

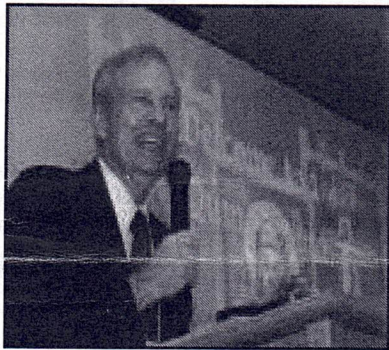


The LaVerna Vision

Growing Fraternity ❖ SUMMER 2012

2012 QUINQUENNIAL WHY FRANCIS? CLAIM THE GIFT

CHICAGO – The journey to the 2012 Quinquennial Congress began for some in Spain or Mexico City or Canada. For others it started in Brooklyn, San Francisco, Green Bay, and New Orleans. Across the continents and nations, over 500 people traveled by plane, train, car, and even foot to learn what gifts they can offer and seek what Franciscan gift they may claim to bring forth in the world.



National Minister Deacon Tom Bello

On July 3 of the five-day Congress, National Minister Tom Bello opened the Secular Franciscan Order USA Quinquennial XVIII at the Holiday Inn, Chicago North Shore. Bello said that he had three simple prayers for the men and women assembled in the grand ballroom. The first is that everybody knows that we are family. "There are no strangers here," Bello said. Second, is to ponder "what it means to be a Secular Franciscan in the United States in 2012 ... and "where do we go from here, what is our future?" And his third prayer is to remember, "we are all brothers and sisters of penance," so as to be spirit-filled during the "Q" and in daily conversion.

General Minister Encarnita del Pozo, who traveled from Spain and was introduced to a rousing standing ovation, said she was struck by the

theme of the Quinquennial, "Why Francis? Claim the Gift." It hit her as an "insistent call" for a "supernatural gift," to ask for it repeatedly. It's not unlike the way Francis responded "to the supernatural love God gave to him." Noting that the Congress would be a journey for herself as well as everyone else, she prayed, "we all perceive in ourselves the gift God is offering us."

Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, who gave three separate power point presentations titled, "Why Francis? Claim Gift," "Who are you, Lord (Franciscan view)," and "Human Person as Sacrament."

True poverty, Sr. Delio said is "rooted in the fact that we (and creation) ultimately do not control our existence. We come from God and belong to God." Material poverty is only the first not final step toward true poverty, she said. In her most recent book titled *Compassion—Living in the Spirit of St. Francis*, Delio writes "we recognize that everything we have, including our lives, is a gift [from God]. Without material poverty, true poverty is difficult to nurture. But without true poverty, material poverty is absurd."



Sr. Ilia Delio, O.S.F.

In her "Human Person as Sacrament" presentation, Sr. Ilia said that each being "within the created order already possess a dignity gifted by the loving creator with sanctity beyond

Please see Quinquennial, page 5

LaVerna Region Chapter

A well-formed and Informative meeting that brought renewal to local ministers and their fraternities

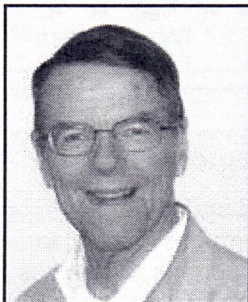
MARATHON, WI—The June 22 – 24 LaVerna Regional Chapter, held at the St. Anthony Spirituality Center, engaged local fraternity ministers, delegates, and observers to participate in discussions that outlines the need for OFS spiritual assistants, JPIC awareness, formation, and increase vocations.

On Friday evening, the Chapter started when members gathered at the Spirituality Center for dinner, followed by Liturgy of the Hours in chapel. Later in the evening, social hour gave Franciscans time to relax, enjoy and become reacquainted.

Saturday morning chapel included a memorial service intended for the twenty-six brothers and sisters from local LaVerna fraternities who died in 2011 -2012. The commemorative was shared prayer and, when each name of the deceased was announced, their local minister or delegate picked up a symbolic yellow or white carnation flower and stood it up in a vase.

Later in the afternoon, regional formation team member JoAnn Boss asked the group to reflect on their best and least best reviews of the recently distributed FUN formation manual. All local LaVerna formation directors received a copy of the newly implemented FUN manual, which was distributed at the October 2011 special gathering, held at St. Peter's Church in Stevens Point. It has been eight months since the Stevens Point meeting, and the local ministers gave their report saying that the best forms

Please see Chapter 2012, page 6



“CLAIM THE GIFT”

The Focus of Quinquennial Congress XVIII held July 3-8 at the Holiday Inn, Chicago North Shore and attended by over 500

Franciscans was “Why Francis? Claim the Gift.”

On Saturday evening, Secular Franciscan National Minister Tom Bello presented a summary of small group discussions and a few gifts. I felt honored to accept one on behalf of St. Paschal Baylon fraternity who received a gift for having the most members present by a fraternity. The LaVerna region was second for members attending per region [see photo on page 5]. Thank you to all—for a wonderful response—and a sign of a “gifted” region.

Sr. Ilia Delio’s three talks set forth the gift of Franciscan spirituality, and as Franciscans, our gifted relationship to God. I will always cherish the blessing she offered me in signing her book *Simply Bonaventure*. Ed Shirley, OFS, then offered many helpful gifts on deepening that relationship with God—including waves of laughter on his inept first-time ever power point presentation. Br. Bill Short’s gift was a sweeping 800-year historical review of the inter-relationships of the Franciscan family, again filled the audience with the gift of much laughter. Daily Mass was our spiritual gift of the highest magnitude. Members from our LaVerna region gifted the choir,

and Fr. Bach gifted us by presiding at Mass on Friday. After Mass, he received gifts and thanks for his 12 years’ service as one of NAFRA’s Spiritual Assistants. Veteran NAFRA leaders Pat Brandwein-Ball and Ann Mulqueen asked us to vision under our rule who we are and what our presence is or should be in the world. CIOFS General Minister, Encarnacion del Pozo, our special gift, gave us a greater world perspective.

Each day after the main talks, we broke into “Q fraternities,” which included over 60 small groups to discuss questions. Each Q fraternity was asked to pray on “What is our Gift, What is God asking of us in the 21st Century?” Each of the small groups came up with answers to the question, and then we met and reduced them into ten composite suggestions. National Minister Tom Bello further distilled our work, our gift, into three basic concepts: 1) Rebuilding and building bridges (in fraternity, church, world) and better communication 2) Better formation at all levels 3) Be who we are in all we do. “Be better children of the Gospel, making Christ ever-present in the world.”

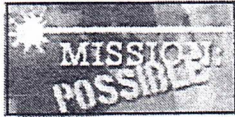
Of course, conversations with our brothers and sisters at meals and entertainment performed by brothers and sisters in the evenings were also important gifts. Please check out www.quinquennial.org for many event photos and many more details.

Peace and Good.

Jim Carlson, Regional Minister

Reflections

Regional Spiritual Assistant - Lester Bach OFM Cap
La Verna OFS Region



No Time to loiter!

In a world that faces so many problems concerning the actions of human beings, Franciscans are not going to be able to be un-involved. With the marvelous gift of our vocation to the Franciscan way of life, we continue to do what we can to bring peace to our world (...ceaselessly - OFS Rule - Article 19)

Moreover, we will continue to learn new ways of loving people. The Holy Spirit is with us to make it possible!



The Spirit is also the energy which transforms the heart of the ecclesial community, so that it becomes a witness before the world to the love of the Father, who wishes to make humanity a single family in his Son.

God is Love - Benedict XVI
Paragraph 19

... to say that we love God becomes a lie if we are closed to our neighbor or hate him altogether. ... closing our eyes to our neighbor also blinds us to God.

Ibid - Paragraph 16

The Spirit, in fact, is that interior power which harmonizes their hearts with Christ's heart and moves them to love their brethren as Christ loved them, when he bent down to wash the feet of the disciples. ... (John 13:3-5)

Ibid - Paragraph 19

Regional Spiritual Assistants

Over time most things change. That is normal in the world of nature and happens as well in human situations. These changes are normal and are accepted as such even when it may be a struggle to deal with new situations. Such is the case of the Regional Spiritual Assistant to La Verna Region. My 12 year term is coming to an end and we (REC) are taking time to recommend people to be appointed as Regional spiritual assistants. For practical reasons we will recommend two seculars to become co-regional assistants - one serving fraternities in the southern area of La Verna and the other serving fraternities in the northern area of La Verna. These two seculars will take the training program with Fr. Lester to help them "learn the ropes." For that reason Fr. Lester may still perform some of the ministries of Regional Spiritual Assistant during this training period. Please welcome your new servants who help to connect the 1st Order Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order to the La Verna Region. We look forward to a seamless change with the service of two co-spiritual assistants representing the Capuchins. As St. Paul often wrote - "Welcome them as you would welcome me."

Vocation Tips

At our recent La Verna chapter at St. Anthony's in Marathon we had fine input about a variety of ways to discover vocations the Holy Spirit gives to people. Please work together with your local council and minister. It is an important part of your commitment to the OFS. Don't hesitate to invite others as Jesus invited some of his disciples to: *Come and See!* Inviting new people is the lifeline to continue the presence of secular Franciscan fraternities in the region.

Conversations

We spent several sessions at our recent regional chapter on ways and means to achieve good communication among fraternity members and with newcomers to our fraternities. I encourage you to help implement these tools to achieve good conversations among ourselves and with others who are not OFS members. Even though some of us may be bashful or introverts or whatever, it is always possible to learn how to share our personal stories or ideas in ways that build fraternity life and relationships. If this seems difficult, don't worry. Do what you can (even if you haven't done so before). We'll get to know each other better and put our ideas on the table to build vibrant fraternity life. I trust that secular Franciscans will do whatever is needed to achieve vibrant fraternity life. Change is a natural part of that process.

+++

If I have no contact whatsoever with God in my life, then I cannot see in the other anything more than the other, and I am incapable of seeing in him the image of God. But if in my life, I fail completely to heed others, solely out of a desire to be "devout" and to perform "my religious duties," then my relationship with God will also grow arid, and it becomes merely "proper," but loveless. ... Only if I serve my neighbor can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me.

(Fraternity members are "neighbors" too!)
Deus Caritas Est (*God is Love*) - Benedict XVI - Paragraph 18



OUR ENVIRONMENT

Pest Control, Franciscan Style

by Judy Stouffer, OFS

During the summers, especially when it's been so hot and humid, I always enjoy seeing the local bats flitter over as they emerge at dusk to hunt mosquitoes. A single little brown bat can eat 400 mosquitoes an hour, which puts a sizeable dent in the local population of blood-sucking skeeters. But bats aren't the only critters that can help control "pests" that cause problems when they bite us or move in where they shouldn't be. Lots of other wild creatures are great at "pest control" and can easily co-exist with us, often even in urban settings, with a little encouragement. Here's a few of my favorites.



Toads are master fly catchers, and only need a small protected area in a yard that stays shaded and moist to call home. A small flowerpot, with a hole knocked in its side, placed upside down in a shady spot, can become a nice toad abode. The number of flies a toad will eat in its lifetime equals many, many times its own weight, as toads live a surprisingly long life--three decades or more!

While noisy, domesticated Guinea hens are the superstars at tick control. These chicken-sized fowl, originally from Africa, are so good at finding and eating even the tiniest of ticks that they're being used in areas in the east coast programs to help eradicate Lyme disease. They're a great addition for any farm that can keep poultry and wants to eliminate ticks.

Barn owls, rarely found in urban settings, are stellar mousers, and a welcome addition to any farm. Barn owls eat mice, voles, pocket gophers, and shrews. They will rarely eat small birds, making them effective rodent predators that don't adversely impact local song bird populations the way domestic cats do. A nesting pair of barn owls can catch as many as 1,000 mice a year!

Kestrels, small hawks that will nest inside city parks if encouraged, are also excellent mousers. Given a proper nesting box, a pair of kestrels will take up residence within noisy urban settings and happily hunt mice. Kestrels are so effective at rodent control that cities such as Green Bay are establishing kestrel nesting programs in preference to hiring exterminators for parks like Bay Beach Amusement Park, where mouse populations have skyrocketed.

Canada Geese have become an urban pest, taking over local ponds in many municipalities. Businesses are experimenting with using swans to fight the battle against the burgeoning population of geese. In addition to adding their majestic beauty to any locale, a pair of domesticated nesting swans won't tolerate wild geese or ducks near "their" pond. While the swans will need wintering over in our snowy climates at a friendly farm once the water freezes, they're gaining popularity as businesses employ swans to patrol their ponds and establish a nature-based "zero tolerance" policy towards urbanized geese.

Peregrine Falcons, which are slowly making a comeback from near-extinction in the United States, are a city manager's best friend when it comes to controlling pigeons. Peregrines will live in the middle of the largest cities, given an inviting nesting platform. They are fierce hunters, and absolutely amazing flyers, the fastest animal on earth.



Bats, toads, guinea hens, barn owls, kestrels, swans and Peregrine Falcons. What an amazing collection of wild helpers, just a few of the wondrous creatures we have all around us!

(copyright © 2012 Judy Stouffer, B.S., M.S., SFO. All rights reserved)

our ability to understand.” The primary focus of our life is not prayer or work but the human person, she said. Her example was Admonition XIV: “there are many who apply themselves insistently to prayers and good deeds ... but are scandalized and quickly roused to anger by a single word which seems injurious to their person ... these people are not poor in spirit.”

Sr. Ilia Delio is a writer in the Franciscan intellectual tradition and recognized spiritual voice of Catholic Christian faith. She is senior fellow at Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University, author of numerous books, and winner of two Catholic Press Book Awards in 2009.

SECULAR FRANCISCAN HISTORY WHO WE ARE

Brother Bill Short, an OFM Franciscan who has taught at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, CA presented examples of Secular Franciscan history and women lay

communities that eventually evolved into religious communities still in existence today. These men and women took their inspiration from Francis and Clare and saintly Third Order members like St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Male religious communities rose similarly. A major player was what was to become known as the Third Order Regular (TOR) friars.

The Third Order history is full with a combination of religious, secular and something-in-between; and the secular and something-in-between had profound impact on society through their front-line apostolic works (especially among the poor and sick). Seculars (known as brothers and sisters of penance) tried to live the Gospel while living at home with their families and going to work. Some, especially women, tried living in lay communities, and were independent, which brought suspicion because they were not under male authority, so many adopted the Third Order Rule to avoid persecution.

The Third Order tertiaries (which today

comprise the Secular Franciscan Order) went through periods of growth and decline over the centuries. The Great Plague of 1349 decimated fraternities, whose members were usually in the forefront of caring for the sick and burying the dead.

Later, several popes encouraged the spread of the Third Order, thinking it would help revitalize the church. However, while lay membership swelled, and at one point membership was considered “chic” for the upper classes, formation wasn’t always what it should have been, Brother Bill said.

For more OFS history, please check out Br. Bill Short’s power point presentation titled, “Secular Franciscan History” at www.quinquennial.org.

Also listed on the same website are the power point presentations and photos from major speakers and attendants at the 2012 Quinquennial Congress, including Sr. Ilia Delio.



LaVerna Region Franciscans at the XVIII Quinquennial Congress

Front row: left to right: Sharon Dale, Jim Carlson, Diane Gray, Laurel Swencki, Pauline Riedl, Kelley Reis. Second row: l to r: Robin Pope, Carol Nickasch, Beth Kuczkowski, Helene Brown, Carol Bekkers, Marie Hince, Linda Faust. Third row: l to r: Joanne Guzik, JoAnn Boss, Bonnie Mayer, Audrey Ricard, Fr. Jerome Wolbert, Valeria Knier, Sr. Ann Kelley, Francine Fosselman, Margaret Zold, Karen Juntikka, Lee Ann Niebuhr, Fr. Lester Bach. Fourth row: l to r: Ed Boss, Fr. Jerry Schroeder, Cathy Sutliff, Rodney Knier, Lora Hainy, Joe Kuczkowski, Peter Bekkers, Jolie Zimmer, Richard Lapesquer, Ted Faust. Ken Beattie, OFS, missing from group photo.

Photo by Norman Mosk, OFS, Mother Cabrini Region

of the FUN manual were its Scripture references, the depth of study and context put into making the manual, lesson plans, the manual's world-wide usage in all fraternities, how the manual complements many local formation class assignments, study books, and establishes reflective questions.

One unanimous least best review comment described the physical bulk of the large, three-ring binder FUN manual: it looks intimidating to most formation directors. Others complained that the manual was written on a 6-grade level, and its reading depth may make lesson plans difficult for students who hold a theology or pastoral education. Some thought there was too much information to read, learn, and understand.

Most ministers and delegates gave positive suggestions on the list of Franciscan resources. The resource subjects cover a wide-range of formation and Church/Franciscan historical topics, and the references may assist ongoing formation projects, the ministers said. Such current resources contain You -Tube, music recordings, and power point programs, which can be downloaded onto a computer for large screen video projection.

For example at the meeting, Lizanne Schulrud connected her laptop to a video projector to display the NAFRA formation website page, www.nafraformation.org. This particular site leads to essential Franciscan documents, general OFS constitution, FUN manual links, and most important, formation updates and new Franciscan resources. Another NAFRA formation website link goes to a well-designed and colorful OFS vocation brochure which can be printed and used for recruitment events.

VOCATIONS and VISIONS

Southeastern LaVerna Regional Councilor Ed Boss began his Sunday morning presentations by writing the OFS Rule 12 on the conference whiteboard: *Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.*

Ed said that OFS vocations are the "white elephant in the room," with most LaVerna region fraternities. "We may have interesting ongoing programs, cheerful Franciscan hospitality, lots of formation training manuals, but if we don't have people in formation classes ... then we are all dressed up with no place to go. "We lose the wonderful opportunity to pass on our legacy to the next potential generation of Secular Franciscans," he said. He cited Rule 12 because it puts us in a positive frame of mind ... *witnessing to the good yet to come...because of the vocation they embraced.*

Almost all fraternity ministers talk about the lack of formation students in their fraternity. Most local councils play musical chairs just to keep the fraternity going, but our members are getting older, he stressed, and they are stretched to pull down many fraternal functions at the same time.

Prayer is a very important voice in obtaining vocations, he said. Prayer puts us in direct relationship with Jesus, but there are times when we have to go out and talk with interested people.

"There are Catholics who are right now pondering how they may grow in their spiritual life, and we have to be aware of these people," he said. And there are positive signs. Ed introduced Bill Hammond, minister of Sacred Heart fraternity in Oshkosh, to demonstrate how his fraternity attracted students.

Bill's report to the Chapter explained the carefully put together steps that develop a recruitment process, which attracted twelve people to become interested, nine of which are still attending formation classes at Sacred Heart fraternity. Bill said recruitment requires input from most of the fraternity. The first thing is get parish priest permission to speak from the church pulpit at Mass. Secure dates and ask two volunteers to speak at each of the weekend Masses. After each Mass, have members ready to greet parishioners in the vestibule or the back of the church with posters, brochures, fraternity activity photos, etc.

Bill has put together an easy to read packet that outlines instruction for "Recruitment Sunday." Included in the packet are pulpit dialogue scripts, which outline information about Francis' history and the Secular Franciscans.

The 2012 Chapter members who listened to Bill's talk and then ask further questions about his recruitment packet, broke into applause at the conclusion of his presentation. The feeling in the air was that this may be the "*witnessing to the good yet to come.*"

PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL

We value our life as Secular Franciscans and wish to have our way of living the Gospels continue through future 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 Peter Bekkers, OSF, LaVerna Regional Treasurer, W6855 St. Mary's Dr., Greenville, WI 54942. Telephone number is (920) 757-9027 or email Peter at taxmannatp@gmail.com

Your Franciscan Way of Life and generosity will be remembered for years to come

National OFS



Quinquennial speaker, Pat Brandwein-Ball, OFS

Pat Brandwein-Ball, OFS, took a moment to survey the large hall from the podium and said: "From up here the room is aglow because I see in your eyes the light of God." She stood before the 500 members to discuss the Franciscan Rule and the Order's presence in the world.



Pat reminded attendees, "God wants us" to be holy, which the first part of the Secular Franciscan Rule addresses. "The second part of the Rule talks to us about our presence in the world," which comes out of living the first part of the Rule. The Rule and Constitutions are important documents in the life of the Order. Reading and studying them, and absorbing them internally help shape the Secular Franciscan identity.

"Franciscanism is not something you can put on and take off...", she said. "It's something you live and breathe." How do we get to that point? We're called to be saints, after all. It's in that call we need to take a look at ourselves. What do we need to change within ourselves? Where is God calling us in our lives?" She added: "Jesus came to make things anew. Let us not stand in the way of him making us new... of making the order new." Pointing to the second part of the conference theme, "Claim the Gift," she said "it refers to our vocation" and claiming it is part of answering the question of where God is calling us to be.

She concluded by offering a challenge to "start the journey." Quoting from the book, *Pathways to Re-creating*, she advised that mission statements and waiting for everyone to get on board are not enough. Just start the journey. You can expect failure and ups and down. But just start the journey, and get up and start it again.

Editor's note: Patricia Brandwein-Ball, OFS, is a retreat and spiritual director from Maine who has held a number of leadership positions in the Secular Franciscan Order. She is a former national councilor for the order and former national chair of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission. Also, special thanks go out to photographer and writer Robert Stronach, OFS.

Regional OFS

Fraternity Spiritual Assistant Training Deepens Student's Franciscan Perspective

Jan Tolfa, who is a member of St. Francis fraternity in Escanaba, MI, recently began her spiritual assistant training program in March 2012. The 19-month correspondence course continues between Tolfa and LaVerna Regional Spiritual Assistant Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap, who directs the course. Together, Fr. Bach and Jan are working from the book titled *Franciscan Family Connections*, which develops to train Secular Franciscans to become Spiritual Assistants. Certification for a successfully completed course allows Jan to go on as a continued presence at fraternity meetings, retreats, possible mentoring of future candidates.

Before Jan retired, she was a special education grade school teacher. "All things come together and make sense in my life," Jan said in an interview. "So many things develop into a Franciscan perspective and outlook." Jan has participated as formation instructor with St. Francis fraternity, parish council member, and helped the poor through her church St. Vincent de Paul Society. "When we bring furniture to the needy, I look at these people and see Christ. I know they will change me," she said. When Jan learned that her church was merging with another church, she wasn't upset. Jan said this natural acceptance to events in her life had something to do with her spiritual growing, especially visiting Assisi. In her retirement years, Jan thought she would have to spend much time on countless matters, "but now I want to be humble and follow the Franciscan Way."



Jan Tolfa, OFS

La Verna Regional Fraternity SFO
STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSE
FOR PERIODS ENDED DEC 31, 2011 & 2010

	THIS YEAR Y. T. D. 2011	TOTAL Budget 2011	Budget Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)	LAST YEAR TOTAL 2010
BEGINNING BALANCES:				
REGULAR CHECKING -----	80.89			1,011.47
RETREAT SUBSIDY FUND -----	1,563.31			1,282.76
EDUCATION/TRAINING FUND -----	1,000.00			1,000.00
RETREAT ENDOWMENT FUND CD -----	16,924.15			16,924.15
INVESTMENT SAVINGS CD -----	15,516.96			15,516.96
VISA CREDIT CARD -----	(627.47)			(620.54)
CASH ON HAND -----	(0.00)			-
TOTAL CASH ON HAND & IN BANKS -	34,457.84			35,114.80
REVENUE:				
DONATIONS -----	2,894.65	1,500.00	1394.65	1,508.80
INTEREST INCOME & VISA BONUS -----	368.50	310.00	58.50	65.00
INTEREST ENDOWMENT FUND -----	888.50	888.50	0.00	858.05
SPECIAL MEMORIALS -----	60.00	1,000.00	(940.00)	600.00
CHAPTER -----	395.15	650.00	(254.85)	854.75
FAIR SHARE -----	21,863.00	22,100.00	(237.00)	22,143.25
MISC INCOME -----	589.95	1,000.00	(410.05)	125.00
TOTAL REVENUE -----	27,059.75	27,448.50	(388.75)	26,154.85
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS -----	61,517.59			61,269.65
EXPENSES:				
STIPENDS -----	2,775.00	2,450.00	(325.00)	2,400.00
RENT INCLUDING EQUIPMENT -----	-	50.00	50.00	-
MATERIALS & SUPPLIES -----	1,083.15	650.00	(433.15)	678.40
EDUCATION/TRAINING -----	6,185.32	2,000.00	(4185.32)	-
MEETING ROOM & FACILITIES -----	1,150.00	500.00	(650.00)	1,175.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES -----	134.69	150.00	15.31	155.29
DONATIONS -----	-	250.00	250.00	-
ADMINISTRATIVE EXP -----	1,415.77	900.00	(515.77)	739.65
NEWSLETTER -----	1,818.58	1,707.72	(110.86)	1,823.19
TRAVEL EXP -----	10,138.82	8,998.28	(1140.54)	8,685.30
FAIR SHARE TO NAFRA -----	5,352.00	5,304.00	(48.00)	5,352.00
ANNUAL CHAPTER -----	4,029.65	3,650.00	(379.65)	4,310.68
VISITATION / ELECTION -----	484.11	850.00	365.89	814.80
RETREAT SUBSIDY -----	410.00	888.50	478.50	577.50
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE -----	589.95	100.00	(489.95)	100.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS -----	35,567.04	28,448.50	(7118.54)	26,811.81
GAIN OR (LOSS) FOR PERIOD ---	(8507.29)	(1000.00)	(7507.29)	(656.96)
ENDING BALANCE -----	25,950.55			34,457.84
CURRENT BALANCES:				
REGULAR CHECKING -----	2,217.59			80.89
RETREAT ENDOWMENT FUND (Restricted) -	2,041.81			1,563.31
EDUCATION/TRAINING FUND -----	-			1,000.00
RETREAT ENDOWMENT 5.25% 59 mo CD ** -	16,924.15			16,924.15
US Bank 1.01% CD maturing 5/2/13 ---	4,994.55			15,516.96
VISA CREDIT CARD -----	(690.05)			(627.47)
CASH ON HAND -----	462.50			(0.00)
TOTAL CASH ON HAND & IN BANKS --	25,950.55			34,457.84

**Received for Retreats from St. Francis Of Assisi Fraternity Milwaukee & St John Neumann Fraternity Rhinelander

Note: Misc Income and Misc Expense (\$589.95) is the special collection at District Gatherings for "Chapel Fence Project"

PETER J. BEKKERS, OFS, TREASURER

6/24/2012

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The La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA consists of Eastern ¾ of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. The region geographical area is divided into four districts: Southeast, Central, Fox Valley and Upper Michigan. The La Verna Vision is a communication vehicle with the LaVerna Region, and presents a forum for information and insights that relate to the Secular Franciscan Order way of life.

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No Better Life

By Ellen Jennings, OFS

**"Is there nothing else?" You may say,
While rushing around night and day.
Stop a while - you just might see
You are really running from Me.**

**I wish to speak - you wish to hear;
In you filled-up life, I can't be near.
Push away all clutter you hold
You know my love - you have been told.**

**Know my Word is ever true.
Why do you run? I thought you knew
That I am always there with you
Not some place far, but close to you.**

**So do not fear to sit and rest,
And wait in silence for the best
Of life with Me, which is right now.
I'll fill you with blessings - that is my vow.**

Ellen Jennings is a member of Portiuncula fraternity, Franklin, WI.

**LaVerna Regional Fraternity OFS
APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
FOR 2012 FRANCISCAN RETREAT FEES**

APPLICANT _____ PH # (____) _____ - _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____ / ____ / _____

FRATERNITY: _____ PROFESSION DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

RETREAT LOCATION _____

RETREAT DATE ____ / ____ / ____ FEE \$ _____

IN ORDER FOR YOU TO QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, WE NEED TO HAVE SOME INFORMATION.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN FAMILY LIVING AT HOME _____

TOTAL MONTHLY HOUSHOLD INCOME \$ _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

THESE GUIDELINES WILL HELP US TO DETERMINE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

FAMILY SIZE	MONTHLY INCOME
1	\$ 1,490.00
2	\$ 2,004.00
3	\$ 2,518.00
4	\$ 3,032.00
5	\$ 3,547.00
6	\$ 4,061.00
7	\$ 4,575.00
8	\$ 5,089.00
9	\$ 5,604.00
10	\$ 6,119.00

**RETURN TO: PETER BEKKERS, OFS, W6855 ST. MARYS DR., GREENVILLE, WI 54942
PHONE: (920) 757-9027 E-MAIL: TAXMANNATP@GMAIL.COM**

NOTE: IF FOR SOME REASON YOU CANNOT ATTEND THIS RETREAT, PLEASE RETURN THE ASSISTANCE MONEY TO "LAVERNA REGION OFS"

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

BOOK REVIEW

Francis of Assisi - A New Biography, written by Fr. Augustine Thompson, O.P. Published by Cornell University Press, copyright 2012. Book review by Ed Boss, OFS.

During one of the author's speaking engagements, someone asked him if his book wouldn't seek to discredit St. Francis' existence. Another reader commented during the Fr. Thompson's talk, "You're causing me to doubt everything I know about St. Francis," to which Fr. Thompson replied, "doubt is the beginning of wisdom." Doubt began the forethoughts for the historical research *Francis of Assisi - A New Biography*. Fr. Thompson, Professor of History at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, Berkeley, CA, believed that a good serious narrative and survey biography of the Poverello needs revision. He said there many, many books on the lives of St. Francis, but not a complete scholarly biography.

For example, the Dominican priest's research says that St. Francis only mentions the word "poverty" four times in his many pages of writings, three of which are scripture verses. Francis considered poverty more of a subtle quality than what some earlier biographers and editors like Leone Bracaloni, Francois De Beer, and Regis Armstrong had summarized in their research. Fr. Thompson makes a fresh case that poverty was more a political idea of medieval Franciscans at the time, and Francis' struggle for humility. Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, may concur with Fr. Thompson. During her XVIII Quinquennial presentation in Chicago, she said that poverty is more important internally than externally. For example, obedience, as the fruit of poverty, manifests itself in right relationship with God and community. Sr. Delio wrote that, "without true poverty, material poverty is absurd."

Thompson writes that the nature of the Rule of 1209 was not to be an "order." At that early time, Francis only wanted his group to be followers of the evangelical life, according to the biblical texts revealed to him. And the author disagrees with biographer Francois De Beer who wrote in 1963 that Francis wanted to start a "rule" on the way back from his trip from Innocent III in Rome. Pope Innocent seems to be the origin of the Francis' mission to preach the gospel, not Francis.

For ease of reading, the Fr. Thompson's biography is presented in the first 141 pages of the book without any discursive side notes on alternate views of the incidents described. Those discussions are all grouped together in what amounts to a second half of the book – end notes that are far more than a simple listing of sources, but fascinating discussions of those sources, their limitations and perspectives, and alternate views. It's a very helpful arrangement.

"As I have worked on this biography," Fr. Thompson writes in his notes, "my respect for Francis and his vision has increased, and I hope this book will speak to modern people and that the Francis I have come to know will have something to say to them today."

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Calendar of Events: Spring/Summer 2012

August 10/11 St. Clare's 800th anniversary celebration. St. Clare's Transitus to be held on the Cardinal Stritch University, St. Clare Center, Milwaukee, WI.

September 28-30 Franciscan Living Retreat: "The Perfect Joy of Francis." Presented by Fr. Dan Crosby, OFM Cap and Sr. Ann Marie Lom, OSF. To make reservations, contact St. Anthony Spirituality Center, 300 East 4th St., Marathon, WI 54448, phone: (715) 443-2236, email: info@sarcenter.com; website: www.sarcenter.com. Cost: \$165 (there is a fee discount if you register before August 28). Come and rest.

October 3 Sacred Heart Fraternity in Oshkosh is putting on a short Franciscan play about the Transitus of Francis on Wednesday at 7:00 P.M. at the Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, St. Peter site, 435 High Ave. Oshkosh, in the narthex. There will be refreshments served, following the play. All are invited.

February 26 – March 5, 2013, Lenten Pilgrimage to La Sagrada Familia. The Sagrada Familia (Holy Family) is the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's Sister Parish in the Dominican Republic. The parish of Sagrada Familia is located in the province of Azua in the southwest corner of the Dominican Republic. Sabana Yegua is the largest town in the region; this is where the parish center is located, with the main church and rectory as well as sewing and cosmetology centers; computer lab; and a health center with a clinic, pharmacy, and laboratory.

The all-inclusive trip fee of around \$1,800.00 covers air and ground transportation, programs, guides, translation service, communal reflection and retreat, and simple meals and accommodations. For general information, tentative itinerary and application go to: <http://www.archmil.org/Resources/2012-Lenten-Pilgrimage-Sagrada-Familia.htm> . or, contact information name: Elizabeth Howayecke, phone:414-758-2283, e-mail: howayecke@archmil.org