



The LaVerna Vision

Merry Franciscan Christmas

Growing Fraternity ❖ WINTER 2011- 2012

FUN formation training begins with LaVerna Region fraternity councils

Secular Franciscans say the new manual will strengthen fraternity vocations and formation training

Stevens Point – Sixty-four LaVerna Region council members representing all Wisconsin and Upper Michigan local fraternities gathered at St. Peter’s Church in Stevens Point on October 29 to begin the FUN manual training and workshop.

The *For Up to Now* (FUN) manual, put together by the National Formation Commission, will present study materials for all local fraternity formation directors.

Jeff Gumz, LaVerna Regional Vice Minister, opened the SFO workshop and welcomed all local fraternity council members. He read Fr. Lester Bach’s letter addressing the FUN manual: “It is vitally important for the future of the SFO that we develop solid training programs for newcomers. Please remember [to] use it for your own preparation for formation sessions. In addition, the book that is recommended for use by the newcomers is *The Franciscan Journey*. It is the most up-to-date formation book that we have at the present time. It is recommended for use in initial formation by all the fraternities of the region.”

Pauline Riedl, LaVerna Region formation team member, gave assembly instructions on the FUN manual.

HOW TO BUILD A FUN MANUAL

At each workshop conference table, council members hand assembled FUN documents sections, chapter tabs, and lesson plans inserts. The morning workshop agenda moved in a Franciscan team spirit, which

“This day revealed an aspect of our Franciscan Charism — we all cooperated to accomplish the binders.”

Formation Training Meeting Evaluation Report

helped the SFOs to insert FUN text chapters into their personal three-ring binders. In addition, the hands on approach help educate each council member learn about the



THE FUN MANUAL ASSEMBLY LINE

l to r: Jim Burg, St. Clare Fraternity, Greenfield; Carol Nickasch, St. Josaphat Fraternity, Milwaukee; Ed Boss, Laurel Swencki, and Audrey Ricard, St Paschal Baylon Fraternity, Wind Lake.

general listing contents of the manual.

Once assembled, each local fraternity formation director was asked to take their three-ring binder home, study its contents, and begin to implement the FUN material into fraternal life.

INSIDE THE FUN MANUAL

Text chapters cover Church and SFO history, formation guidelines on Orientation, Inquiry, Candidacy, Profession, JPIC, Laity Ecclesiology, vocations. The

“It was a beautiful day, and Lee Ann Niebuhr’s talk on profession was excellent.”

Formation Training Meeting Evaluation Report

manual also includes a DVD that can be downloaded onto a home computer, a Franciscan Peace Prayer song, a training power point presentation, U-Tube production and much more.

FOLLOW UP DISCUSSIONS

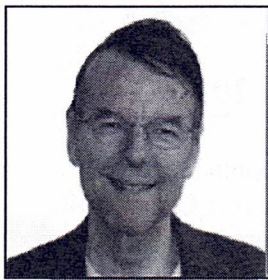
At the end of the October 29 Formation Training workshop, SFOs proposed in their written and verbal evaluation report for a 2012 formation follow up meeting. A 2012 region-wide gathering may offer an open forum on how well the FUN manual and related materials have help promote SFO fraternal life.

Members of St. Peter’s Fraternity were the gracious host for the workshop and provided lunch.

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Minister's Message



October Gatherings

A Saint Francis Tribute

Dear Brothers
and Sisters,

I missed not being with my fraternity to celebrate the Transitus and Feast-day celebrations of our founder, but I wasn't alone on those days. I was with thousands of brothers and sisters on pilgrimage at St James Church in Medjugorje. A life-size statue of St Francis was prominently placed at the front of the church. Transitus was celebrated outdoors, and attended by over 10,000 people.

The feast-day celebration began with a procession of youth walking one by one holding brightly lit votive candles, placed inside red holders. They approached the altar and shaped their lighted candles in the shape of the Tau cross. In addition, on this day and on the saint's feast day, visiting priests gathered here from around the world to extoll the many virtues of St Francis of Assisi. As a professed member of the SFO, I felt proud wearing the Tau.

During October 22-29, Anne Mulqueen, our SFO International Councilor, faithfully reported on the daily events coming out of the Secular Franciscan General Chapter held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. At that gathering, General Minister Encarnacion del Pozo, OFS, expounded upon the theme of the conference: ***"Evangelized to Evangelize."*** Because Anne wants all of you to hear her words coming from the XIII General Chapter held in Sao Paulo, I have forwarded them to your ministers to convey to you.

October 27-28, at Assisi, the Holy Father received various world religions representatives and non-believers, who gathered and celebrated a day of reflection, dialogue, and prayer for world peace and justice. Pope Benedict said, "this gathering is representative of the billions of men and women

throughout the world who are actively engaged in promoting justice and peace."

Then, October 25-30, I attended the NAFRA annual chapter in California. The consensus from the California NAFRA chapter said that the FUN manual is critical to the animation of our local fraternities. The upcoming TAU will have much more information about the NAFRA chapter that I can ever hope to cover here—until then, check out www.nafra-sfo.org for recent conference updates on spiritual assistants, meetings and other resources (photos and pressroom).

During the same time of the NAFRA meeting, our own LaVerna Region fraternity councils gathered at Stevens Point to learn about the FUN formation manual and its guidelines. The LaVerna Regional Executive Council (REC) has reviewed the Stevens Point workshop evaluations, and those evaluations help prepare our regional formation team for excellent follow up to the 2012 area district gatherings.

Also of concern are vocations—I have some ideas to share with you at the LaVerna Regional 2012 district gatherings. I suggest that each fraternity encourage members to make vocations a daily prayer—see the prayer below—and that fraternity councils make vocations a monthly agenda item.

Peace & Good,
Jim Carlson, Regional Minister

NATIONAL PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS to the SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

O, Good and Gracious God
God of mercy, compassion, generosity, and love,
As we live our lives today in the model of St. Francis,
Choosing daily to live the Gospel life,
Help us to help others hear Your call.

Help us to help others to recognize their vocation as a
Secular Franciscan that You have already planted in their
heart.

Help us, so that together we all may work to bring the
Gospel to life. Amen!

Reflection

Lester Bach OFM Cap - Regional Spiritual Assistant



THANKS ALL AROUND !!

From all that I have heard and read, the day-long program for councils and formation directors at Stevens Point, WI was truly helpful for everyone. We owe a special thanks to the fraternity at Stevens Point whose hospitality went far beyond being wonderful. A great big *thank you* to the folks at Stevens Point who hosted the program.

But nothing can quite compare to the solid program that the Regional Formation Team put together for the formators and councils of the region. It was a top-notch program led by competent and dedicated people. They have been a special gift to the Region. The program at Stevens Point continued to prove that. To each of the members of the formation team: **THANKS! THANK! THANKS!** And thanks ahead of time for the continuing work that will energize our district meetings in 2012.

I encourage everyone in the region to set aside the dates of the district meetings and attend them. We help each other to put energy and dedication into the way we live our Franciscan lives. The greater the attendance, the more likely we are to work **TOGETHER** in our programs - especially formation.

While we prepare for more exciting workshops, continue to ask the Holy Spirit to guide all of us as we work together to bring to our world and the Church the wonderful flavor that is the Franciscan spirit!

INTERNATIONAL CHAPTER

The International chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order was held in October at San Paulo, Brazil. Our international councilor, Anne Mulqueen, was in attendance and brought back many ideas from the chapter. She will be sharing them in TAU-USA, so look forward to her reports.

The theme focused on *Evangelization*. It goes beyond merely bringing converts into the Church. That is a beautiful ministry. But our task is bigger than that.

We need to live in such a way that people, seeing us, wonder what keeps us positive and willing to shape our lives after the values of the Gospel. It is of special importance that we recognize that our profession

didn't just make a *request* of us. Making profession means we handed over our lives to Jesus and the Trinity. We are consecrated people whose lives should be a living book that is read by the people in our lives. It should be straight talk and not just pious words that sound good but demand little.

Back before the Rule of 1978 was written, secular Franciscans in the USA attended a Franciscan Congress in Santa Clara, Ca, August 13-19, 1972, with about 500 seculars in attendance. In their concluding statement they shared some reasons why we are not always faithful to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. They wrote:

There is disunity and turmoil in our society. As Franciscans we have an answer to this condition in the very Faith we profess. But we have failed to translate this Faith from a mere profession to a way of life.

+ *We have not been honest with ourselves in living our faith:*

- a. *The fear of being different;*
- b. *The inconvenience which Faith-action causes;*
- c. *The fear of change;*
- d. *The fear of insecurity which change brings.*

All these have prevented us from having the courage of our convictions - (And our consecration through profession!).

These words might have been written last week or any week at the present time rather than 39 years ago. We live as a community (With common support, concern, love and encouragement) because fear CAN keep us paralyzed or stuck with encrusted opinions that do nothing to deal with modern issues. Trying to keep everything safe and not too demanding is the worst way to bring hope to our world and the Church. We convince people by living according to our Franciscan spirit. When people see us living a dedicated life they no longer have an excuse for not embracing some of the same ways of living and loving. They may not become Franciscans, but they may deepen their love for one another and for God. **GIVE IT A TRY!!** After all, you said you would at profession!



OUR ENVIRONMENT

Greener Electronics Are In The Stores by Judy Stouffer, SFO

Some good news is in the air. More and more manufacturers selling products in the United States are voluntarily meeting two internationally recognized "green" standards when making electronics such as cellphones, computers, laptops, monitors and televisions. Consumer items that meet these two standards, RoHS and EPEAT, are safer for our health and better for the environment, too.

The "Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive" or RoHS was developed for electronics marketed in the European Union. Electronics that meet the RoHS standard are sold in the United States as well.



RoHS restricts the use of six hazardous materials that are used in the manufacturing of electronics. They are: lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, polybrominated biphenyls (PBB) and polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE). (PBB and PBDE are flame retardants used in plastics.) An item that meets the RoHS can only have tiny amounts of any of these toxic materials in it.

EPEAT, or the "Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool," was designed to help American consumers identify greener computers and other electronic equipment. The best EPEAT rating is Gold, followed by Silver and Bronze. Fourteen different measures are weighed to determine a product's rating, including such things as the energy it takes to make it as well as to recycle it when it's worn out, reductions in toxic substances that make up the products, decreases in hazardous waste generated by its manufacturing process, and much more.

To find electronics that meet these standards, just look for EPEAT rating, and whether the item meets the RoHS, listed on the packaging. If there isn't anything about these on the packaging, then it's unlikely that the product meets either one of these standards.

Oh, and a bonus for not just the environment and our health but our pocketbooks as well: EPEAT and RoHS compliant electronics aren't more expensive—they're just safer!

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Argentine Fraternity Sponsors Franciscan Green Fair

Since 2001, the Father Carlos de Dios Murias fraternity has been engaging in the important task of caring for the environment in Saldan, Cordoba (Central Argentina). Their Secular Franciscan mission aims at spreading information on ecology and integrity of creation on urgent local and world issues. This initiative provides community with the hope of changing relationship with mother earth.

OFM friars coordinate the fraternity Green Fair projects, while area YouFra members help participate and collaborate the Franciscan green fair events.



SFO Workshop on Fraternity

St. Francis University, Loretto, PA

by LeeAnn Niebuhr, SFO

On a sunny June morning at St. Francis University located in the Pennsylvania Adirondack Mountains, Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap and Mary Bittner, SFO spoke to a room full of Secular Franciscans about the importance of understanding a “community of love” and how it looks in a Franciscan setting.

Fr. Bach challenged us by asking the question: Why is “community” so important for our Franciscan “Vision”? Immediately my mind reflected upon the wonderful example that those more senior in profession continue to set for the rest of us.

Each member in our own fraternities (communities of love) inspires us with the unique chapter of Franciscan living they write with the manner in which they live their lives.

The concept of a fraternity being a “community of love” is both comfort and a considerable challenge. One of the most obvious comments is that the “lover” must be present to convey that love to the beloved. Therefore, attendance at fraternity meetings is absolutely essential.

Father Bach outlined three major Franciscan concepts, which are living the Gospel life, daily conversion, and living in fraternity. It is this last concept that was the focus of Father Bach and Mary Bittner’s presentations. Father Bach listed three reasons why

fraternity life is essential to living out our Franciscan charism. First, our fraternity is a place where we are transformed from separate individuals to a community dedicated to follow in the footsteps of Francis and Clare.

Second, a vibrant fraternity helps its members to grow by learning more about being Franciscans through initial and ongoing formation. Third, as our knowledge increases so should our faithfulness to following the Gospel and our Rule. Father then added the comment that “without fraternity life to keep us honest, we might believe that we are as good as we think we are.”

Next, Father Bach talked about Trinitarian spirituality, which can illustrate how we are to be in relationship with one another. As we all know, the Trinity consists of three divine persons united in love. Father’s point is that no one part of the Trinity is dominant, and no part is subordinate. It is the mutuality of their perfect love that animates this equality of lovers. As love is at the heart of the Trinity, it is also to be at the heart of all we do as Franciscans.

Applying these concepts to how we live in fraternity was Father’s next area of focus. If love is to be at the heart of all we do, we must use it as the basis for decisions in planning our fraternity gatherings. How does this mutuality of love express itself in our fraternity? In making decisions, we must

remember that faithfulness to the Gospel and our Rule is what is important, not success.

We are called to take what we learn and experience in fraternity life to life in our secular world. For a just and fraternal society, we need to deepen the foundation of universal kinship by creating a spirit of warmth and welcome wherever we go. Next, we must firmly commit ourselves to oppose every form of exploitation, exclusion and indifference. We are called to work on programs committed to create worthy conditions of life and freedom for all people.

Finally, on that beautiful June morning in the Adirondack Mountains, Father Bach’s talk inspired us to be Franciscans who sow seeds in the garden of life by being faithful lovers. As faithful lovers, we unite ourselves to work in the creation of vibrant fraternities where we support and encourage one another in following the Gospel life through daily conversion.

As our Franciscan seeds bloom into beautiful flowers, others too will want to join us in loving and serving the Lord and the People of God.

Lee Ann Niebuhr is a member of Our Lady Queen of the Universe Fraternity in Woodruff, WI, and works with the LaVerna Regional Formation Team.

**LaVerna Regional Fraternity SFO
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:

<u>FAMILY SIZE</u>	<u>MONTHLY INCOME</u>
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, SFO E-MAIL: TAXMANNATP@GMAIL.COM
W6855 ST. MARYS DR. PHONE: (920) 757-9027
GREENVILLE, WI 54942

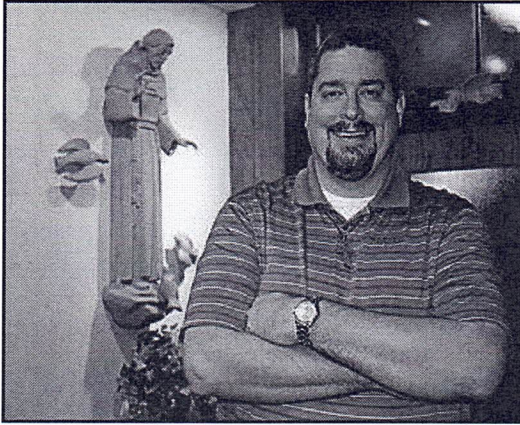
NOTE: IF FOR SOME REASON YOU CANNOT ATTEND THIS RETREAT, PLEASE RETURN THE ASSISTANCE MONEY TO "LAVERNA REGION SFO."

Affinity to St. Francis leads to his Profession as Third Order Franciscan

by Eddie O'Neill

Green Bay — There was neither a lightning bolt nor a deep voice from the clouds that called Jeff Gumz to the Secular Franciscans. According to him, a good discernment led him to eventually profess with the Franciscan Third Order several years ago.

"I can remember as a young man being attracted to the Peace Prayer attributed to St. Francis," noted the father of two boys. "However, if there was a 'light bulb moment' it would have to have been a homily I heard a number of years ago preached by Deacon Paul Umentum at St. Mary of the Angels." In his sermon, Deacon Umentum, also a Secular Franciscan, talked about the different Orders of the Franciscans. "It was the first time I had heard about a Third Order."



A few weeks after that Mass, Gumz was on a retreat with Deacon Umentum, learning more about the spirit of St. Francis. Jeff soon became a regular at the monthly Secular Franciscan meetings held at St. Mary and entered into formation. In 2007, he made a public profession as a permanent commitment to the Gospel way of life.

"The things that really attracted me to St. Francis were simplicity, poverty and humility. Especially humility as I strive to be that

humble person," Jeff told *The Compass*.

The Third Order Franciscans have around 25 members in Green Bay. It is a worldwide lay movement with more than 30,000 members in the United States alone. Jeff was quick to explain that this is not another church club but rather a calling to live the Gospel inspired by the vision of St. Francis. For him, this means being a witness of the good news at Green Bay East High School, where he has taught U.S. history and psychology since 1999.

"I always try to exemplify that famous quote of St. Francis to preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary use words. At the high school that means being an example to the young people that I come across every day as a teacher," he said. "If one of the kids comes up and feels comfortable talking to me about things, then I feel that I need to be there for them."

Being an attentive listener and being open to dialog are also two traits of Francis that Jeff tries to emulate in his daily life. One of his favorite stories of St. Francis was when he met the Muslim sultan during the era of the Crusades.

"Did they convert each other? No. But Francis came away with a better respect for Muslims as he came to appreciate their five times of prayer each day," Gumz explained. "They had dialogue and conversations. And that is what we are called to do: to listen and bridge these gaps we have in our society."

In the end, Gumz sums up his life as a Secular Franciscan as one in which he feels much closer to God.

"We go from Gospel to life and life to Gospel. I have a beautiful Rule (of life to follow) and fellowship within a fraternity to guide me along my life's journey," he added. "I think my prayer life has grown and I continue to strive for a life of humility and charity."

ASSISI:

Location, Location, Location!
by Carol and Don Derozier, SFO's

Armed with 50 words in Italian, some Euros and a Master Card, we journeyed boldly to Assisi. We wanted to refresh our Franciscan selves with the "spirituality of place" (Roch Niemier, OF.M., 2006), to steep in the mystical powers embedded in the Piccolino, Carceri, San Damiano, and the Portiuncula.

We could have used more Italian!

One cannot get lost in Assisi—everything is either up or down, left or right and always accessible by steps. Eventually one arrives at the Basilica of Francis at one end, the square in the middle, or the Basilica of Clare at the other end. Interim respite is available at ice-cream shops strategically placed along the way.

As we plodded over hallowed stone walkways to various sites, we pictured Francis the troubadour, singing his way to salvation. Soon the place-spirits within his conversion were accessed, unpackaged and incorporated into our own hearts.



Don and Carol Derozier spent two weeks in Italy and said that their Assisi pilgrimage "was a dream fulfilled...everything we expected and more." Don and Carol are members of the Sacred Heart Fraternity in Oshkosh, and they recently offered a photo presentation to their members. Their presentation focuses on the importance of "Spirituality of Place."

“The stories of the early life of Francis, and many others throughout the whole expanse of his journey, verify the fact that it was the experience of God that is the key to unlocking the door to his soul. It is important for the pilgrim who visits Assisi to spend time in the Piazza Comune.



While there, sit at one of the outdoor cafes or on the steps leading into the former Temple of Minerva, order a cappuccino, a glass of beer or a cup of tea and let your imagination run wild. Picture Francis running through this square or along the street that runs in and out of the piazza. Allow your heart to sense God touching you and inviting you to discover your moorings in him alone.

This is one way to explore the spirituality of the piazza and streets of Assisi.”

In the Foot Steps of Francis and Clare, written by Fr. Roch Niemier, OFM (2006).

Editor's note: Below is an article written by Fr. Marius Noe forty-eight years ago for the St. Joseph Fraternity *Crossed Arms* newsletter.

The Crossed Arms

Published by the St. Joseph Fraternity of the Third Order of St. Francis
Volume 27, Number 1 APPLETON, WISCONSIN January 1964

HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH?

by Fr. MARIUS NOE, O.F.M. Cap

Your pocketbook? No, I'm not looking at its bulge or its bareness.
Believe it or not, you're not as big or small as your bankroll.

According to Cardinal Fisher, "A man is worth as much as he prays." A tertiary is worth as much as he prays. That's because prayer obtains grace, and we are as big or small as the amount of sanctifying grace we possess, as God sees us. "I am what I am by the grace of God."

The Rule requires the daily recitation of 12 Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory Be's. Oh I know, and so do you, that the Rule doesn't oblige you to say these prayers. under pain of sin. You know, too, that you may recite (in Latin) the regular Breviary instead of the Our Fathers and Hail Marys, or the shorter Breviary of lay Brothers or Sisters (in English), or the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. The question is, how can you give these prayers a shot in the arm by injecting devotion? How can you keep the daily Third Order prayers from going stale, on you, like week-old bread?

Prayer is talking to God (or to Jesus and Mary and the saints). If you merely say words, you are not praying: you must think of what you are saying. God may give you a good mark for your good will, but you're not really praying. Think of the earnestness of the men in the gospel, who prayed: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!" "Lord, that I may see!" The Our Father is tops for any vocal prayer, because our Lord made it up for us. We can't say anything better to our Heavenly Father.

When the tertiary recites the Our Father, he calls on the help of God, his Almighty Father. The Hail Marys are roses we offer to Our Blessed Mother: these spiritual roses are fresh and fragrant if we recite the Hail Marys devoutly; or like artificial flowers without life or perfume if we recite them carelessly, with haste and distractions. The Glory Be's are professions of faith in the Blessed Trinity, and express our purpose in life, namely, to give glory to God.

Prayer is the breathing of the soul. If the breathing is good, health is good. If the tertiary prays well, his spiritual life will be healthy, vigorous. The special office, the Third Order prayer, is a mighty weapon and shield, which tertiaries

should use to protect themselves against their spiritual enemies, and to champion the cause of Christ.

When the Council in France wished to express religious Orders as useless, one member arose and said: "They are the lightning rods which avert the wrath of God from us!" Every tertiary by his life of penance and by his official prayer, can and should be such a lightning rod, saving the world from the just punishments of God and rescuing souls from hell. "Prayer,"

You don't need a high I.Q. or huge biceps to get to heaven: all you need is earnest prayer. "We ought always to pray and not grow faint-hearted," Jesus said. Of course you have to punch the clock on time, you have to get the kids off to school on time, you have 100 and 1 things to do. But prayer helps, not hinders work. "A man of prayer is capable of everything," St. Vincent remarked. "Work and Pray" is an excellent motto. If you pray as you should, you'll find time for everything.

When you recite the Hail Marys, do you offer Our Blessed Mother gorgeous, fragrant roses, or lifeless, artificial flowers? Pray your Third Order Office, say it attentively and devoutly, and then every Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be will constitute a jewel. a heavenly rose, a pearl, in the sight of God.

Remember: A tertiary is worth as much as he PRAYS.

Special thanks to Peter Bekkers, SFO, St. Joseph Fraternity, who submitted Fr. Noe's article to the La Verna Vision. If your fraternity wishes to submit archival articles, please contact Ed Boss, at ed-joann@execpc.com.

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The La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA consists 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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The La Verna Vision newsletter is published three times a year. Deadline for submitting articles are as follows: spring issue—March 1; summer issue—July 1; winter issue—November 1.

La Verna Vision editors: Ed Boss, SFO, ed-joann@execpc.com, and Bob Henning, SFO, bmjhsfo@aol.com

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, SFO 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.



International OFS

National Fraternity in Argentina presents their “Active Presence in the World – 2011 Survey”

The OFS National Fraternity in Argentina recently published its 2011 National Fraternal Gesture Project to the world. At each OFS national Chapter, held usually in January, Secular Franciscans make a voluntary contribution to help particular groups.

Four years ago, members of the national Council decided that in each national Chapter, Secular Franciscans would perform a fraternal gesture to help others. Since then, each brother or sister who participates in the Chapter shares something with certain groups.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2008: Milk was collected for the Chaco indigenous resistance school.
- 2009: Blankets were woven during the Chapter to be donated to Villas del Rosario, the Tartagal Salta indigenous community and the Manantiales neighborhood community in Saldan.
- 2010: School supplies were collected and distributed at the indigenous community of Tartagal Salta, the Huayco School in Cordoba, and the Mesada School, also in Cordoba.
- 2011: Food items were collected and donated to St. Francis of Assisi soup kitchen in Carlos Paz, Cordoba.

IMPACT ON SOCIETY

We have been able to collaborate with the indigenous community in Salta, which is very impoverished and has many pressing needs, especially by supporting the education of children.

IMPACT ON FRATERNAL SECULAR FRANCISCANS

Simple gestures can strengthen a national fraternity and provide assistance to other brothers and sisters in need. Brothers and sisters of the OFS are very generous as proven by the fact that each year the fraternal gesture has exceeded expectations. By expressing solidarity, fraternity members continue to experience the grace that God has given them to live the Franciscan charism each day.

For more “Active Presence to the World 2011 Survey” information, contact Mirta Landivar at ofsaldan@hotmail.com.

Tau Cross Prayer Square

by JoAnn Boss, SFO

Over the years at regular, district and Chapter gatherings, I have been asked by SFOs on how I knit the Tau Cross into fabric. So, here is my best answer. I work with worsted weight yarn on size 7 knitting needles. The exact gauge is not as important as general proportion. The piece is roughly a square and the Tau symbol is in the center of the cloth. (Like my mother’s cooking recipes, this pattern is approximate.) The Tau Cross Prayer Square holds my coffee cup as I say the Morning Office. Have fun experimenting as you pray and knit.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR KNITTED PRAYER SQUARE

Begin with **casting on 25 stitches**:

Rows 1 to 5: Knit across for the bottom border.

Rows 6 to 10: Alternate between K3, P19, K3 across one row and K the next row.

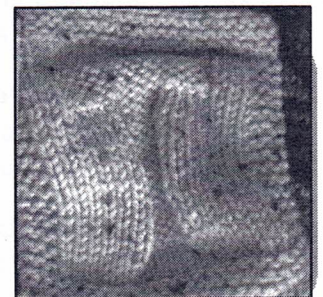
Rows 11 to 25: Begin the staff of the cross – alternating K 10, P 5, K 10 and K3, P7, K5, P7, K3.

Rows 26 to 30: Begin the cross bar by alternating K3, P3, K 13, and P3, K3 with K6, P13, and K6.

Rows 31 to 35: Alternate between K across one row and K3, P19, K3 the next row.

Rows 36 to 40: Knit across the row for the top border.

Bind off the next row.



Adjust the pattern for your unique prayer square.

Resource: Prayer Square with Cross in center
www.shawministry.com

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Calendar of Events: Winter/Spring/Summer 2012

- February 4** LaVerna Regional Executive Council meeting, St. Mary of the Angels Friary, 9:30 a.m., Green Bay.
- March 4 - 10** **Integrating Energy Centers of the Body: A retreat focusing on self-care and creativity.** Participants revive their spirits by focusing on the seven core energy centers in the body. Experience art, healing, music, quiet time, and prayer. All will create an abstract set of paintings on canvas that can be used in meditation and displayed in your home to awaken one to God's healing energy. Participants will learn ways of going to the Source of God's healing through meditation, ritual, dialogue and the gentle practice of self-renewal, so as to better minister to others. Residents will have a private room in a shared cabin. Retreat facilitators: Sr. Roselyn Heil, FSPA and Sr. Karen Kappel, FSPA. Call Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center, Arbor Vitae, WI. 715-385-3750, e-mail: marywood.center@gmail.com.
- March 17** **Southeastern LaVerna Regional District Gathering**, St. Clare's Catholic Church, 7616 Fritz Road, Wind Lake, WI. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., lunch provided by host, St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity.
- April 14** **Central LaVerna Regional District Gathering**, Nativity of Our Lord Church – St. Joseph site in the Kohlbeck Hall at 1350 North Stevens Street, Rhinelander, WI. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., lunch provided by host, St. John Neumann Fraternity.
- April 21** **Fox Valley LaVerna Regional District Gathering**, Community Center, 280 Garfield Street, North Fond du Lac, WI. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., lunch provided by host, St. Joseph Fraternity, Fond du Lac, WI.
- June 22 – 24** **LaVerna Regional Chapter, St. Anthony's Retreat Center, Marathon, WI.**
- July 3-8** **The 18th Quinquennial of the Secular Franciscan Order, "Why Francis? Claim the Gift!"**
Holiday Inn Chicago North Shore Hotel, 5300 Touhy Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077 (toll free number: 866-750-3369. Open Liturgy: Bishop George J. Rassas, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Chicago, Bro. Bill Short, OFM, Tom Bello, SFO and keynote speaker, Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF. For more information, contact Cecilia Maljan, SFO: cylmaljan@earthlink.net