebago but we have our own delta, the *Delta Restaurant* ! We will gather there on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM to greet the Christ-child and celebrate His Nativity with good food and jolly fellowship. This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fraternity Christmas Party. At the first we enjoyed Kelly Aschebrook, folk singer, who led us in traditional carols. At the second we were blessed with a short-story drama

written and presented by Members and their children. At this third gathering we will be entertained by a special surprise quartet who will perform for us and guide us through caroling.

As an outreach, we invite prospective SFO candidates and friends to this party. Last year our former Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Silas, and our Regional Councilor, Jim Carlson joined in the festivities. This year we hope to have as many as six "interested" persons along with Fr. Art Cooney, Spiritual Assistant, and honored guests.

Don Derozier, SFO, Minister, Sacred Heart Fraternity, Oshkosh

## ADVENT FRANCISCAN STYLE !

At one time our St. Josaphat's Fraternity met in the lower church of the Basilica. We had very little storage space.....as a result during Advent we held a "living Advent wreath." Four people would each hold a candle and as each one read a prayer that reflected one of the four weeks of Advent.....the candles were lit.

In the past, St. Josaphat's Fraternity celebrated "Little Christmas" in January around the feast of the Epiphany. This is a Conventual Franciscan tradition. During this celebration, each person is given the name of a saint for the coming year, a bible quote and a little gift. Some years, members then plan a report on the saint whose name they received. Sylvia Marmurowicz, St. Josaphat Fraternity, Milwaukee.

## WINTER TEACHES ME

by Joyce Rupp

*Winter teaches me patience:*

*Walk carefully on icy sidewalks*

*Take more time to put on layers of clothes.*

*Winter strengthens my courage:*

*Go out into windy, freezing air.*

*Risk traveling on snowy roads.*



*The Circle of Life* copyright 2005 by Joyce Rupp.

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Editor's note: illustrator Anna Gragnani recently celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## REGIONAL CALENDAR FOR SPRING/ SUMMER 2008

- **January** = NAFRA will hold a **Formation Work Shop** in Florida for Regional Ministers and Regional Formation Directors.
- **February 2<sup>nd</sup>** **Regional Council Meeting** in Green Bay
- **March 29<sup>th</sup>** = **South East District Gathering**  
at St Joseph's Convent, 27<sup>th</sup> and Greenfield in Milwaukee
- **April 5<sup>th</sup>** = **Fox Valley District Gathering**  
In Manitowoc – look for upcoming flyer for details
- **APRIL 19<sup>th</sup>** = **Central Wisconsin District Gathering**  
At Stevens Point – look for upcoming flyer for details
- **MAY 3<sup>rd</sup>** **Regional Council Meeting** in Green Bay
- **JUNE 20-22<sup>nd</sup>** - **Regional Chapter of Elections**  
In Marathon, WI at St Anthony Retreat Center.  
(All members are encouraged to attend along with expected Fraternity Ministers.) Watch for details and registration forms.

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### PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL

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](mailto:beatiesfo@aol.com), if any questions

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