

**A History of  
La Verna Region  
  
of the  
Secular Franciscan  
Order**

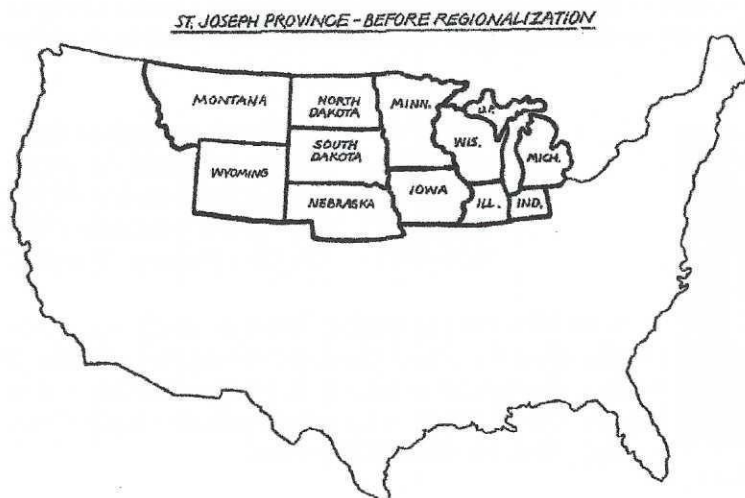
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Compiled by Sharon Dale OFS  
Archivist for La Verna Region  
March, 2018

## Part 1-- A Tertiary Province

Provincial Ministers of the four Major Orders formed Third Order Provinces as early as 1917. The OFMs were the first with a central board of 7 officers: Commissary, Vice Commissary, Secretary/ Treasurer (all friars) and 4 lay Councilors. This move encouraged the Capuchin, Conventual, and Third Order Regular friars to set up their own Tertiary Provinces. It was on April 18, 1924, that the Third Order Province of St. Joseph (OFMCap) was officially established.



Tertiary Provinces were under the jurisdiction of the particular First Order from which they were established.



Rev. Basil Janasik OFM

Individual fraternity Directors were either OFM friars or sometimes diocesan priests delegated by a Provincial Minister. One such case was diocesan priest Reverend Florian Marmurowicz, pastor of St. Lawrence Church in Wisconsin Rapids, who was appointed Director of their new fraternity by Rev. Basil Janasik OFM, Provincial Commissary (later called the Provincial Spiritual Assistant). It was accepted that "the Director is the immediate head of the fraternity...possesses the power necessary for the proper discharge of his duties, as he must bear the obligations and responsibilities which accompany said office. The Director calls the meeting and presides over them. He invests new members and should instruct the Tertiaries on the precepts of the Rule."<sup>1</sup>



Archbishop Sebastian Messmer

Third Order Priest fraternities emerged in the St. Joseph Province in 1925. Tertiary clergy in the Milwaukee Archdiocese under then Archbishop Sebastian Gebhard Messmer, himself a Tertiary, organized the St. Charles Borromeo fraternity under the jurisdiction of the Capuchin Fathers of St. Joseph Province in Detroit. In the mid-1960's there were 4 Priest Fraternities in Wisconsin:

- 1) St. Bonaventure fraternity (Madison) had 63 diocesan priests professed in the Third Order of St. Francis with Rev. Delbert Schmulzer as Director
- 2) St. Pius X fraternity (Rhineland) had 26 priests as members

<sup>1</sup> Wicks, William. *A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States*, vol. 1 p. 119-120.



- 3) St. Anthony fraternity (Green Bay) had 33 members
- 4) St. Charles Borromeo fraternity (Milw.) had 179 members

Because of their manifold parish duties, the monthly meeting requirements were dispensed; the priests' fraternities met twice annually. In a letter to the Third Order priests in his fraternity, Rev. Alphonse S. Popek, Director, wrote "you need not say extra prayers to gain the rich indulgences [of being a Third Order member]; the daily recitation of the Divine Office fulfills the demands of the Franciscan Office."<sup>2</sup>

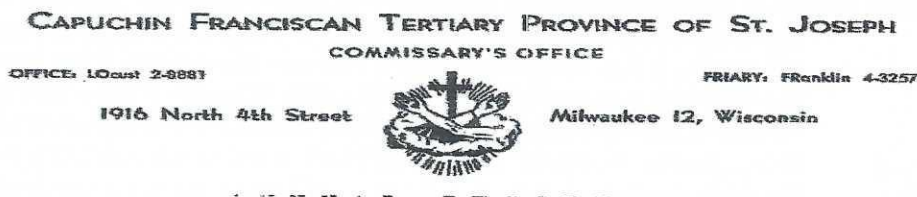
William Wicks, National Historian, obtained a list of Provincial Commissaries for the Tertiary Province of St. Joseph and the years each served. A listing of Provincial Commissaries from the other First Orders was not available at this time.



Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap

1943-1952	Fr. Fergus Pease OFM Cap.
1953-1954	Fr. Conrad Polzer OFM Cap.
1954-1954	Fr. Alphonse Heckler OFM Cap.
1955-1956	Fr. Cassian Latondress OFM Cap.
1957-1977	Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap. <sup>3</sup>

In 1958 Friar Ulric Buening OFM Cap was Provincial Commissary with an office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He served on various Federation Boards (later called National Boards) first as a Councilor, then as Federation Assistant until 1977 (more about Fr. Ulric's rich involvement in our history will follow). Displayed below is the letterhead from his office in Milwaukee.



It wasn't until the late 1950's that the "cause" for the advancement of Tertiaries into leadership positions was given impetus by the decrees of the 1957 General Constitution and documents newly emerging from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Efforts were made, especially in the mid-1960's, to give Tertiaries a more executive voice on Provincial Third Order Councils.<sup>4</sup> In 1963 Mr. Fred Kowalski SFO was elected as Provincial Minister Prefect, Mr. Thomas Ricard SFO served on the Directive Council from 1965 through 1971, and in 1967 Mr. Herbert Stackhouse SFO was elected Federation Vice-Minister Prefect of St. Joseph Third Order Province. Even with seculars assuming some of the leadership roles, it was still the Major Orders who had the upper hand in decision-making.

A letter sent by Fred Kowalsky, Minister Prefect of the St. Joseph Province, to the Priest Directors and

<sup>2</sup> Popek, Rev. Alphonse. Letter entitled "Membership Still Growing," Fall 1960, pg. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Wicks, William OFS, *A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States*, vol. IIA, pg. 249-296.

<sup>4</sup> Wicks, William OFS, *A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States*, vol. IIA, pg. 23.



Council members stated, "We have one of the best, if not the best organization in the Federated Provinces of North America. This was proven at [the] Detroit Congress. We were the host Province. Father Cyril OFM Cap, head of the Detroit Fraternity, and Father Ulric OFM Cap, along with the wonderful cooperation of the St. Bonaventure tertiaries did a fine job [at organizing this event]...Father Ulric, since his appointment as Commissary of St. Joseph Province, has proven himself most capable. He...is most solicitous for the...Third Order, and is most watchful that the best interests of the Third Order are served and protected. Under his administration the Third Order has become militant, operates efficiently, and its members have become more conscious of their obligations...May he have many more years as our Commissary."<sup>5</sup>

It was in the mid-1960s that many friars felt that Tertiaries should be trained to assume leadership roles within the Third Order. Previously seculars were treated under their Rule and Constitutions as pious laymen and laywomen with a list of rules similar to the OFM friars and sisters. Pope John XXIII, during the Second Vatican Council, called for renewal in the Church and an understanding that laymen and laywomen must take a more active presence in the Church. We began to see parish councils form, lay CCD teachers and lay readers at Mass. Lay people were stepping up to assume responsibility in their parishes and dioceses.

An OFM Provincial Conference was held in Lemont, Illinois in October, 1966, and Fr. Auspicius Van Costanje OFM brought this summary (in part) of a European renewal meeting he had just attended:

- 1) The Third Order needs to recover its original inspiration, free itself from much constraining structure which has accumulated through the centuries, and make some new radically renewed starts;
- 2) The Third Order must recover its autonomy as a self-governing group within the total Franciscan movement, but dependent on the teaching and witness of the friars.
- 3) Its spirituality must be conformed to the secular state, as Vatican urges.<sup>6</sup>

## Part 2- Pre-Region

At the 1967 Quinquennial Congress in Philadelphia, Tom Ricard SFO, Provincial Prefect of St. Joseph Province, stated in his opening address, "We have an unnecessary duplication of effort, a wasteful duplication of organization, confusion and lack of communication...There should be a form of separation of the Third Order from the First Order. The Third Order should be autonomous from the First Order in government and operation...[however] there should not be, and cannot be, a complete divorce between the two. The First Order is still the Spiritual Director of the Third Order. There should be collaboration, and not domination, by the First Order."<sup>7</sup>

In October, 1967, the NAF (North American Federation) appointed a special Constitutional Revision Committee, of which Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap was a member, to study possible revisions to the Constitution in light of the documents of the Second Vatican Council. One of the committee's proposals, a rather radical plan, was restructuring the national organization: replacing the provincial jurisdictional structure with one that was based on geographic boundaries (regions). They further suggested forming Regional Councils in these regions irrespective of First Order jurisdictions.

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<sup>5</sup> Kowalsky, Fred. Letter to fraternity Directors and Council members, May 16, 1963.

<sup>6</sup> Document drafted at OFM Conference, Lemont, IL, 1966; Wicks, *History...*, vol. IIA, pg. 94-95.

<sup>7</sup> Ricard, Tom. Philadelphia Congress 1967, Keynote Address.

Resistance to change is a natural phenomenon. This was true for the Friars of the First Orders as well as Third Order Franciscans. The Constitutional Committee polled joint Executive and Directive Council members...and the vast majority were in favor of juridical autonomy of the Third Order organization [ideally and eventually], as opposed to the present provincial jurisdictional organization. The organization of the Third Order by geographic regions was unanimously recommended. It was a single friar's objection to moving forward at this time that the committee concluded that the matter be "put on hold." He felt "that much more study of this problem is needed before coming to a workable solution."<sup>8</sup>

In 1970, Father Edward Dillon OFM stated, **"The leadership of the Third Order belongs in the hands of the laymen. Renewal, real renewal, will never be possible for latter-day lay Franciscanism until and unless it regains its absolute autonomy, its pristine, unique personality and charism. It must cease to be a mere appendage of the First Order...As for the friars, they must be available; they must assist; they must serve...period."**<sup>9</sup> Forward-looking leaders of the Franciscan First Orders (OFM, OFM Cap, OFM Conv, and TOR) grasped the impact of the spirit surrounding Vatican II. (Bold font added for emphasis by editor)

Nearly nineteen years passed with no further serious discussion of changing over from Provincial boundaries to geographic regions nor was discussed the matter of jurisdictional organization. In the meantime, a new Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order was approved by Pope Paul VI and promulgated in 1978, and a Ritual of the SFO was written by Fr. Benet Fonck OFM and published in 1985. Both the new Rule and the Ritual called for a restructuring of the Third Order in the United States.

Regarding Secular Franciscan Leadership, William Wicks SFO, National Historian, tabulated the years 1972-2006.<sup>10</sup>

Province Delegates	1972-1976- Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap; Arthur Dallman SFO 1977-1980- no documented information 1981 - Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap 1982-1983- Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap; Joseph Russell SFO 1984-1991- Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap; Marie Amore SFO
Intern'l Rep. to CIOFS	1985-1989- Marie Amore SFO
Nat'l Exec. Council Vice-Pres.	1987-1991- Marie Amore SFO 1997-2003- Marie Amore SFO
CIOFS Councilor	1990-1995- Marie Amore SFO
Nat'l Directive Board	1992-1993- Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap; Jean Ann Platz SFO
Provincial Fraternity Minister	1994-1995- Jean Ann Platz SFO
Pro-tem Region Minister	1994-1995- Ken Beattie SFO
Region Ministers (La Verna)	1996-2001- Ken Beattie SFO 2002-2004- Dale Nees SFO 2004-2006- Ken Beattie SFO

"Focus" meetings appeared throughout Wisconsin. The first one in our archives was dated April 29, 1979 and was hosted by St. James fraternity in Wausau. Fraternities rotated as host for the gathering and set the agenda for the day-long event. Speakers were usually Franciscan friars or sisters. Talks were given; breakout

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<sup>8</sup> Report of the Constitution Committee to the N.A.F, Joint Executive Directive Council, Lemont, IL, Oct. 11-13, 1968.

<sup>9</sup> Dillon, Fr. Edward OFM. *Franciscan Herald and Forum*, 1970, pg.42.

<sup>10</sup> Wicks, William. *A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States*, vol.III, pgs. 378-429.



sessions were common, each group given a list of questions to discuss and then report back to the full assembly. Often a short film was shown.

Focus themes from our archives file appear below:

- |                                                 |                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1979- Renew the Face of the Earth               | 1988- You Are the Potter, We Are the Clay       |
| 1980- Family Togetherness                       | 1990- You, Too, Go Into My Vineyard             |
| 1981- Family and Community                      | 1991- You Who Abide in Me Shall Bear Much Fruit |
| 1982- Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace |                                                 |
| 1983- Reconciliation- the Way to Peace          | 1992- Build With Living Stones                  |
| 1984- Let Your Light Shine                      | 1995- The Old Gives Birth to the New            |

Focus meetings were replaced in the mid-1990's with what is now called District Gatherings. Below is the FOCUS program for 1982. The image of the kneeling Franciscan was the creation of Art Dallman SFO.

#### Front of Program

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS \*\*\*\*\*

1. WHAT IS PEACE?
2. EXPLAIN HOW WE MUST FIRST BE AT PEACE WITH OURSELVES (WITH GOD) BEFORE WE CAN BE PEACEMAKERS.
3. WHY WAS ST. FRANCIS AN EFFECTIVE PEACEMAKER? GIVE EXAMPLES.
4. WHAT QUALITIES SHOULD A MODERN DAY FRANCISCAN POSSESS TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PEACEMAKER?
5. WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS WE AS FRANCISCANS CAN BE INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE IN OUR HOMES? AT WORK? IN SOCIETY? IN OUR COUNTRY & IN THE WORLD?

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY \*\*\*\*\*

1. SCRIPTURE
2. VARIOUS LIVES OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
3. OMNIBUS OF SOURCES & WORKBOOK
4. FRANCISCAN HERALD JAN. 1981
5. THE THIRD ORDER VOCATION
6. NEW RULE, ESP. ART. 14 & 17

#### FOCUS '82 \*\*\*\*\*

SUNDAY JUNE 13, 1982  
ST. MARY'S CHURCH  
MARATHON, WIS.



SPONSORED BY  
ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY  
MARATHON, WIS.



## Inside of Program

FOCUS '82 *****		OBJECTIVES *****
THEME: LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE.		AT THE COMPLETION OF FOCUS '82, ATTENDEES WILL BE PREPARED TO:
PROGRAM *****		
10:30	MASS	1. HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.
11:30	REGISTRATION	2. DEFINE PEACE.
12:00	LUNCH	3. EXPLAIN WHY ST. FRANCIS WAS AN EFFECTIVE PEACEMAKER.
1:00	MOVIE--FRANCIS OF ASSISI; <u>A SEARCH FOR THE MAN AND HIS MEANING</u>	4. LIST THE QUALITIES OF TODAYS SECULAR FRANCISCAN PEACEMAKER.
2:00	BREAK	
2:15	MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE FR. GRIGNON WENNING, OFM.CAP. SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY	5. LIST PRACTICAL WAYS WE CAN BE INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE IN OUR HOMES, AT WORK, IN SOCIETY, IN OUR COUNTRY AND IN THE WORLD.
2:30	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (SEE QUESTIONS)	
3:30	SUMMATION FR. ULRIC BUENING PROVINCIAL MILWAUKEE, WIS.	
4:00	MEDITATIVE REFLECTION	
4:15	EVALUATION & ADJOURNMENT	

There was a letter from Joseph Russell SFO, President of the Province of St. Joseph and co-signed by Fr. Ulric listing the agenda for the upcoming Provincial Council meeting to be held at the Schoenstatt Retreat Center in Waukesha, September 19-21, 1980. The agenda (in part) follows:

- 1) What is the role of the Secular Franciscan in the Church today? In the world today?
- 2) How can we better serve the Church on the parish level?
- 3) Should each region (NOTE: the use of the word "region" at this point in time referred to the various districts within the province) of the Province have a regional council composed of the presidents (in later years this term was replaced with the word "minister") of the fraternities of the region? Why or Why not? Consider...
  - input to the provincial council
  - helping to solve local problems
  - for a better understanding of the region
- 4) How does the Community [fraternity] serve modern day lepers? (e.g. the poor, neglected, prisoners, refugees, etc.)
- 5) How should the Province handle the matter of withdrawal from the Order?
- 6) Guidelines for pastoral and fraternal visitations (Fr. Ulric will explain)
- 7) How is the New Rule of 1978 being presented and implemented in your fraternity?
- 8) How can the Province implement the transition to more lay Spiritual Assistants to serve the fraternities? (where no friar, priest, or deacon is available)

Although agendas today appear quite different, one can see that the above issues were of concern even back then.

In another letter addressed to the "Brothers and Sisters of the St. Joseph Province", Joseph Russell mentioned that the Council voted to raise the per capita dues to \$5.00 per year. "Please keep in mind," he said, "that per capita is figured on membership but is paid by the fraternity so as not to require members to pay on an individual basis... Members who can afford to and wish to, can pay well beyond the listed per capita figure. Others less fortunate, may make a lesser or even no contribution if that fits their circumstances... We feel that both the envelope method and special fraternity [fundraisers] are in order if either best fits the fraternities' preference or capabilities."<sup>11</sup>

Our Archive files have a listing of Apostolates of Secular Franciscans of St. Joseph Province at this time. It is believed to have been written by Marie Amore SFO. A partial list appears below:

- 1) visiting the sick and homebound; visiting prisoners
- 2) providing rides to doctor, church, and shopping
- 3) providing financial assistance and sewing linens and vestments for the missions
- 4) teaching CCD to school children
- 5) assisting the poor and needy with canned goods and clothing donations
- 6) providing Christmas gifts for needy children through Advent Angels program
- 7) assisting in Loaves and Fishes program
- 8) working in support of Prolife programs
- 9) making bandages for the lepers
- 10) supporting soup kitchens and Meals-on-Wheels program

Fr. Ulric Buening wrote a letter to the Presidents of the Secular Franciscan Order in the St. Joseph Province. In this letter he reminded everyone of the celebration of the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of St. Francis of Assisi. He said further, "This year should be a time when we as Franciscans make a special effort to renew our Call, to become better acquainted with the Franciscan Charism, and become renewed in our enthusiasm to spread the Gospel and the Gospel message in the spirit of St. Francis."<sup>12</sup>

Fr. Ulric kept extremely busy at this time, first with co-responsibility as Province Delegate, then was appointed as CNSA for several years, besides his responsibilities as Capuchin Province Spiritual Director.

Conference of National Spiritual Assistants: 1985-1990- Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap  
2001-2006- Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap

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<sup>11</sup> Russell, Joseph. Letter to all Members. November 21, 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Buening, Fr. Ulric OFM Cap. Letter to the Presidents of the Secular Franciscan Order. April 10, 1981.



### Part 3- An Emerging Region



Marie Amore SFO

There is an undated document that names Joseph Russell SFO as President, Marie Amore SFO as Vice-President, Susan Solloway SFO as Secretary, and Anna Sery SFO as Treasurer. Marie Amore SFO was Provincial Minister of the St. Joseph SFO Province in 1985; Jean Platz was the Vice-Minister.

Fr. Ulric reported in the 1985 Provincial Council Minutes that there were 53 Fraternities in the Province, 3,095 Active and Active Excused members, 285 Diocesan priests' membership, and 112 Novices since the preceding year's report. There were also 140 deaths recorded in the 1985 report. Father also reported 2 new fraternities— Rainbow Fraternity in Middleton (Oct. 1984) and St. Mary Fraternity in Fennimore (November, 1984).

There was an election in 1986. Marie Amore was elected as SFO Provincial Minister, Jean Platz was voted as Provincial Vice-Minister, Juanita Echeverria was elected as Provincial Secretary and Joseph Russell was voted as Provincial Treasurer. National Minister James Lynch SFO presided over the elections.

In her Provincial Minister's Report based on statistics collected from the previous year, Marie stated that there were 46 Third Order Franciscan Fraternities in her jurisdiction, 5 Priest Fraternities, and 1 emerging fraternity; the number of Tertiaries were listed at 2,468; Novices were listed at 88.<sup>13</sup>

The Milwaukee Office used the following letterhead in its communications with Friars, Directors, Council Members and Fraternity Ministers in the Province.



The Provincial Council Minutes of 1987 were very enlightening. The National Council initiated a new program which included 4 Commissions: Family, Work, Environment, and Justice and Peace and each local fraternity was encouraged to follow their lead. The following heads of each of these commissions were as follows: Marie Amore (Family), Cynthia Loudon (Work), Anneta Duveen (Environment), and David Purvis (Justice and Peace).

At that same meeting Jean Platz presented an overview of the SWOT Analysis, employed by many businesses at the time as a preliminary to setting up realistic and productive goals and objectives. First, the group's strengths (S) are determined, then its weaknesses (W). The third step in this process is to determine all the conceivable ways in which the group could overcome the weaknesses (i.e. what opportunities (O) present themselves). Finally, what factors or threats (T) might prevent the group from accomplishing its goals.

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<sup>13</sup> Amore, Marie. Provincial Minister's Report, 1986.



The council worked on this SWOT project together. They brainstormed 30 "strengths", 42 "weaknesses", 22 "opportunities", and 5 "threats". An abbreviated list<sup>14</sup> follows:

**Strengths:**

1. Spirit of fraternity within membership
2. Annual visitations to each fraternity
3. Annual reports submitted by each fraternity
4. Desire to grow
5. District meetings

**Weaknesses:**

1. Lack of or slow response to communications
2. Lack of knowledgeable leaders
3. Lack of initiative in members
4. Annual Reports incompletely answered
5. Resistance to change
6. Poorly planned meetings

**Opportunities:**

1. Make available resource material
2. Set formation guidelines
3. Provide leadership workshops at district level
4. Affirm those in leadership roles
5. Provide guidelines for Visitations

**Threats:**

1. Cost
2. Distance
3. Time
4. Energy



Jean Platz (on left) with Eva Crotteau

It was the intention of the council to use the information gathered from the SWOT Analysis to write future goals and objectives, using our strengths and opportunities to help improve on any weak spots.

Also in 1987 a report was handed to the SFO Provincial Council listing individual fraternities within our 5 districts and district representatives.<sup>15</sup> These are fraternities under the jurisdiction of St. Joseph Capuchin Province.

DISTRICT I (councilor)

Mr. James Pranger

INDIANA

Fort Wayne  
Huntington  
Marion  
Peru

FRATERNITY

St. Charles  
St. Felix  
Our Lady of the Angels  
St. Charles Borromeo

DISTRICT II

Mrs. Marie Amore

MICHIGAN

Bay City  
Detroit  
Jackson  
Jackson  
Monroe  
Saginaw

Visitation  
St. Bonaventure  
St. Dismas  
St. Francis  
St. Joseph  
Queen of Angels

Marie and Mr. Richard Hulan

<sup>14</sup> SFO Provincial Council SWOT Analysis, 1987.

<sup>15</sup> Amore, Marie. SFO Provincial Council report, 1987.

<u>DISTRICT III</u>	<u>NORTHERN WISC.- No. MICHIGAN- MINNESOTA</u>	
Mr. Roger Brill	Marshfield	St. Clare
	Rhineland	St. John Neumann
	Wausau	St. James
	Wisconsin Rapids	Our Lady Queen of Heaven
	St. Paul, Minnesota	St. Crispin of Viterbo
Miss Jean Platz	Chippewa Falls	St. Elizabeth
	Marathon	St. Anthony
	Woodruff	emerging fraternity
	Marquette, Michigan	St. Anthony of Padua
	Zaba (Baraga), Michigan	St. Ann
Ken Beattie remembers a fraternity in Sturgeon Bay, but records were unattainable.		

<u>DISTRICT IV</u>	<u>CENTRAL WISCONSIN</u>	
Mrs. Jane Echeverria	Appleton	St. Joseph
	Fond du Lac	St. Joseph
	Mt. Calvary	Holy Cross
	Oshkosh	Sacred Heart
Mr. Fred Fischer	Manitowoc	Holy Innocents
	Menasha	St. Francis Xavier
	Mt. Calvary	St. Lawrence Seminary
	Shawano	Sacred Heart

<u>DISTRICT V</u>	<u>SOUTHERN WISC- IOWA- MONTANA</u>	
Deacon Arthur Dallman	Beaver Dam	St. Peter
	Jefferson	St. Coletta
	Milwaukee	St. Anthony of Padua
		St. Augustine
		St. Matthias
		St. Rose
Miss Francine Fosselman	Fennimore	St. Mary
	Middleton	Rainbow Fraternity
	Milwaukee	St. Francis
	Mukwonago	St. James
	Breda, Iowa	St. Bernard
	Billings, Montana	San Damiano
	Lodge Grass, Montana	Little Portion
Mr. Joseph Russell	Belgium	St. Mary
	Hartford	Immaculate Conception
	Milwaukee	St. Catherine
		St. John de Nepomuc
		St. Thomas Aquinas
	West Allis	Holy Assumption

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PROVINCIAL	Rev. Myron Kowalsky OFM Cap.
PROVINCIAL ASSISTANT SFO	Rev. Ulric Buening OFM Cap.
VICE-PROVINCIAL ASS'T SFO	Rev. Jogues Constance OFM Cap.

Third Order Provinces like St. Joseph covered several states, and the responsibilities of Provincial Commissioners like Fr. Ulric Buening must have been staggering.

The process of Regionalization (the process of restructuring the Third Order such that divisional boundaries are written according to geography in place of the previously arranged friar provincial jurisdictional structuring)<sup>16</sup> began in 1987 with a meeting of the Directive (National) Board, of which Father Ulric Buening OFM Cap was a member. The Board, working in small groups, developed a list of pros and cons for the proposed restructuring. Fr. John Kramer OFM presented the following results of their discussions:

Points in favor:

- Better cooperation of the common resources within the Secular Franciscan Family
- Better quality of spiritual assistance to the SFO, because the regional assistant may be chosen by the region; he will be a willing, capable friar
- Better leadership within the SFO
- Breaking down provincialism
- Bring the Seculars more in touch with the local Church
- Reduce travel time
- Help raise the consciousness that we are one organic family
- Be a prophetic witness to the friars

Points against:

- Provincial Spiritual Assistant and some friars will lose interest in the SFO
- Initial confusion
- Loss of emotional affiliation with friar provinces, a tradition, a history
- Fear that renewal of the Order will be the demise of the Order
- Confusion in erection of new fraternities— who would do this
- Proprietary understanding of ownership

It was agreed that a Regionalization Committee would be appointed for this all-important project. The Executive Council appointed four seculars and one friar to serve on the committee along with a Vice-Minister to serve as chairman. Committee members appointed were: Richard Morton SFO, Chair, Fr. Lawrence Landini OFM, Bruce Fahey SFO, Mary Mazotti SFO, Jerry Rome SFO and Elizabeth Ryder SFO. The committee further researched and developed various proposals for the restructuring of the Secular Order in the United States on a regional level. The proposal and the committee's recommendation was submitted to a review panel composed of the National Executive Council and the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.



Richard Morton SFO

In January, 1988, Richard Morton, Chairman of the Regionalization Committee, drafted a letter to the National Directive Board. In part it read, "Regionalization is clearly mandated by Vatican II in its efforts to return the Church and its Orders to their beginnings. It was over two hundred years from our founding before we were placed under the jurisdiction of the First Order (Martin IV, 1428). Even the General Spiritual Assistant of the Secular Franciscan Order, Rev. Carl Schaefer OFM at his meeting with all the friars attending the National Congress in San Diego in August, 1987, requested that the National fraternity consider the regionalization of the fraternities in the United States."

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<sup>16</sup> Wicks. William SFO. *A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States*, vol. III, pg. 277.



In July, 1988, a letter was sent to the Major Order Provincials explaining what the Regionalization Committee was proposing. In this letter Richard addressed certain concerns that some were expressing: "I believe we all realize that regionalization is a complicated, and perhaps, even emotional issue with some people. Because of this, whatever is done must be done in a slow, deliberate, and methodical manner. It must be well researched, thought out, and communicated clearly. Most importantly, however, it must be done prayerfully and with trust in the Holy Spirit."<sup>17</sup>

At its annual meeting in October, 1988. Chair Richard Morton SFO presented the following report to the National Board:

### Criteria or Guidelines for the Establishment of Regions

1. No Regionalization is to take place until the promulgation of the new SFO Constitutions by the Holy See.
2. Responsibility of NAFRA is to be respected as stated in the Constitutions.
3. The rights of Local Fraternities must be respected.
4. No region is to be established without a stable presence of friars. This addresses the concern for the *altius moderamen* [juridical or governing relationship] and the life-giving union between the friars and the SFO.
5. No region is to be established without adequate provision for spiritual assistance both from friars and/or their suitable and well prepared associates as provided by the SFO Rule and Constitution.
6. The newly established Regions are to be composed of a sufficient number of fraternities (neither too many nor too few) within a defined geographic area to carry out the obligations of a higher fraternity according to the Rule, Constitutions, and National Statutes.
7. Implementation of regionalization in some potential areas begins after the promulgation of the SFO Constitutions and under the direction and process approved by NAFRA.<sup>18</sup>

Father Benet Fonck OFM wrote a paper on his thoughts concerning the implementation of regionalization. Regarding the continued responsibility of Spiritual Assistance of the First Orders and Third Order Regular towards Secular Franciscan Fraternities, Fr. Fonck wrote: "This traditional responsibility has evolved over the centuries into an apostolic mandate by the Holy See to care for the Secular Franciscan Order, and is institutionalized in the Code of Canon Law (Canons 298-320). This canonical duty on the part of the friars of the First Order and Third Order Regular has a juridical dimension (also known as "*altius moderamen*") and a pastoral dimension.

- a. The juridical dimension is exercised and expressed by means of the erection of fraternities, the pastoral or canonical visitation, and the nomination of spiritual assistants for the various levels of fraternity.
- b. The pastoral dimension is fulfilled by means of the presence, word, and action of the spiritual assistants which enable and empower the fraternity to realize its goals."<sup>19</sup>

Fr. Benet Fonck also presented his idea of the establishment of regions according to states, keeping in mind an equitable distribution of local fraternities. It was his idea that WISCONSIN would be a region by itself. His report was quite thorough and addressed many issues which were voiced at various council levels. Fonck concluded with the following implications which would need to be implemented to make geographic regionalization really work:

- a. Greater interaction between fraternities in a given area to know which activities could be initiated among them and what possibilities exist for greater collaboration;

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<sup>17</sup> Morton, Richard. Letter to the First Order and Third Order Regular Minister Provincials. July 14, 1988.

<sup>18</sup> Guidelines presented to the National Directive Board, October, 1988.

<sup>19</sup> Fonck, Fr. Benet OFM. "A Reflection on the Regionalization of SFO Fraternities," 1988, pg.3.

- b. Regular and frequent gatherings of local spiritual assistants to form for themselves a support group of sharing, collaboration, and accountability;
- c. Less possessiveness or appropriation of "kingdoms" and "turfs" on the part of friars and seculars alike to allow real opinions and desires to take shape;
- d. More assertive decisiveness on the part of the members of the Third Order to take charge of their own destiny in terms of organizational expressions and effective collaboration to achieve their goals and dreams.<sup>20</sup>

Meetings of the Regionalization Committee and the National Directive Board, which had now changed its name to the National Fraternity Council, continued for several more years to iron out terminology and additional issues such as the relationship between the Third Order (Seculars) and the Third Order Regular according to Canon Law (1883).

Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap flew to Europe for the International Chapter, and while there had the privilege of meeting Pope John Paul II on June 18, 1988. Accompanying Father was our Minister General Emanuel De Nunzio SFO.



Fr. Ulric with Pope John Paul II and Emanuel

The 1989 Provincial Election results were as follows: Marie Amore was re-elected as Provincial Minister of the Third Order Province of St. Joseph, Jean Platz was re-elected as Vice-Minister, Juanita Echeverria was re-elected as Secretary, and Bruce Fahey was the new Treasurer. Voting for the various councilors was done at the Focus meetings in each district.

In the spring 1990 issue of *The National Fraternity Newsletter* an article announced that the Regionalization Committee proposed and that the National Fraternity approved the initiation of experimental regions (mainly on the West Coast and Minnesota) that would "work through the process of discernment, education, and problem solving.... The National Fraternity will monitor and evaluate the progress of the regions to insure that this significant change in organization will be in the best interest of our Order in the United States before final approval will be given."<sup>21</sup>

It was also in 1990 that local fraternities throughout the United States began to adopt the Apostolic Commissions initiative, proposed by Fr. Matthew Gaskin OFM. Back in 1984 Fr. Gaskin presented the idea to the National Fraternity Council Meeting in Colorado Springs, CO. These commissions would represent the 4 major aspects of the Franciscan charism— Family, Ecology, Justice and Peace, and Work. Marie Amore SFO was appointed Chair of the Family Commission. A mission statement was drawn up for each commission, and logos for these commissions were drawn by Kathy Taormina SFO.



<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pg. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Morton, Richard. Article entitled "Toward Regionalization," from *The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order Newsletter*, spring, 1990, pg. 1.



Several goals were set for each commission, and each local fraternity was to incorporate these commissions into their monthly meetings (reports, speakers, personal experiences, etc). A few of these goals are presented here:

--Peace & Justice--

- 1) to help with the ongoing identification of systems which deny human dignity and freedom, and adopt focused and nonviolent confrontation of those systems as an aspect of Secular Franciscan ministry at the local level
- 2) to affirm and challenge [the members] to recognize, understand and embrace peace and justice ministry as an essential element of their Franciscan evangelical vocation through the process of initial and ongoing formation

--Work--

- 1) to share information about programs developed at various levels of fraternity life to promote a Christian attitude toward work that brings the gospel to life and life to the gospel
- 2) to provide a focus for discussion and evoke comment at all levels of fraternity life on presenting a viewpoint that is authentically Franciscan on work, workers and the workplace

--Ecology--

- 1) to promote simple living by reducing material needs and by curbing the thirst for possession and the domineering power that may come from ownership
- 2) to create an understanding of kinship with creation in the context of the desire of the brothers and sisters to be instruments of...peace

--Family--

- 1) to encourage the sisters and brothers, single and married, widowed or divorced, to cultivate a spirit of prayer, peace, fidelity, and respect for life at every stage of human development within their own families, their fraternities and in the community at large
- 2) to encourage each fraternity to strive to become for its members a real family in every sense of the word<sup>22</sup>

In her Provincial Minister's Report to the Provincial Council in 1990, Marie Amore said the following:

**A Look at the Future**

**The entire Secular Order is growing with a new vision; a clearer picture of what God, His Church and our Rule calls us to be. We need to see with prophetic vision the direction and leadership that the Holy Spirit is revealing in these times. We are conscious of ourselves as adults able to govern and be responsible for our own fraternities. Our formation is geared to a Secular not a religious spirituality. Our fraternities are not isolated local fraternities but each is interdependent and related to other fraternities.**

**As we look ahead, we are more and more aware of the mission and ministry of the Secular Franciscan Order: TO BUILD A MORE FRATERNAL AND EVANGELICAL WORLD. The focus of our formation both Initial and On-going is to help us to make choices in our daily lives that are consistent with that mission and ministry. We, as elected members of this Provincial Council, should rededicate ourselves to helping the fraternities to be the place where that vision and experience of a loving, encouraging and supporting family comes to life.**

**Thanks to all of you who give time, effort and sometimes sacrifice financial gain for the Order. May God reward you.**

Marie Amore, Provincial Minister

<sup>22</sup> Wicks, William. *A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States*, vol. III, pgs.199-202.



Also included in her 1990 report to the Council, Marie gave the following statistics concerning the Secular Order:

Local Secular Fraternities	41
Emerging Fraternities (La Crosse, Ludington)	2
Local Active Membership	1497
Candidates	105
Priest Fraternity Membership	208

On January 1, 1991, a draft of Regional Statutes (Guidelines) appeared in the hands of Provincial Ministers to share with their respective Councils. In this report such issues as definition of the Regional Fraternity, the election of the [executive] Council and job descriptions of each officer, the Regional Chapter, the Common Fund of the Regional Fraternity, and the responsibilities of the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) were listed. A draft of the purpose of the Regional Council appeared as follows:

- a) To foster co-operation and communion among the local Fraternities, to suggest helpful policies to the Regional Chapter and to carry out the decisions and policies of the Regional Chapter;
- b) To foster contact with other branches of the Franciscan family within the Region;
- c) To make the charism of our Seraphic Father present in the life and mission within the Region;
- d) To promote knowledge of the Franciscan way of life and commitment to it;
- e) To approve the formation program for instruction of Postulants (Inquirers) and Novices (Candidates) in the local fraternities;
- f) To provide a forum for discussion of common problems and goals;
- g) To be a voice in the public forum for Third Order Franciscans;
- h) To represent Third Order (Secular) Franciscans in contacts with other church or civil organizations, and to promote mutual relationships with such other organizations when appropriate;
- i) To make Fraternal and Pastoral Visits to local Fraternities when requested, and when the life of the Fraternity necessitates it;
- j) To provide, in general, for the life of Third Order (Seculars) at the level of the Regional Fraternity;
- k) To present the agenda for the Annual Regional Chapter.<sup>23</sup>

Marie Amore distributed the following report to the local fraternities. No cover letter was included, but another letter pre-dated this report asking for a special collection to be taken up in the fraternities to offset recent provincial expenses.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps, then, this was to remind fraternity members of all that the province did for them. The entire report lists 32 ways of servitude. The entire list is available in our archives.<sup>25</sup> A few points are featured here:

#### How Does the Province Serve the Fraternities

- 1. prepares, codes, and mails the quarterly bulletin FRANCISCAN LIFE;
- 2. offers weekly Mass for living and deceased of the Province;
- 3. answers letters and communications to assist fraternities in their development & growth;
- 4. makes annual pastoral and fraternal visitations to all fraternities;
- 5. conducts special workshops on Leadership, Franciscanism, Community and Formation;
- 6. promotes new fraternities and prepares for their canonical establishment;
- 7. pays expenses of Provincial representation at National meetings;
- 8. keeps fraternities informed of Franciscan happenings on all levels—international, national, and provincial levels by writing, publishing, and distributing special informational items.

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<sup>23</sup> NAFRA. "Suggested Model For the Drafting of Regional Statutes in the [USA]", draft 1, pg.3.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix A

<sup>25</sup> "How Does the Province Serve the Fraternities," located in SFO archives "Letters: 1991" folder.

At the National level, Regionalization Chair Richard Morton wrote an article in our National Newsletter (Spring, 1991) which updated all members regarding the move toward Regionalization. His article is interesting and is worth reading.<sup>26</sup> Interesting to note, Richard Morton was elected as National Minister in the fall of 1991 and presided at our Provincial elections in September, 1992. Those elected as Officers were the following:

Jean Platz, Provincial Minister  
John Terranova, Provincial Vice-Minister

Marie Criste, Provincial Secretary  
Jennie Dziennik, Provincial Treasurer

In his address to the members present, Richard emphasized that "the Secular Franciscan Order is at a crossroads and the future is uncertain. This time of transition is a challenge for all Seculars. Our Order will grow and regionalization will strengthen us." Father Ken Reinhart OFM Cap added, **"we must concentrate on our similarities and not the minor differences. This is truly our Order and it will grow if we really believe in the Franciscan movement and its relevance for our time. Collaboration will mean new attitudes of trust and co-operation. We can work together, that has been proven. The First Order needs the Seculars. Leadership must have a vision, a dream, for the future. The vision for today and tomorrow must agree with the dream of our founding Father Francis."**<sup>27</sup> (Bold font added for emphasis by editor)

Outgoing Provincial Minister Marie Amore was distinguished at having served in this position for nine years. In her closing remarks she said, "I leave office well aware that the Province as we know it is going to be disappearing as all the Provinces will. I am grateful to the Province of St. Joseph, whose guidance has led us through these years of adolescence to a greater maturity. We will always be mindful of our roots and of the loving care which brought us into being. I look forward to a future for the Secular Franciscan Order which is just beginning to emerge—a new spirit—that of unification; each fraternity being part of the whole; each taking the best of the parent province and bringing all fraternities up to a better level of understanding, formation; proud of their identity, able to govern and lead their fraternities as instruments of God."<sup>28</sup>

Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap thanked all who attended the 1992 Elective Chapter. He said of Marie that she "has served heroically over the years. The last three years have been difficult because of the many changes which Seculars have not always understood. Marie, as always, has given her very best, and is recognized as a true leader on the National and International level who inspires, encourages, and has great compassion for those in need." Fr. Ulric then gave some statistics regarding Spiritual Assistance in the Province:<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to add that there was no organized program to develop lay Spiritual Assistants at this time, but sometimes Seculars were appointed.

District I (Indiana)	3 fraternities	1 friar 2 diocesan priests
District II (Lower Michigan)	4 fraternities	7 friars 1 deacon
District III (Northern Wisconsin)	5 fraternities	2 friars (one serves 2 fraternities) 1 diocesan priest 1 religious sister

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<sup>26</sup> Appendix B

<sup>27</sup> Reinhart, Kenneth OFM Cap, Provincial Minister. Remark made at the Provincial Council mtg. at Schoenstatt Center, Waukesha, WI, September 18-20, 1992, pg.5 .

<sup>28</sup> Amore, Marie. "Provincial Minister's Report- 1992", pg. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Buening, Fr. Ulric. "Provincial spiritual Assistant Report", Sept. 2, 1992, pgs. 2 & 4.



District IV (Central Wisconsin)	6 fraternities	5 friars 1 without a spiritual assistant
District V (Southern Wisconsin)	13 fraternities	5 friars, 1 religious priest 3 diocesan priests, 2 deacons 1 religious sister, 1 Secular Franciscan
District VI (Montana & Wyoming)	3 fraternities	3 friars
District VII (Upper Michigan)	2 fraternities	2 friars

Carol Nickasch SFO sent a letter, which was the collaborative work of the entire pro-tem council, to all members thanking them for coming to the first Regionalization discernment meeting. In the letter she mentioned that 21 Fraternities were present and approximately 56 people attending. The day began with prayer by Ken Beattie SFO and then a presentation on Regionalization by Fr. Reynold Jarecki. Forms were handed out for the ministers of local fraternities to sign that their fraternity was willing to merge into a new Region. The form passed out appears below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_ fraternity,  
(minister/ representative) (name of fraternity)

at \_\_\_\_\_ in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby  
(church or meeting place)

commit our fraternity to the task of forming a Secular Franciscan Region in Upper Michigan and Wisconsin. By our prayer and our actions we pledge support to this endeavor. As a sign of unity, this project will be a priority in our fraternity life.

At this same meeting Carol gave a presentation regarding naming our new Region. It was a type of contest as it were. She encouraged each Fraternity to consider Franciscan Saints and Blesseds to discern if they would be appropriate as a name for our Region. Our name, she said, should reflect who we are. The new name cannot be the same of any existing Province or Fraternity. All proposals were to be sent to her at the Franciscan Center address. The vote to name our new Region was taken on March 27, 1993. The "short list" included these 5 names: Manuela Mattioli, Thomas Moore, La Verna, Brother Juniper, and Blessed Luchesio and Buonadonna. Others were suggested, but they were either already named for another Region or were not Franciscan names. "La Verna" was voted in as the name of our emerging Region.

In our archives is a document preserved by Fr. Ulric which was a working model of the proposed Regional Statutes (Guidelines). The entire paper can be viewed.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Appendix C



Jean Platz was Provincial Minister from 1992-1995. In her final Report she said, "[It] has been a year of joy and frustration, growth and change, work and play, good times and bad." She gave the final statistics of the Province: 35 fraternities, 1169 Active Members, 578 Excused Members, 52 Candidates, and 53 Professions for a total membership of 1,747.

#### Deactivation of the Province:

"For a smooth transition when the Province is deactivated, we should approve a motion at the September Provincial Council meeting to continue as long as there is a fraternity still within St. Joseph Province. Once the last fraternity has been transferred out of the provincial jurisdiction, the province is defunct. Fr. Ulric will contact a lawyer...for legal advice so that the transfer to regional status will be smooth. One possibility is that the assets would be pro-rated per member and the money would be given to the region where the membership then resides. The Provincial Council should notify all the fraternities when the Province is dissolved in order to inform them on changing their wills to reflect the new legal body. This is to make sure the money will go to the correct group and not be refused because of legalities."<sup>31</sup>

In April of 1994 **pro-tem** Officers were appointed. They were Ken Beattie as Minister, Dennis Bernier as Vice-Minister, Carol Nickasch as Secretary and Dolores Scharf as Treasurer. Councilors were Karen Nehls, Joan Schaap and Marie Neubauer. They were to serve until the first council of our newly-established region was formally elected. We still were not officially a Region.

Within a couple of months a 1-800-LAVERNA phone line was set up with Carol Nickasch, the council began working on a region logo, and tentative Mission Statements were discussed.<sup>32</sup> The final MISSION STATEMENT, dated November 21, 1994, was sent to all fraternities. This is what we profess today.

#### Secular Franciscan Order La Verna Region Mission Statement

La Verna Region, born of seven Secular Franciscan Provinces, is formed for all Secular Franciscans in Upper Michigan and Wisconsin.

We committed to our Secular Vocation to follow Christ in the spirit of St. Francis by collaboration in rebuilding the Church.

#### We will:

Live in society as true Brothers and Sisters,  
Follow the Gospel, Rule, Constitutions and Guidelines of  
the Secular Franciscan Order,  
Become a visible sign in the Church by affirming and  
rebuilding the Church in the spirit of St. Francis,  
Participate in frequent Eucharist and Daily Prayer,

<sup>31</sup> Platz, Jean. Executive Council Mtg. Secular Franciscan Province of St. Joseph. Nov. 12-14, 1993, pg.5.

<sup>32</sup> Appendix D

Ken Beattie and the other members of the Council set goals for 1995. These were:

1. to encourage communication between the pro-tem council and Provinces within our emerging region, including the friars, local fraternities and provincial ministers;
2. to encourage all fraternities to actively participate in regional & district meetings and visitations;
3. to present a workshop to include initial and on-going formation and recruitment.

The pro-tem council discussed the question of maintaining the Provincial (soon to be Regional) office in Milwaukee. Office expenses came to \$2,200. per month which included salary, insurance, taxes, and rent. Was a central office and a full-time secretary a necessity? The Sisters of St. Francis offered us office space in their St. Joseph Convent, 1501 So. Layton Blvd. in Milwaukee. This helped keep expenses in line. What was to be done with the Province assets (computer, file cabinets, tables, etc.) Who will pay for travel expenses for regional visitations? Who will pay stipends to the friars for their services to the local fraternities? A listing of receipts and disbursements for 7/93 thru 6/95 is given in the appendix.<sup>33</sup>

Sylvia Marmurowicz, the office Secretary, wrote a touching article in *Franciscan Life*.<sup>34</sup> Coincidentally, this would be the last issue published. This was a fine tribute to Father Ulric Buening OFM Cap.

"Fr. Ulric has been the guiding force behind the Province for more years than most of us can remember. Some of us feared him at first until we saw through his loud booming voice and his large stature. It is quite obvious that his main concern is for us Seculars under his care... Working with him these past fourteen and a half years has given me somewhat of an understanding of this friar. His main goal in life is to make sure that each one of us becomes the best Secular Franciscan that we can [be]. His insistence on our keeping well-informed on the happenings of our Order, his lugging of books and other materials up and down stairs and in and out of doors, his endless reading of anything Catholic, Franciscan, surely lets us know that we are the priority of his life. Oh, the Bears may sneak into his thoughts, and perhaps fishing might also, but even these have to stand aside when the Seculars call.

[Father's] work and his fine Franciscan example have been one of the best formational instruments we have had. He, along with the various province ministers, have molded us into what we are today. As we emerge into our regions, we know that he is with us. He sits with us on various Regional Councils as a member of the College of Friars. We will not lose the vast knowledge he carries; we will still be subjected to his close scrutiny; we will profit from his many years of Franciscan living.

Thank you, Fr. Ulric for each mile you traveled for our benefit. Thank you for the pats on the back you gave us all; we know they were sincere. Thank you for showing us how to live authentic Franciscan lives. Thank you for not asking us to do something you yourself wouldn't do. Thanks you for helping us believe in ourselves. Thank you for being with us when you could have been with your fellow Capuchins or with your family. Thank you for seeing us as family... may God reward you as only He can."

It was with great anticipation that the announcement was made that National would be approving our request to become a Region at their October Chapter, 1995. A great amount of work went into the whole procedure-- lists of duties, responsibilities and resources for example, because we had never had them before.



Fr. Ulric and Marie Bernier from St. Anthony fraternity in Marquette. In foreground was Joanne Guzik from St. John Neuman frat. in Rhinelander

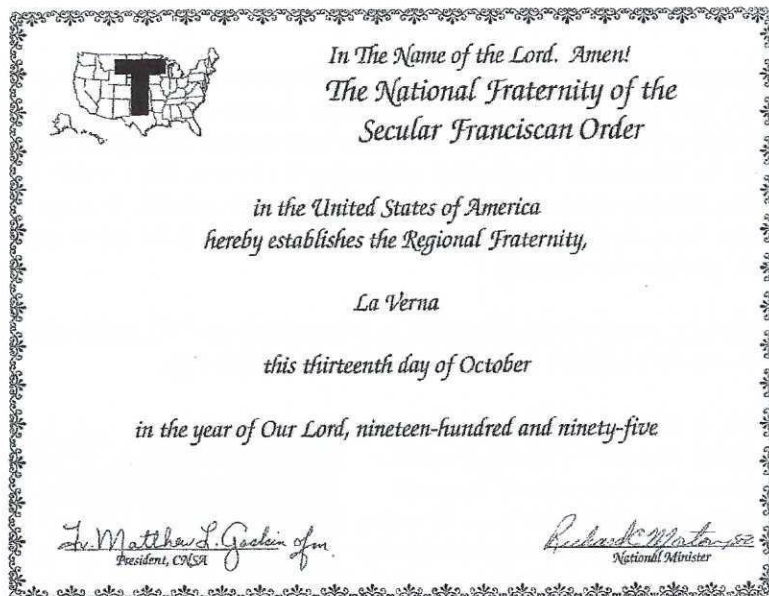
<sup>33</sup> Appendix E

<sup>34</sup> Marmurowica, Sylvia V. "Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Capuchin," *Franciscan Life* newsletter, Dec. 1995.



## Part 4- La Verna Region

We officially became the La Verna Region on October 13, 1995.<sup>35</sup>



We were named for the mountain in Italy where St. Francis spent so many days and weeks in prayer. The mount of La Verna was special to Francis. It is where he received the stigmata. La Verna is a name all Secular Franciscans relate to.

The former Capuchin St. Joseph Third Order Province, as well as the OFM Assumption Third Order Province and 5 other First-Order Provinces were now interwoven into five SFO Regions.

We weren't the first of the 5 to be established as a Region— Queen of Peace was the first established, as it was one of the experimental Regions set in October, 1992. Divine Mercy

Region was the second from the Province to become a Region in October, 1993. Our Lady of Indiana Region was the third to become a Region in Oct. 1994. Finally, La Verna and Our Lady of the Rockies both were established in October, 1995. Nationwide, the final (31<sup>st</sup>) Region to be established was The Tau Cross Region in October, 1997.

A notice appeared in our La Verna VISION newsletter that representatives of all Region fraternities were invited to the "1<sup>st</sup> Big Celebration" as a Region. It would be held on Saturday, April 27, 1996 at St. Joseph Convent in Stevens Point. The article concluded with "come and share the joy of our establishment and also our first elections."

We were still operating with a pro-tem Council— elections of our first Regional Executive Council wouldn't be held until spring, 1996. See Appendix F for the map of new La Verna Region.

Five Regions Created



1- Our Lady of the Rockies  
 2- Queen of Peace

3- La Verna  
 4- Divine Mercy  
 5- Our Lady of Indiana

<sup>35</sup> Document of Establishment signed by Richard Morton SFO, National Minister.



The results of the first Region Executive Council were as follows:

Ken Beattie- Regional Minister	Ed Hokans- Upper Michigan Councilor
Carol Nickasch- Regional Vice-Minister	Kathryn Sutliff- Central Wisconsin Councilor
Sylvia Marmurowicz- Regional Secretary	Rodney Knier- Fox Valley Councilor
Dolores Scarf- Regional Treasurer	Karen Nehls- Southeast Wisconsin Councilor



Ken Beattie SFO, Regional Minister

Dorothy Henkes- appointed Regional Formation Minister  
 Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap. appointed Regional Spiritual Assistant to the Executive Council by his Provincial Minister  
 Rev. Kenneth Reinhart OFM Cap.

Also appointed as Regional SA's were Bro. Jim Buda OFM by Provincial Minister Fr. Paul Rezek OFM. and Fr. Michael Goodavish OFM Conv.



LA Verna - SFO - REGION

Besides having a new name, we now had a Region Logo, the combined efforts of the first Region Executive Council elected in April, 1996. Karen Nehls gave the following description of the symbol now used in our newsletter and all official correspondences.

The TAU CROSS and the HEART are joined together as one denoting the goal of the union of the whole person (heart) with the Crucified Christ in the manner of Francis— who “gloried in nothing but the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (perfect joy).

The DOVE OF PEACE, united with the Cross and the Heart indicates a common commitment and a unified effort to be instruments of peace and reconciliation and a lifting up of the mind and heart to God.

The entire design is embraced within a Romanesque ARCH signifying the Church, the Body of Christ.<sup>36</sup>

One hundred and twenty-five members attended the “Regional Celebration and Chapter of Elections.” A high-lighted event was the “TAU Cross Ceremony,” led by National Minister Richard Morton. Each OFM province represented now as a unified Region, entered its name in the form of a puzzle, to make a TAU CROSS/ The ‘crossbar’ held the words, “LA Verna REGION.” Richard said that the ‘crossbar’ represented the “ALL EMBRACING ARMS OF CHRIST,” who reaches down to make us all one... and stoops to shepherd all of our former provinces into ONE ALL-EMBRACING REGION. This was a sign that we are no longer ‘provinces’ but, sisters and brothers of the new LA Verna REGION. You could tell by the smiling faces, the camaraderie and the genuine feeling of fraternity that the SPIRIT OF THE LORD was with all assembled.<sup>37</sup>

The Executive Council met at St. Ann’s Friary in Green Bay on July, 1996. Bro. Silas Bauman OFM Cap. and Dorothy Henkes had been working on a Formation Workbook. *The Richness of the Secular Franciscan Rule: Secular Franciscan Formation* was soon be put into the hands of all local fraternities. It had 30 lessons in all-- 6 intended for Inquirers and the remaining 24 lessons for Candidates. The use of these Workbooks would not be mandatory, but fraternities would be encouraged to use this resource. Distribution was handled by the Regional office. Formation Workshops were held in the Spring of 1997.

<sup>36</sup> Nehls, Karen SFO. “La Verna Regional Newsletter Logo,” VISION, Spring, 2000, pg. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Buda, Br. Jim OFM. Editorial “Our Regional Celebration,” VISION, Summer, 1996, pg. 2.

District meetings were also discussed. Fox Valley would be the first. The district gathering would provide a means for fraternities in a given geographic location to get together, to get to know each other. It should be quality time to pass on information, share ideas, and events that have been happening. Noted also was the urging of our Spiritual Assistants to be invited. The Fox Valley District Meeting would be held at St. Andrew Church in Manitowoc Sept. 12, 1998, and the theme for the day would be "In the Spirit."

Betty Lou Pyka SFO was appointed Regional Commission Coordinator for the La Verna Region. Her letter of September, 1997, was an explanation of this appointment. It is very interesting; it can be read in its entirety.<sup>38</sup>

TAU-USA, our newly-named National Newsletter kept us informed on events happening throughout the United States. Marie Amore was appointed National Director of Vocations in Spring, 1995. Among her duties Marie would answer the National phone number 1-800-FRANCIS. In the Fall, 1997 issue of TAU, we were informed that Marie was elected as National Vice-Minister with Bill Wicks our new Minister.

The Annual Ministers' Chapter was held at St. Francis Retreat Center in Burlington, Wisconsin, May 28-31, 1998. In his opening remarks, Regional Minister Ken Beattie referred to a list that Richard Morton, National Minister, gave a few years back. Ken said these pointed to how we live the Gospel within our Franciscan way. Some of the points mentioned were as follows:

- to live the Gospel according to the spirit of St. Francis
- to commit to continual conversion
- to serve the poor
- to participate in the life and mission of the Church
- to be instruments of peace
- to love a life of prayer— personal, communal and liturgical
- to live in joy
- to be loyal to the Church in an attitude of dialogue and collaboration with her bishops and priests
- to be open to the action of the Holy Spirit
- to live in simplicity, humility and littleness

These are contained in our Rule. They call us to reflect on who we are and where we are going. Ken said also that each fraternity has become stronger, not in quantity of vocations necessarily but more so in the quality of each vocations. Becoming more aware of the foundation— origins— of being Secular Franciscans. The process of refounding/ renewing of our spirit built on Francis' life with this world and society in which we must live and work is essential to us. Each of us has been called to make a difference.

Featured presentations were given by National (NAFRA) and Regional members; they addressed the 4 Commissions: Marie Amore (Family), Roberto Cortex (Peace and Justice), Sr. Virginia Stone BVM (Ecology), and Jean Platz (Work). Roberto and Sr. Virginia work for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. A celebration commemorated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1978 Rule.

In July, 1998 another Executive Council meeting was held in Fond du Lac. The agenda follows.

- A. Opening Prayer; Introduction of Fr. Michael Goodavich OFM Conv.
- B. Review of Minutes from last meeting- changes, approval
- C. Financial report- recommended audit before 1999 Council elections
- D. Nominations Committee approval— Jim Brown, Vicky Hassle, Dale Nees, Evelyn Knuercher (we need one more person for an odd number— suggestions?)
- E. Discussion on progress of payment to IRS/WI State Taxation
- F. Discussion on Chapter of Elections for 1999
- G. Set plans for Regional Council Retreat in October
- H. Update of concerns with fraternities in UP Michigan

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<sup>38</sup> Appendix G



# I. Beginning Action Plan regarding concerns resulting from Regional Ministers Meeting in May

Agenda item "I" refers in part to a concern that a roster be made available listing all local fraternity ministers into divisions according to the 4 districts (Upper Peninsula Michigan, Central Wisconsin, Fox Valley and South-east Wisconsin). This list was made available a month later; addresses have been eliminated.<sup>39</sup>

The second La Verna Regional Meeting and Chapter of Elections was held at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Wisconsin, April 23-25, 1999. In his opening remarks, Ken Beattie gave the following statistics for the Region: Professed members- 873, Fraternities- 30, Candidates- 33, and Inquirers- 11. Marie Amore, National Vice-Minister, presided over the elections.

The results of those elections were as follows:

Ken Beattie, Region Minister (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Karen Nehls, Councilor (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)
Dale Nees, Region Vice-Minister	Kathy Sutliff, Councilor (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)
Judith Eckert, Region Secretary	Rodney Knier, Councilor (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)
Bob Nehls, Region Treasurer	Marie Neubauer, Councilor
Dorothy Henkes was appointed Formation Director (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	
Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap and Friar Dacian Bluma OFM were appointed as Regional Spiritual Assistants	

The day came to a climax as we honored our out-going Spiritual Assistants with a plaque and a beautiful cake. Honorees were Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap and Bro. Jim Buda OFM. Father Ulric had given 54 years serving as Spiritual Assistant of local Fraternities, Provincial Spiritual Assistant, and various roles with the National and International Secular Franciscan Order. Br. Jim Buda had been Regional, Provincial, and local Spiritual Assistant. Both friars' love of the Secular Franciscans was clearly felt in all they had given. Everyone present enjoyed and shared in the evening's festivities in a spirit of love and brotherhood.

DREAM 2000 was a big event held on April 15, 2000 in Milwaukee. Featured was "The Walking Way of the Cross," in which Seculars, Friars and Franciscan Sisters would pray while walking through the downtown streets. Members representing 20 fraternities in our Region joined Maria Amore representing the National Council. At each "station," prayers were read and a short reflection was given on social justice issues related to peace and non-violence. Some of the individual issues were: migrant workers, domestic violence, murder and suicide, capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion, and conflict resolution. It was a powerful time of prayer, witness and personal conversion.<sup>40</sup>

The Milwaukee Secular Franciscan Office, which recently relocated to St. Joseph Convent, would be vacated by June 30, 2000. Council members voted that with advanced communications options (computer, email, etc), a central office was no longer necessary and besides, expenses were still an issue. Critical documents would be archived elsewhere. Regional business will be conducted by contacting council members directly. General information will be posted on our new website. The website was still "under construction" thanks to the efforts of Ed Boss and help from Tony Outhwaite, editor of TAU-USA.

Father Daniel Fox OFM Cap, Provincial Minister of the Order of Francis Minor, Capuchin, presided at the Jubilee Celebration of Profession of Vows on August 4, 2000. Among those celebrating 50 years of religious life was our Regional Spiritual Assistant Fr. Lester Bach. Several Secular Franciscans from our Region attended the event at St. Lawrence Chapel, Mount Calvary.

The Spirit and Life Team (SALT) attended Chapter 2000, a 3-day event at Camp Vista in Dundee, Wisconsin

<sup>39</sup> Appendix H

<sup>40</sup> Brown, Tim and Tina SFO. "Dream 2000," Spring, 2000 issue of VISION newsletter.



Sept. 29-Oct 1. Marie Amore, Richard Morton, Ann Mulqueen, and Fr. Steve Gross OFM Conv. had as their mission to "enkindle that spirit and life contained in our Rule that we profess to as Secular Franciscans." SALT was subsidized by the Duns Scotus Trust Fund. When former attendees were asked about this event they said that they camped out in pup tents. It was a gathering of all SFO's from the Region. The Region Executive Council supplied meats, drinks, plates, pans, etc. Everyone ate together in the main dining hall. SALT was National's attempt to re-kindle the flame in our fraternities and to promote membership and community.

The Spring, 2002 issue of our La Verna VISION newsletter featured an article on Franciscan Youth by Kathy Taormina SFO of the National Youth Commission. She spoke about how to support and promote Franciscan Youth groups. Her key points, as she spoke at our Southeast District meeting, were:

1. Ensure that your local fraternity is open to and committed to working with youth.
2. Gain support from your local parish (es). This is not to compete with existing youth groups.
3. Seek out existing youth resources from your Diocesan Youth Ministry Office.

Kathy asked attendees, "How would you explain Franciscan charism and the Secular Franciscan vocation to young people?" Her answer was tell them we...

- |                                             |                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. follow Jesus                             | f. are peace-loving                                          |
| b. follow the life of St. Francis and Clare | g. try to see good in others                                 |
| c. are Gospel people                        | h. are optimists                                             |
| d. are people who love                      | i. share our gifts with each other                           |
| e. try to find God in ourselves and others  | j. are individuals as well as community with our apostolates |

The yearly Chapter Meeting was held at the Schoenstatt Center in Waukesha June 6-9, 2002. The newly-elected Executive Council was the following:

Dale Nees- Region Minister  
 Jean Platz- Region Vice-Minister  
 Richard Lepesqueur- Region Treasurer  
 Juanita Olivas- Region Secretary (Kathy Sutliff in 2003)  
 Pat Bloomquist- Region Councilor  
 Tina Brown- Region Councilor  
 Marie Neubauer- Region Councilor  
 Peter Bekkers- Region Councilor  
 Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap- Region Spiritual Assistant

Appointees to Commissions:  
 Ed Boss and Vinal Van Benthem- Formation  
 Sally Geranden- Family  
 Alvina Lensmire- Work  
 Betty Sullivan- Ecology  
 Bonnie Mayer and Kathy Sutliff- Peace and Justice  
 Jim Carlson- Youth/ Young Adults



Left to Right: Juanita Olives, Tina Brown, Dale Nees, Richard Lepesqueur

Left to Right: Ed Boss, Fr. Lester Bach, Jean Platz

(REC members not in picture: Marie Neubauer, Pat Bloomquist, Vinal Benthem, and Peter Bekkers)

The Out-Going Council prepared an article in the Fall, 2002 VISION, listing the accomplishments of the La Verna Regional Council 1999-2002 and listed considerations for the newly-elected Regional Council.

Accomplishments (in part):

- Established and maintained a Regional Website
- Achieved financial stability
- Solidified the purpose, structure and publication strategy of the Regional Newsletter
- Gathered for a Regional Council retreat
- Hosted the Spirit and Life Team twice during the term
- Clarified the current state of Spiritual Assistants in the Region
- Assured regular visitations in our fraternities

Considerations for New Council (in part)

- Establish a Regional & District calendar that extends beyond your term
- Set Council goals to assure accountability and evaluate progress
- Do not attempt to go it alone. Rather, rely on the Spirit
- Inquire and listen
- Encourage the clustering of local fraternity gatherings
- Evaluate the adequacy of the Spiritual Assistant stipend
- Pray for each other...often, and be grateful for the diverse gifts you possess as a group

The 16<sup>th</sup> Quinquennial Congress- sometimes just called the "Q" was held July 2-7, 2002, in New Orleans. Keynote presentations centered on the tri-fold theme: TAU- Transformation, Apostleship, and Unity.

In October of that year, at the annual NAFRA meeting, Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap was appointed the president-in-turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA).

The Region's spring, 2003 District Gatherings had the theme *Take the Next Step* with SFO Commissions. In breakout groups discussed our commissions and how they can be better utilized in our fraternities. It was the intent that each Secular choose this opportunity to better know and understand the importance of our Rule...specifically Articles 15-19 with respect to our commissions. Ed Boss SFO summarized points brought forth from these gatherings.<sup>41</sup>

### Dreams and Recommendations for Our Journey

#### Article 15- Justice

Dispel gossip and rumors. Be aware of what's happening in politics. Work with food and domestic violence shelters. Check with healthcare providers about options for senior medicine care. Run for leadership positions. Become active in peace and justice movements/ ministries.

#### Article 16- Work

Use our personal God given talents and learn new skills. Be a fair supervisor. Work with the right attitude. Promote fair work laws for the poor in other countries and USA. Continue in time-fulfilling work. Love your work, even if an unsung hero. Pray for others in your workplace. Show and verbalize work appreciation.

#### Article 17- Family

Family is beyond our home walls. Help SFO fraternities in the "desert" with special formation teams advocating vocations in their parish churches. Reconcile with family members: fidelity with family, discernment with children. Have a living will/ trust. Plan ahead with family, set goals: college, church activities.

#### Article 18- Ecology

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<sup>41</sup> Boss, Ed. "Dreams and Recommendations for Our Journey." VISION, Winter, 2003, pg. 5.



Join or sponsor community gardens. Avoid over-consumption of material or financial products. Teach others to respect God's creatures/ earth. Adopt-a-Highway program. Your daily life is your best natural resource...don't waste your energy.

#### Article 19- Peace

Find Christ in everyone. Love your neighbor as yourself. Bring joy and hope into others. Study ways to dialog with others in each fraternity.

Marie Neubauer had to resign as Councilor to the UP District. The 2 fraternities in Escanaba and Marquette will join the Central District and Pat Bloomquist will represent both areas as Councilor. Another replacement was Kathy Sutliff for Juanita Olivas as Region Secretary. Kathy worked to align our Region database with NAFRA so that everyone can receive both the TAU-USA and the La Verna VISION Newsletters and so that information on membership can be attained easily by our Region.

There was a Visitation from National Minister Carol Gentile at the May, 2004 Chapter in Marathon. Her keynote address was entitled "Embracing Our Way of Life." Carol detailed what she called the 6 stages of living our commitment to live as Secular Franciscans. 1) The Call- We are pulled from our preoccupations to a response; 2) The Declaration- We make our commitment for life not thinking about what sacrifices may lay ahead; 3) The Involvement- There is a sacrifice always. We must begin to do what we say we will do; 4) Purpose and Meaning- We must use the gifts we have been given to their fullest. If we are unable to DO, we pray for others to do it; 5) Struggle- We have to struggle to grow. Change can occur on a personal level, but also our fraternities are in change and struggle; 6) Divine Identity- Commitment is no longer just what I do, but it is who I am. Trust in God. Let His will be done.<sup>42</sup>

Ministers (or delegates) from these fraternities were present for Chapter 2004.

St. Joseph (Appleton) Charlotte Rossmessl	Sacred Heart (Oshkosh) Susan Paulin
St. Ann (Green Bay) Joan Faltynski	St. Pascal Baylon (Burlington) Jim Carlson
St. Joseph (Fond du Lac) Bonnie Parish	St. Francis (Milwaukee) Richard Lepesqueur
Holy Innocents (Manitowoc) Margaret Senzig	St. Josaphat (Milwaukee) Mary Fedor
St. Francis Xavier (Menasha) Donald Stoegbauer	Portiuncula (Franklin) Ken Beattie
St. Anthony (Marathon) Alvina Lensmire	Queen of the Universe (Woodruff) Nancy Kokstis
St. John Neumann (Rhinelander) Kathryne Sutliff	St. Francis (Escanaba) Betty Rogers
St. Peter (Stevens Point) Karen Poffinbarger	St. Anthony of Padua (Marquette) Bob Henning

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<sup>42</sup> Gentile, Carol SFO. Keynote Address (in part) from Chapter, 2004, Marathon, Wisconsin.

St. James (Wausau)  
Pauline Riedl

Queen of Heaven (Wisconsin Rapids)  
Frederick Ellis

A Regional Chapter of Elections was held at St. Anthony's Retreat Center in Marathon the weekend of May 20-22, 2005. New Regional Council members were:

Ken Beattie- Regional Minister  
Don Ryder- Regional Vice-Minister  
Kathy Sutliff- Regional Secretary  
Peter Bekkers- Regional Treasurer  
Jim Carlson- Councilor for Fox Valley

Mary Fedor- Councilor for South-East  
Bob Henning- Councilor for UP Michigan  
Lee Ann Niebuhr- Councilor for Central  
Fr. Lester Bach- Regional Spiritual Assistant  
Jean Platz (appointed) Formation Director  
Judy Stouffer (appointed) Webmaster



Standing Left to Right: Bob Henning, Peter Bekkers, Fr. Lester Bach, Ken Beattie, Jim Carlson

Sitting Left to Right: Kathy Sutliff, Lee Ann Niebuhr, Mary Fedor, Jean Platz. Don Ryder not present.

John Sanborn from National presided at our elections and Fr. Marty Pable OFM Cap. was appointed Ecclesiastic witness. Fr. Bach introduced a new guide called "Helps and Hints." It is intended for Region Council members. Chapters address such issues as running a local fraternity council meeting,

fraternity life, elections, spiritual assistance, and requesting and preparing for visitation.

Statistics were given by out-going minister: There were 21 fraternities in the Region, 619 professed members, and 28 in formation.

Judy Stouffer, a member of the St. Joseph Fraternity in Appleton completely redesigned and was now maintaining our La Verna website. The site was <http://www.rc.net/sfo.laverna/>. A few of the links were "Who is Saint Francis", "Find a Local Fraternity", "Regional Executive Council", "Upcoming Events" and many, many others.

The Regional Executive Council (REC) met in October, 2005, to discuss among other things the goal of district meetings. They concluded that the goal was to renew the flame of life within our fraternities by deepening the spiritual life of everyone who attends. How could we best help the members of our region live their Franciscan lifestyle more fully? The council focused on three areas: renewing the passion for our calling within our current membership, recruiting new members, and encouraging new leaders within our fraternities. It was announced that Don, Mary and Lee Ann will write a Leadership Guidebook to accompany Fr. Bach's new



book *Capturing the Spirit*.

TAU-USA reported in their Winter issue that in November Fr. Bach and National Minister Carol Gentile flew to Assisi to deliver opening addresses at the General Chapter of the Order. This was an international event and the talks had to be translated into 4 languages. Fr. Bach's talk focused on the relationship between structures and vision within the SFO. The 3 main issues discussed were "What is our vision of Church for today, reflecting both on the early Church and the Church of Vatican II", "How did Francis influence his world and give new life to gospel living, examining his call to rebuild the church" and "What is the vision of Secular Franciscans today according to the Rule of 1978". Carol's complete address is available in our archives files.

"La Novitas Franciscana"  
International Gathering in Assisi, Italy  
Pictured Left to Right: Fr. Michael  
Higgins TOR, CGSA, Deacon Juan  
Lezcano SFO, Encarnacion del Pozo  
OFS, Minister General, Carol Gentile  
SFO, National Minister, Fr. Richard  
Trezza OFM, Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap.



Father Roch Niemier OFM was appointed Provincial Spiritual Assistant for the Assumption Province and would be working with Fr. Bach. The 4 fraternities under this province are St. Peter (Stevens Point), St. Ann (Green Bay), St. Paschal Baylon (Wind Lake), and Portiuncula (Franklin).

The year 2006 began with Lee Ann Niebuhr assuming the position of Regional Vice-Minister when Don Ryder resigned for personal health reasons. "TAU" was chosen by the Regional Council as the theme for the next three years, focusing on each letter separately. The Spring edition of our VISION wrote the following article:

T..... Transformation (2006)  
A..... Action (2007)  
U..... Unity (2008)

We are people of the TAU. St. Francis selected the sign of the TAU as the symbol of his vocation and that of his followers. He marked the places he lived and the letters he wrote with the TAU. May we wear it as a sign of the Gospel life we have professed to live.

This year (2006) the focus will be on Transformation. Transformation suggests "change" and "conversion". Let us recall some of the transforming moments of our own lives. Let us think about some changes we might engage in that would make a difference in the lives around us. How has the transforming power of Christ entered into our lives?



Our Regional Chapter met at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon the weekend of June 16-18. Representatives from 17 local fraternities and the executive council were present. The gathering opened with a Memorial Service for members who died during the past year. Attendees could choose any 2 of 3 workshops that Saturday afternoon. The workshop topics were Leadership, Formation, and Recruitment. Fr. Lester Bach encouraged local councils to look for people to take the *Life Giving Union* course for future Spiritual Assistants in the Region. He reminded all attendees that there are not enough friars to provide fraternities with SA's. Donations for the Maasai tribe "Well Project" would continue with Don Ryder heading the project. The completed Leadership Guide collectively compiled by Lee Ann Niebuhr, Mary Fedor, and Don Ryder which was to accompany Fr. Bach's book *Capturing the Spirit* was introduced. All fraternity representatives were encouraged to purchase a copy for their fraternities.

NAFRA held its 2006 Chapter of Elections at St. Anthony's and La Verna Region hosted the event. So many people helped make this a truly memorable event even though it was a lot of work. Kathy Sutliff kept track of registrations, Pat Bloomquist organized the "Day Away" event, Peter Bekkers was the transportation man, Jim Carlson was the official "bell hop", Ken Beattie introduced everyone as emcee; Mary Fedor stuffed 90 folders with handouts, and Lee Ann Niebuhr helped with the Memorial Service honoring all members who had died across the U.S. during the course of the year.



Attendees at the NAFRA Chapter of Elections, October 24-29, 2006

Sadly, just three weeks later, Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap. passed away. His obituary appeared in our VISION newsletter as follows:



Fr. Ulric Buening died November 16, 2006 in Kaukauna, Wisconsin. Father was well known to the SFO's in the La Verna Region as he served as Provincial Spiritual Assistant for many years and visited each fraternity in the region on an annual basis.

He was born in Fennimore, Wisconsin on May 13, 1927. Most of his priestly life was spent working with the SFO's on local, national and international levels. Although stationed at St. Francis in Milwaukee, he spent most of his time on the road. He guided the fraternities into the vision of the lay apostolate coming from Vatican II and into a greater Franciscan identity. He was part of the process of helping SFO's develop their own leadership and mission.

A diagnosis of cancer brought about retirement; he lived at St. Paul Nursing Home until the time of his death.<sup>43</sup> We have all been blessed by his dedicated service.

In the year 2007 we shifted our emphasis to "action". Not only does our Rule call us to action, it specifies where we as Seculars should concentrate our action. We are called in Articles 14-18 to "build a more fraternal world", we should be "promoting justice", we should "esteem work", we should "cultivate the Franciscan spirit in our families", and we are called to "universal kinship" with all of creation. These calls are what prompted the development of the Commissions, to assist us as Seculars in living out our Rule, going from "gospel to life and

<sup>43</sup> Article from La Verna VISION, Winter, 2006 issue, pg. 6. The last sentence was expressed by Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap.



life to gospel”.

Our La Verna Chapter was held June 15-17 and followed in traditional Franciscan footsteps with inspirational and life-giving renewal. It's always a special time when we assemble with our Franciscan brothers and sisters. This year we had a Visitation from Patrick Mendes SFO, National Minister and Fr. Kevin Queally TOR, National Spiritual Assistant. Our National visitors talked about lapsed, active, and active excused SFOs, Fair Share contributions, fund raisers, and much more. It is a time to answer questions we might have on a variety of concerns within our fraternities at large. Sr. Jolynn Brehm FSPA gave a presentation entitled “Living the SFO Rule”. The current Rule removes traces of monastic thinking, said Sr. Jolynn, and incorporates Vatican II. Profession is not to religious life but an affirmation of Baptism and Confirmation.

Statistics of our Regional membership were the following: We have 485 Professed Members, 22 Candidates, 12 Inquirers; we currently have 19 established fraternities and one more emerging.

Each representative of our local fraternities was asked to bring a small container of water for a ritual prayer service. Don Ryder, a member of the St. James fraternity in Wausau, talked about the Kenya Water Project. The nomadic Maasai tribe raises cattle goats; the tribal women walk about 15 miles through dangerous territory to fetch water. They share water with their livestock. Added to this, there was a drastic water shortage resulting in much of their livestock, crops and tribal members dying. Don is co-founder with his partner Romey Wagner of the Kenyan Water Project. They want to raise enough money to drill a deep well which will provide enough water safe enough for all to drink.



Lee Ann Niebuhr involved all present at Chapter in a prayer service which included pouring our individual containers of water into one large bowl, then re-filling them with the “new” water. Lee Ann also gave each minister or delegate a “rungu” from Africa. In Maasai culture, the rungu is an important emblem of warrior status for young males. A special one is held by the designated speaker at important tribal gatherings. Local women oftentimes sew decorative beads onto the handles. Each fraternity representative was given a rungu as a thank-you from the Maasai tribe for our contributions to the water project.

The Executive Council was informed in late October, 2007 at their planning event weekend at Marywood that NAFRA was working on changing the current four Apostolic Commissions (Justice and Peace, Family, Work, and Ecology) into one, calling it the acronym JPIC which stands for Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation. Through much prayer and study, it was determined that it was time to re-evaluate our efforts and structures in order to serve the Church and all people as fully as possible as Secular Franciscans. “The Holy Spirit is stirring us to open our eyes and hearts with greater generosity to the life and mission of the Church.”<sup>44</sup> We are now making an effort to journey from the “doing” to the “being” of our vocation. The goals of JPIC, later published in our La Verna VISION are as follows:



- a) To foster an atmosphere in fraternity, the privileged place, where with openness and trust, we may share with each other, the manner in which our personal conversions are shaping our Franciscan lives;
- b) To reinforce the appreciation of the dignity of the human person in the choices made in our professed lives by responding in charity and patience to all we meet and to respond as Franciscans to anything which would denigrate the dignity of the human person, beginning with our own personal communications with one another;

<sup>44</sup> Brandwein-Ball, Pat SFO. “Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation: Formation”, TAU-USA, Spring issue, 2008, pg.23.



- c) To assist in the living out of obedience to the common good as intended by God so that the professed Secular Franciscan builds up all that is good for all of Creation and does nothing which would damage the fabric of communal interdependence;
- d) To strengthen the professed Seculars' commitment to solidarity with all of Creation enabling them to make those choices in life which would bring about a more fraternal and evangelical world.<sup>45</sup>



Members of FAN. You might recognize Tom Bello, Ken Beattie and Jan Parker

At their Annual Chapter in October, NAFRA also voted to join the Franciscan Action Network (FAN). This is a faith-based legislative advocacy organization with a growing national base of persons who are inspired by the witness and example of Francis and Clare of Assisi. FAN's mission is to bring a coordinated and effective voice to matters of peace, justice and care of creation to Washington, D.C. FAN serves a wider goal, pooling our common Franciscan Family's dedication and numbers, to influence social issues that are important to Franciscans in the USA and hopefully even internationally. Members include Franciscan Friars, Sisters and Seculars as well as other lay groups.

"Unity" was the theme for our 2008 District Gatherings. Father Lester Bach gave a presentation at the three meetings. This marked the 30<sup>th</sup> year of the Pauline Rule for the Secular Franciscans, and in 2009 the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1<sup>st</sup> Rule of St. Francis. Plans were discussed how to celebrate by individual districts and by our La Verna Region.

Patrick Mendes, NAFRA Minister, presided over our 2008 Region Council elections and confirmed all elected members. Friar Tom Zelinski OFM Cap was appointed Ecclesial Witness. The elections were held at St. Anthony's in Marathon. The new officers were:

Ken Beattie- Regional Minister  
 Jim Carlson- Regional Vice-Minister  
 Kathy Sutliff- Regional Secretary  
 Peter Bekkers- Regional Treasurer  
 Rodney Knier- Regional Councilor  
 Bob Henning- Regional Councilor  
 Jeanne Thill- Regional Councilor  
 Pat Yates- Regional Councilor



Back Row: Rodney Knier, Kathy Sutliff, Peter Bekkers and Bob Henning  
 Middle Row: Jeanne Thill, Pat Yates, Jim Carlson  
 Front: Minister Ken Beattie

On Sunday morning of Chapter, eight questions were handed out to all attendees and enough copies for each of their fraternity members. The questions were suggested by our International Fraternity in order to stimulate each person to seriously contemplate their vocation to the SFO. The questions were as follows:

1. To what degree is your being Secular Franciscan an essential part of your life: Is you life in Fraternity only a meeting among many others?
2. What can you do to be more involved in the intimate life of the SFO?

<sup>45</sup> "NAFRA/ JPIC" article in VISION, Summer, 2009, pg. 9.



3. Profession by its nature is a permanent commitment. Do you live it as such?
4. a) Why, according to you, is the local Fraternity so important in the life of the SFO?  
b) To what extent is your Fraternity helping you to accomplish what your Profession demands of you?
5. a) Does the Fraternity help you to remain faithful to your Profession and give you a sense of *belonging*?  
b) To what extent do you work to help the brothers and sisters of your Fraternity to achieve these goals?
6. a) Why did you want to enter the SFO?  
b) What contribution do you give to the SFO by means of your Profession and your presence?
7. To what extent do you believe the new Rule (1978) has contributed to the changes that have taken place in the way of "feeling" the Order and "being" part of it?
8. a) Do you believe that the sense of *belonging* that you live today corresponds genuinely to what the Order truly is, to its "nature" and to its mission?  
b) Or does it correspond to something else that belongs to the past or to a personal conception of the Order?  
– If you think that there is not a sufficient sense of belonging to the Order, what are the reasons, according to you?

Responses were tabulated and distributed to the Executive Council for discussion. Some answers were quite personal. Attempts will be made in the future to address some of these issues, especially in areas where we can improve as a Region fraternity. The results were also forwarded to the International Council.

Fr. Bach distributed a current list of local Spiritual Assistants to our Region fraternities.

St. Joseph (Appleton) Vinal Van Benthem SFO	St. Anthony (Milwaukee) Fr. Anthony Cirigani OFM
St. Ann (Green Bay) Fr. Richard Tulko OFM	St. Anthony (Marquette) Sr. Colleen Sweeting OSF
St. Joseph (Fond du Lac) Fr. Joachim Strupp OFM Cap	St. Anthony (Marathon) Fr. Dan Crosby OFM Cap
Holy Innocents (Manitowoc) Fr. Thomas Wojchichowski OFM	St. John Neumann (Rhinelander) Sr. Marie Vinton
St. Francis Xavier (Menasha) Bro. Robert Toemer OFM Cap	St. Peter (Stevens Point) Fr. Silas Baumann OFM Cap
Sacred Heart (Oshkosh) Fr. Arthur Cooney OFM Cap	St. James (Wausau) Sr. John Marie Simien
St. Paschal Baylon (Burlington) Fr. Linus Kopczewski OFM	Our Lady Queen of the Universe (Woodruff) Sr. Roselyn Heil FSPA
St. Josaphat (Milwaukee) Fr. James Ciaramitaro OFM Conv	Our Lady Queen of Heaven (Wis. Rapids) Fr. Thomas Zelinski OFM Cap
Portiuncula (Franklin) Fr. James Gannon OFM	St. Clare (Greenfield) no appointment yet St. Francis (Escanaba) appointment in process

Father Bach also gave statistics of membership in the United States as he was the National Spiritual Assistant at this time. In the USA there are 674 fraternities, down from 718 in 2008. There are 14,722 professed members, a decline of 1,089 from last year. There are 1,245 Candidates, an increase of 37 and 898 Inquirers, an increase of 48 over the previous year. There are 44 emerging fraternities, an increase of 7 from 2008.



Formation Team 2011: Lee Ann Niebuhr, JoAnn Boss, Lizanne Schlrud and Carol Bekkers. (Pauline Riedl was missing from the photo)

It was decided that the theme for 2009 District Gatherings would be "Information," to begin a 3-year cycle. The theme for Year 2 would be "Formation" and the theme for Year 3 would be "Transformation". The Formation Team consisted of Jean Platz, Pauline Riedl, Carol Bekkers, Lee Ann Niebuhr and JoAnn Boss. JoAnn reminded the Council, "Information is the map, Formation is the compass, and the journey along the path leads us to Transformation." Information can teach us to eyewitness our world in diverse forms. It can explain why it takes a fraternity to develop and sustain a Secular Franciscan.<sup>46</sup>

The Regional Executive Council agreed to have similar themes at the 2009 Chapter. Small group discussions focusing on On-Going Formation, Membership and Dreams For the Future of our Region would be recorded and then presented in a large group format.

The Regional Guidelines were reviewed by the Executive Council throughout 2009 and were presented to the Regional Fraternity Council (ministers/ delegates of our local fraternities) at Chapter. The revised Guidelines document was approved unanimously.

At the National level, Deacon Tom Bello of St. Thomas More Fraternity in Arlington, Virginia, was elected National Minister of the SFO in the U.S. at their Elective Chapter in October. The Chapter was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was a member of the Holy Land Provincial Executive Council, from 1988 until the province became a region. He then was elected to the Regional Council of St. Margaret of Cortona Region and has served in numerous positions, including Regional Minister. Tom had previously worked on the National Statutes and had been the National Vice-Minister this past term.



The Regional Formation Team announced the theme for the District Gatherings for 2010 would be "Gospel Footprints: A Secular Franciscan Perspective." They discussed Franciscan Gospel history, contemplative imagery, and gave a hands-on workshop that taught how to create the gift of personal reconciliation.

Mary Bittner SFO and Fr. Kevin Queally TOR represented the National Council at our June 25-27 Chapter at St. Anthony's Retreat Center in Marathon. Mary asked attendees why Secular Franciscans should meet for Chapter. Why do we have an open forum, offer prayers and break bread together? Various responses were given. As each experiences our own growth spurts, our day-by-

<sup>46</sup> Boss, JoAnn. "The Anatomy of Information", VISION, Spring 2009 edition, pg.1.





day selflessness, we may appear divided as we are challenged differently in our Secular Franciscan charism. Never the less, "when speaking and listening with other Secular Franciscans at fraternity, retreats, and Chapter gatherings, we learn to appreciate our rich sacramental and gospel lifestyle."<sup>47</sup>

Seventeen fraternities were represented at Chapter by their ministers/ delegates.

The focus of 2011 was Transformation at our three District Gatherings. "Information, Formation and Transformation are like logs placed on a fire. These three elements go about and form our Franciscan consciousness, but it is the Holy Spirit that enkindles the flame."<sup>48</sup>



1992 photo of Jean Platz (second from left) at the Quinquennial in Dayton, Ohio. Also pictured are Pat Bloomquist, Kathy Sutliff, and Val Golomski.

Jean Platz passed away on April 11, 2011 in Rhinelander, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was professed in 1951 in the St. Francis Fraternity, Milwaukee, and was the recipient of the National Third Order Achievement Award in 1966. As an SFO, Jean held various local council positions as well as Provincial minister and Regional Representative. On the La Verna Region level she served as Vice-Minister and Director of Formation. Jean was a valuable asset to our Region.

The idea of a Formation Manual was first expressed at the International General Chapter of 2008 in Hungary to expand the CIOFS materials in order to develop a comprehensive manual, which would serve as the foundation of Initial Formation. A National Formation Commission of Secular Franciscans began to format such a manual with representatives from across the U.S. The resulting *For Up to Now (FUN)* manual was born. The manual presents study materials for all local fraternity formation directors. A workshop was made available for local council members in the Spring of 2011. Attendees hand-assembled FUN document sections, chapter tabs, and lesson plan inserts into personal three-ring binders. Each local fraternity received 2 binders, one for the formation director and one for the minister; they were asked to use the manual as a resource along with Fr. Bach's book *The Franciscan Journey*. The entire FUN manual was also available on CD.

Our VISION newsletter recorded the events at the June, 2011 Elective Chapter in Marathon. Dennis Ross, National Treasurer, presided over the elections and Fr. Oliver Bembenc OFM Cap was the Ecclesial Witness representing CNSA (Conference of National Spiritual Assistants). Friday evening, the first day of Chapter, local ministers, delegates, observers and visitors gathered in the chapel where a votive candle memorial service was held for our sisters and brothers who Sister Death had called the past year. Saturday afternoon elections for Region Council positions were held in the conference room. The results of the election was as follows:

Jim Carlson- Region Minister  
Jeff Gumz- Region Vice-Minister  
Lizanne Schulrud- Region Secretary  
Peter Bekkers- Region Treasurer

Joanne Guzik- Councilor  
Bob Henning- Councilor  
Ed Boss- Councilor  
Kathy Sutliff- Councilor

<sup>47</sup> Bittner, Mary OFS. Opening Address at Chapter 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Boss, JoAnn OFS. "The Desire to Transform" address at all District Gatherings, spring, 2011.



# 2011 Regional Executive Council:

Jeff

Gumz, Peter Bekkers, Ed Boss,  
Jim Carlson, Kathy Sutliff, Joanne  
Guzik, Bob Henning

(Lizanne Schlud missing from photo)



NOW "OFS"— A document was issued in 2011 from Encarnacion del Pozo OFS, General Minister of the Order, stating that the official name of the Order is *Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis*. The translation of the name of the Order is already made in the four official international languages— Italian, English, Spanish and in French. The acronym OFS will now be used exclusively, regardless of the language. Secular Franciscans will now use this acronym after their name. In all official documents the words "Secular Franciscan Order" will still be used when referring our Order in English, as well as "Secular Franciscans" still used when referring to members in the USA.<sup>49</sup>

Encarnacion del Pozo OFS  
General Minister of the Order

The theme of our 2012 Spring District Gatherings was "Growing in Fraternity and Scattering Seeds". Wind Lake hosted the first District Gathering on March 17; Rhinelander and Fond du Lac fraternities hosted their District Gatherings in April. OFS Formation team member JoAnn Boss spoke on Christology and the relationship we experience as Secular Franciscans with the incarnate Christ. Our identity is seeded and grown by our Secular Franciscan character. Team member Lee Ann Niebuhr spoke on "Premeditated Mercy." Mercy implies "deliberate, thoughtful, and willful acts to give life: to forgive, to be reconciled, to live at peace with others, even those who betrayed us"<sup>50</sup>. Pauline Riedl spoke about creating our own illustrated lifeline to track the important events that required personal discernment and process. Finally, Regional Formation Director Carol Bekkers talked about the structure of the OFS formation process. She outlined the main points for each level (Orientation, Inquirer, and Candidate) and their requirements in forming prospective members for a lifetime commitment.

An undated document believed to be printed in 2012 was entitled "Vocations and Visions— How to Grow Your Fraternity." The theme paralleled that of the 3 Regional Gatherings and raised 3 questions which were topics for breakout sessions:

- 1) How does your fraternity present itself as a community of love?
- 2) How can appreciation of dignity of people and God's creation increase our vocations?
- 3) How can our fraternity become "*the privileged place, where with openness and trust, we may share*"

<sup>49</sup> Bello, Tom OFS, National Minister. "Formerly SFO, Now OFS", TAU-USA, Fall, 2011, pg.18.

<sup>50</sup> Niebuhr, Lee Ann OFS. "Premeditated Mercy," VISION Spring, 2012, pg. 5.



*with each other the manner in which our personal conversions are shaping our Franciscan lives.” (Rule 22)*

The La Verna Regional Chapter was held at the St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon June 22-24, 2012. Fifteen local Ministers or their delegates, ten Region Council members, and eighteen Observers participated in discussions that outlined the need for OFS Spiritual Assistants, JPIC awareness, formation, and increase of vocations.



Quinquennial XVIII was held in Skokie, Illinois at the Holiday Inn. It was a perfect opportunity for us in the Region to attend because it was within driving distance. Quinquennials (nicknamed “Q”) are traditionally held every five years and can be held anywhere in the U.S. National Minister Tom Bello OFS welcomed over 600 Franciscans (Secular and Religious) from all over the United States to the 5-day event held July 3-8, 2012. Participants traveled by plane, train, car, and even foot to learn what gifts they could offer and to seek what Franciscan gift they may claim to bring forth in the world.

Keynote speaker Sr. Ilia Delio OSF touched on the theme “Why Francis? Claim the Gift” with her three presentations. This Quinquennial was well-attended by the OFS members of the La Verna Region.



Attendees from our La Verna Region at the 2012 “Q” in Skokie, Illinois

The 2013 La Verna Regional Chapter and NAFRA Visitation took place June 28-30 at St. Anthony’s in Marathon. The annual Chapter represents the La Verna regional and local fraternities; it is designed to share learning exchanges, build spiritual relationships and discuss questions regarding its own life and organization. National representatives Mary Bittner OFS and Fr. Kevin Queally TOR met with regional council officers and local ministers at this 3-day event. Two formation students, Mike Adsit and Coletta Cody, participated in the Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming. Both were from an emerging fraternity in Beaver Dam, WI. The Regional Fraternity, including the Regional Executive Council, assumed the responsible role of guiding Inquirers through the Formation process which is why the Welcoming Ceremony was performed by Regional Minister Jim Carlson and Regional Formation Chair JoAnn Boss.



The traditional Memorial Prayer Service was held honoring those fraternity members who had passed away since the last Chapter Gathering. Each minister or delegate approached the front table recited the names from their fraternity and lit a candle.





Memorial Prayer Service in Chapel at St. Anthony Spirituality Center, Marathon

Attendees at 2013 Chapter outside the main doors of St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon



In February, 2014, area formation team members and spiritual assistants met with five Beaver Dam Inquirers for a special Day of Recollection held at the Holy Hill Basilica in Hubertus, Wisconsin. La Verna Regional Spiritual Assistant Fr. Lester Bach and fraternity spiritual assistant Fr. Kim Studwell, along with OFS formation team members Teri Doughty, Joan Reiter, Laurel Swencki, JoAnn Boss and Jim Carlson met with the Inquirers. The teams main purpose was not only to listen but also to dialogue with Inquirers in a forum setting and then later hold individual interviews in expectation of admittance as Candidates. After all required documents and letters asking for admission as Candidates were reviewed by the Regional Executive Council, all were approved and would now continue in their next phase of Candidacy class, beginning in April.



Beaver Dam Candidates and Formators  
Front Row, left to right: Sue Bashynski, Coletta Cody, Jeanne Heft OFS, Janice Tischler, JoAnn Boss OFS, formation instructor. Back Row: Laurel Swencki OFS formation instructor; Mike Adsit, Fr. Kim Studwell OFM and spiritual assistant, Jim Carlson OFS, formation instructor and Regional Minister



"Building the Bridge" was the theme of the Spring 2014 District Gatherings, with Sister Anita Beskar FSPA as the keynote speaker. Sister spoke on LISTENING to God and to each other. "How well do you listen to your members at fraternity gatherings," she asked, "and how well do you listen to God through the Scriptures." Sister then took those assembled through the steps of a Lectio Divina prayer taken from Mark 8:22-26, the story of the Blind Man of Bethsaida." Listening for God's whisperings...something so simple but so important.

Later that morning, REC Vice-Minister Jeff Gumz gave a power-point presentation on "Being the Bridge to Youth." He asked us, "Do we offer our spiritual reality as an attractive way to bring new life [vocations] to our fraternity?" Region Minister Jim Carlson also stressed that each fraternity should have a Y/YA (Youth and Young Adult) contact person and set a goal for outreach to youth— they are our future.



On March 8, 2014, the Southeastern District Gathering at St. Josaphat Basilica in Milwaukee featured a SPECIAL GUEST- his holiness Pope Francis. An anonymous member displayed a life-size photo of the Pope as attendees entered the meeting room. The six-foot tall image was an added funny bone to the day. Attendees took turns standing for a "photo op" with the Pope.

Standing with the "Pope", left to right: Donna Ludwig, Ed Boss, Eddie Multhauf, Carolyn Multhauf, and Helene Brown.

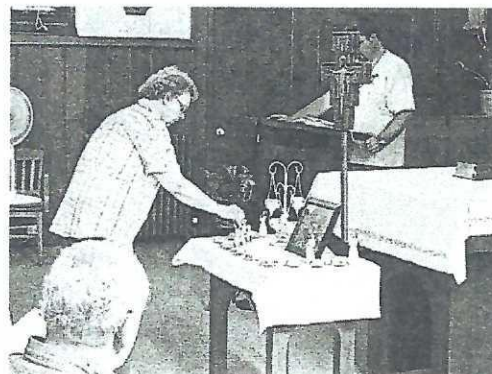
On April 4, 2014 the Central District Gathering was at St. Peter Church in Stevens Point. The St. Peter fraternity hosted the event.

The Pope did not attend this event as he had at St. Josaphat's.



The La Verna Chapter met on June 27-29, 2014, at St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon, WI. This was a Chapter of Elections. Every three years a new Regional Council is elected by the Regional Fraternity (all local ministers or their delegates and the current Executive Council). The elections of 2014 were presided over by Mary Bittner OFS of the National Executive Council and witnessed by Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap.

Saturday morning after breakfast, all were gathered in the chapel for the annual Memorial for those who died since the previous year's Chapter. It was a most solemn prayer service. Each minister lit a candle as each deceased name was read.





Jim Carlson welcomed 17 ministers (or their delegates), 7 current Regional Executive Council members, and 18 Observers to the Chapter. Ministers, Delegates and current REC members are voters; Observers are non-voters.

After a general meeting consisting of the Secretary reading the minutes, giving the Treasurer's Report, and giving approval to both, Jim Carlson gave the current demographics of the Region. We have 17 fraternities, 1 emerging fraternity at Cardinal Stritch University, 438 active Professed Secular Franciscans, 39 in Formation, and 13 Spiritual Assistants (priests, sisters or seculars). The result of the Council election was as follows:



Jim Carlson- Regional Minister (2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
 Jeff Gumz- Regional Vice-Minister (2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
 Kathy Sutliff- Regional Secretary (2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
 Elsa Ruscoe- Regional Treasurer (1<sup>st</sup> term)  
 Teri Doughty- Councilor (1<sup>st</sup> term)  
 Sharon Dale- Councilor (1<sup>st</sup> term)  
 Peter Bekkers- Councilor (1<sup>st</sup> term)  
 Bob Crane- Councilor (1<sup>st</sup> term)  
 Barbara Spies- Formation Director- appointed

Back row: Bob Crane, Kathy Sutliff, Peter Bekkers, Jeff Gumz, Teri Doughty, Ed Boss  
 Front row: Lee Ann Niebuhr, Sharon Dale, Elsa Ruscoe, Barb Spies (Jim Carlson missing from photo)

After Saturday Liturgy celebrated by Fr. Bach, all assembled witnessed the formal installations of our new Regional Co-Spiritual Assistants—Lee Ann Niebuhr OFS and Ed Boss OFS. This was a first for our Region.

Newly installed Regional Spiritual Assistants Ed Boss and Lee Ann Niebuhr with Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap.



Attendees at  
 2014 Chapter of  
 Elections





The theme of our 2015 District Gatherings was Servant Leadership. A DVD entitled "New Council Formation" was shown at each gathering, presenting 3 different models of leadership. Individual copies of this DVD were made available to each fraternity and each fraternity council was encouraged to review and discuss fully the items presented. A Formation team consisting of Bob Henning, Bob Crane, Ed Boss, Elsa Ruscoe, Sharon Dale and Jeff Gumz has been formed to help any Fraternity with this process. Members of this team are willing to visit newly-elected councils to help train them on the "nuts and bolts" of Council Leadership. The team is also willing to meet with current, struggling councils to help in any way they can.

Also at the District Gatherings, Regional Formation Director Barb Spies contrasted traditional leadership styles with servant leadership, and then examples of servant leadership from Christ, St. Francis and St. Clare. Barb, in another presentation, spoke of the FUN Manual as a treasure trove of resources. It includes tidbits here and there about the formation process, it offers important information about the Order, and provides a simple way to talk about subjects that we otherwise might not have remembered to share. She said, "the FUN Manual is a beautiful collection of content that we can make use of every time our fraternity gathers."<sup>51</sup>

The theme of Servant Leadership continued at our 2015 June Chapter with a presentation by Carl Koch entitled "Leading Like Francis." Carl defined leadership as people who influence others to do something. Servant leaders like St. Francis go beyond that definition because they love their followers and respect their dignity as persons formed in the image of God. Many attendees signed up to receive a copy of his latest book, "Leading Like Francis: Building God's House."

Although Jim Carlson Regional Minister could not attend the Chapter due to ill health, he sent the demographics of the Region to Jeff Gumz to read: We currently have 17 fraternities, 447 Active and Active Excused Professed members, 41 people in Formation, and 14 Spiritual Assistants.



Attendees outside front doors of St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon.

Region Chapter, June, 2015

Jeff Gumz, Regional Vice-Minister, gave a presentation on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* using a video by Fr. Dan Horan at our 3 spring District Gatherings. Lee Ann Niebuhr presented a talk on "Franciscan: Bearers of Peace in a Troubled World," and Ed Boss talked about "Are we losing our Franciscan charism".

In October, 2015, NAFRA elected Jan Parker OFS as our new National Minister, succeeding Tom Bello. La Verna Region Councilor Sharon Dale had the privilege of being appointed "delegate" for Jim Carlson and attended the Chapter of Elections in New Jersey.



Jan Parker OFS

<sup>51</sup> Spies, Barb OFS. "So Many Resources!" article in VISION, fall, 2015, pg.5.



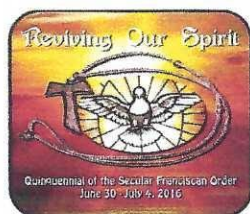
In 2016 the La Verna Executive Council discussed the need for an Archivist to organize the multitude of Regional records currently stored in several places. Jim Carlson has for many years tried to procure a safe and secure facility within the Region for our many boxes of material handed down by Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap and our Region Ministers. Regional Councilor Sharon Dale contacted and visited the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order of St. Francis in Stevens Point, and then St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon for a place to keep our archives. It was decided that St. Anthony's would furnish us with a room. Also, Sharon was appointed Regional Archivist in May at an REC meeting.

A Spiritual Assistants Workshop was offered in early June with 17 enthusiastic attendees. The purpose of this and future workshops was to prepare materials for our local fraternities to use regarding what it means to be a Franciscan NOW.

The June Chapter featured a Visitation conducted by Bro. Bob Brady OFM, a member of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants and Joan Geiger OFS, National Councilor, delegate of Jan Parker National Minister. Three breakout sessions- formation, spirituality, and vocations had attendees moving about and taking notes. Members of the REC facilitated each session and took notes which would later be discussed at a future REC meeting and disseminated from there.

The statistics as read by Jim Carlson were as follows: We have 15 canonically established fraternities, having lost 2 this past year, 381 Active and Active Excused Professed members, 31 in Formation, 13 Deaths, 2 Newly-Formed groups, and 16 Spiritual Assistants.

Another Quinquennial Congress was offered this year in St. Louis, MO. Over 600 Secular Franciscans and Friars of the Franciscan First Orders attended. Fourteen Seculars from our La Verna Region were among the attendees.



La Verna Region attendees at  
Quinquennial Congress XIX, July, 2016



The theme of the "Q" was *Reviving the Spirit*, and keynote speaker Fr. Dan Horan OFM and other National speakers spoke on opportunities for all of us to share how we "revive" our Franciscan spirit. The 3 ½ days were filled with joy at meeting old and new friends, sharing in discussions as well as delicious meals. There were plenty of opportunities to purchase books, t-shirts and totes, and religious articles.

We were happy to welcome the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity from Chippewa Falls into our Region. Previously they were part of the Queen of Peace Region. Fr. Bach indicated that it is hoped that the emerging group from Hayward were also "cross over" into our Region once they become fully established.

The 2017 District Gatherings were held on the following days: March 25<sup>th</sup> hosted by St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Milwaukee), April 1<sup>st</sup> hosted by St. Ann Fraternity (Green Bay), and April 29<sup>th</sup> hosted by Queen of the Universe Fraternity (Woodruff). The theme for these Gatherings was "Living in the Franciscan Spirit: Formation, Spirituality, and Vocations."



Another Chapter of Elections faced our Region in June, 2017. Each nominee was asked to write a short biography which would familiarize attendees with those running for positions on the Executive Council. Mary Bittner OFS was our NAFRA visitor and presided at the elections and Lee Ann Niebuhr, our RSA, was appointed by CNSA to be their official church witness.

The newly-elected REC officers were:

Region Minister- Jeff Gumz	Region Councilors- Peter Bekkers
Region Vice-Minister- Bob Crane	Nick Crane
Region Secretary- Kathy Sutliff	Teri Doughty
Region Treasurer- Bob Henning	Sharon Dale
Region Spiritual Assistants (appointed)- Ed Boss, Lee Ann Niebuhr	

Back row: Ed Boss, Peter Bekkers, Nick Crane  
 Middle row: Jeff Gumz, Kathy Sutliff, Sally Crane,  
 Bob Crane  
 Front row: JoAnn Boss, Sharon Dale, Teri Doughty  
 and Lee Ann Niebuhr



Chapter attendees,  
June, 2017



## Part 5- Going Forth, From Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel

The fraternities of the La Verna Region Secular Franciscans have always taken the words of Saint Francis to heart when he instructed his Friars to take "Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel." Indeed, we've always stressed this in our Rule. The following section will highlight a few of the MANY WAYS in which our fraternities have reached out to others in our parishes and our communities. Many of the following apostolates appeared in our VISION newsletter.

2000-

### **The Walking Way of the Cross**

In April, Secular Franciscans representing 20 fraternities together with Friars and Franciscan Sisters prayed the Walking Way of the Cross through downtown Milwaukee streets, making faith statements regarding Franciscan perspectives on peace and non-violence. It was reported that 115 members of our local fraternities were present and Marie Amore represented the National Council. At each "station," prayers were read and a short reflection was given on social justice issues such as domestic violence, capital punishment, euthanasia, and migrant workers. It was a powerful time of prayer, witness and personal conversion.

2001-

### **Adopt-a-Highway Program**

Coinciding with the onset of our 4 Commissions, St. John Neumann Fraternity in Rhinelander applied for permission to pick up trash along a two-mile stretch of rural highway nearby. After watching a video and wearing their bright orange vests, even their older members got involved. Along the highway a sign was erected with the name of their fraternity in big bold letters. Doing physical work and laughing together and occasionally enjoying a simple meal together afterwards has helped them to strengthen the sense of family among the members.

(Pictured are Linda Welbes and Marge Huser)



2003-

### **Uniforms for Haiti School Children**

Members of Saint Anthony Fraternity in Marathon sewed school uniforms for the children of Haiti. Due to extreme poverty, children were not able to attend school without a uniform that met government specifications. The uniform, color-coded by individual school, includes a jumper and blouse for the girls, and trousers and shirts for the boys. The entire fraternity was involved. Those who had no sewing ability donated money for the material. Their goal in 2003 was to make 75-100 uniforms.

2005-

### **Jubilee House in Wausau**

St. James Fraternity in Wausau prepared and served dinners for the Jubilee House. Wieners and brats were grilled outside while potato salad was prepared inside. Guests were also treated to desserts prepared by fraternity members. Members unable to help serve because of health or conflicting schedules donated money to purchase food.



2006-

### **Vocations Expo**

St. Paschal Baylon Rainbow Cell participated in a Vocations Expo conducted by the Madison Diocese. They set up a booth and displayed SFO pictures and brochures. They were also asked to participate in a Parish Leadership Day and met with Bishop Morlino and the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.



2006-

**Food Pantry Project**

Our Lady Queen of the Universe Fraternity in Woodruff asked 3 area grocery stores to donate paper bags. Fliers listing items needed for the local food pantry were prepared and stapled to each bag (750 of them). Members passed out bags at all Masses the weekend before Labor Day and parishioners returned the filled bags the following week. Bags were then taken to the food pantry with the help of the Knights of Columbus. The fraternity collected 8 tons of food the first year and 6 tons of food the second year.

2006-

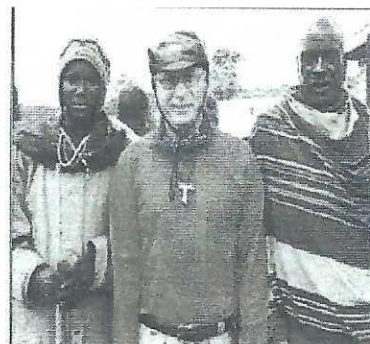
**Youth Initiative**

When the question was raised if St. Peter Fraternity in Stevens Point had any sort of a youth ministry program where parents and children could participate together, then Formation Director Marie Archibald formed a committee to make such a ministry a reality. Within a few months youth of fraternity members and other families in the parish lead the rosary before Mass. After Mass families were invited to hospitality downstairs and presented the brochure "Praying the Rosary" and a handout explaining what the Franciscan Youth Apostolate was all about.

2007-

**Kenya Water Project**

Secular Franciscan Don Ryder, a member of St. James Fraternity in Wausau, joined members of his parish on a mission trip to Kenya, Africa. After witnessing how the Maasai tribe women have to walk nearly 15 miles through dangerous territory to fetch water, which may or may not be sanitary enough to drink, Don knew something had to be done. The lack of water killed much of their livestock, crops and tribal members. He began an initiative to raise money selling cookbooks & through various organizations which included our Region fraternities, to drill deep wells for water & install a distribution system.



2007-

**Death: A Franciscan Perspective**

St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity of Wind Lake presented a five-part presentation which explored specific moments in Francis and Clare's life, examining their perception for personal end-of-life decisions. Each session throughout the retreat provided guiding steps in legal preparations as well. Individual stations occupied by Secular Franciscans who work professionally in legal, hospital or spiritual fields were available to counsel members with further questions. Attendees indicated that this workshop was extremely interesting.

(Pictured are Jim Carlson, Audrey Ricard, Robert Witek, Fr. Linus Kopcowski OFM, Ed Boss and JoAnn Boss)

2007-

**Korean Candidates**

Terese Shin SFO traveled from her home in Racine to St. Mary Magdalen church in Milwaukee to teach a formation class once a month to Koreans interested in becoming Secular Franciscans. St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity of Wind Lake council members and their spiritual assistant are sponsoring the group. The goal of this sponsorship is joint communication despite language difficulty, with fraternal, social, and spiritual events.

(Pictured are Jim Carlson, JoAnn Boss, AeKyung Jang, Rosa Sookhee Han, Joung Ja Park and Catherine Pahk Bohne)





2007-

#### **Transitus**

St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity in Marquette, Michigan, celebrated a Transitus ceremony with Fr. Tom Schmied as Presider. Members of St. Francis of Assisi fraternity of Escanaba, Michigan, and two Franciscan Sisters from St. Christopher parish were also present. There were 42 people in all. It was a special event in itself as it celebrated the death and "passing over" of St. Francis. Added to this, however, it was a going-away party for Fr. Schmied, the fraternity Spiritual Assistant for 17 years.

2007-

#### **Franciscan Creative Ingenuity**

St. Josaphat Fraternity in Milwaukee met at one time in the lower church of the Basilica. During Advent they 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. More recently, the fraternity celebrated "Little Christmas" in January around the feast of the Epiphany. This has always been a Conventual Franciscan tradition. During the celebration, each person is given the name of a saint for the coming year, a Bible quote and a little gift. In up-coming months, members report on the saint whose name they received.

2007-

#### **Annual Christmas Party**

Sacred Heart Fraternity in Oshkosh celebrated the Nativity of Jesus with good food and jolly fellowship. At their first Christmas celebration they had folk singer Kelly Aschebrook lead them in traditional carols. The next year they participated in a short-story drama written and presented by fraternity members and their children. Most recently they were entertained by a special quartet who will perform for them and guide them through caroling. As an outreach, members invite prospective SFO candidates and friends to their annual Christmas celebration.

2008-

#### **Dominican Republic Ministry**

Jim Carlson, a member of St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity, and 13 other members of various Milwaukee and Green Bay archdiocesan parishes, took part in a mission outreach program in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. They visited their sister parish, La Sacrada Familia (The Holy Family) near Azua. They saw several projects sponsored by the Archdiocese—a new Health Clinic, five new homes, and the new San Francesco Chapel in Barrera. Assistant pastor Fr. Oriol Regales, a Missionary of St. Paul, asked if the Secular Franciscans would like to donate a nice picture of St. Francis and could present it at the chapel's dedication. Funds were raised and a picture was brought back in September by Milwaukee parish member Sandy Nowak. Jim made three trips in all to the Dominican Republic.

(Jim Carlson with young friends)



2009-

#### **Franciscan Anniversary**

Members of St. Ann Fraternity from Green Bay attended the 800 Years of Franciscan Life celebration at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee. Fr. Roch Niemier of Assumption BVM Province was one of 2 featured speakers. The anniversary milestone was filled with inspiration, invitation, and challenges to explore a renewed response to Gospel living, whether we bear the name Franciscan or espouse the spirit of Francis, whose life and charism has stood the test of time for 800 years.

2009-

#### **Mission Warehouse**

Over the years Holy Innocents Fraternity in Manitowoc has donated a share of its money to the Brother Regis Salvatorian Warehouse in New Holstein. The Christmas donation goes to the Salvatorian brothers to help with their mission work, primarily in Tanzania. The money donated will be used to mail out toothpaste, toothbrushes,



soap, shampoo, and other sanitary supplies to over 20 underdeveloped nations.

2010-

### **Interfaith Chapel**

Suzanne McKinney and fellow members of Portiuncula Fraternity in Franklin initiated a project to provide an interfaith chapel at Mitchell Airport in Milwaukee. Travelers, often under stress, would have a place for worship or private meditation. The proposal must be approved by the Milwaukee County Board. Donations are appreciated. Members hoped to incorporate some elements of the old St. Stephen Church (stained-glass windows, marble from the sanctuary, and a few pews). The chapel will welcome people of all faiths.

(Pictured are Karen Piece, Suzanne McKinney and Kurt Kiedl)



2010-

### **Lady Jacoba Cookies**

In June, St. Josaphat Fraternity celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee. Spiritual Assistant Fr. Jim Ciaramitaro OFM celebrated Mass, and following services, the fraternity hosted a home-cooked Italian feast in Baran Hall. Lady Jacoba Cookies, a recipe by Marie Amore SFO, were displayed on the tables. Over 100 SFOs from our Region and Northern Illinois together with parish members attended this event. A special banner was made for this celebration.

2010-

### **Dead Sea Scrolls**

Members of Queen of Heaven Fraternity in Wisconsin Rapids took a bus trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum to view, among other interesting displays, the Dead Sea Scrolls. The opportunity arose when members of St. Vincent de Paul parish invited the Seculars to join them on this day-long trip. Everyone was in awe they viewed the artifacts.



2010-

### **Blessing of Animals**

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, the feast of St. Francis, Holy Name Central School in Escanaba, Michigan, held a blessing of animals. Members of St Francis Fraternity saw this as a perfect opportunity to attend this festivity. The children eagerly shared their delight in having all kinds of animals present for the blessing. This opened the way for our Seculars to tell the children of the life of St. Francis— his family, childhood, adolescence, manhood, and then his illness and how he turned to God. Jean Simon, Jan Tolfa, and Dorothy Kollmann shared their life and vocation as Secular Franciscans.

2011-

### **Building the FUN Manual**

Sixty-four La Verna council members representing all Wisconsin and Upper Michigan local fraternities gathered at St. Peter Church in Stevens Point on October 29<sup>th</sup> to begin the FUN manual training and workshop. The *For Up to Now* (FUN) manual, initiated by the National Formation Commission, is recommended for use in initial formation by all the Region fraternities to supplement Fr. Lester Bach's book *The Franciscan Journey*. The new manual will strengthen fraternity vocations and formation training.



2012-

### **Food Pantry**

St. Josaphat Fraternity in Milwaukee prepared and served delicious chili and chicken noodle soup every first and third Saturdays to feed the hungry at St. Anthony parish food pantry. Soup kitchen work deepens Franciscan spirituality, affirms the orders of Franciscan charism and the JPIC mission, and gives the opportunity to perform a corpora work of mercy. Recently the volunteers have asked recipients to pray for those who donate the food. A prayer basket is displayed and clients are asked to select a petition to pray for that person and their special need.

(Pictured are Michelle Schoenecker and Kurt Keidl)



2012-

### **Membership Drive**

Holy Innocents Fraternity in Manitowoc sponsored a Membership Drive in area Catholic churches. Before Mass two assigned speakers spoke to parishioners from the pulpit about the call to become a Secular Franciscan. Each scripted talk gave meaning to Gospel life interacting with our profession. Following Mass, the speakers greeted parishioners and guided them to a display board and OFS handouts. A week later, the fraternity membership team gave a presentation at the St. Francis of Assisi parish Teen Center.

(Pictured are Ed Boss, Gloria Trainor, Kelley Reis, Rodney and Valeria Knier)

2013-

### **Warming Shelter**

Minister Greg Zajackowski of St. James Fraternity in Wausau and Pauline Riedl got their fraternity involved by agreeing to serve the Sunday meal at the Warming Shelter in Wausau. The purpose of the shelter is to provide a safe and warm place for the homeless during the bitter cold late evenings and night hours. What a wonderful opportunity to help meet a need in the community and spread the spirit of St. Francis.

2014-

### **Franciscans Downtown**

Bob Crane, minister of St. Peter Fraternity in Stevens Point and several members of their fraternity volunteer at a storefront ministry begun by Fr. Placid Stroik OFM. They welcome all, offering coffee, something to eat, conversation, or simply a place to "hang out." There is a fine library, a television, comfortable couches and chairs, a microwave and a refrigerator which anyone can use.

2014-

### **Feed the Birds**

Members of Queen of Heaven Fraternity in Wisconsin Rapids stuffed 750 small plastic bags with bird seed and distributed them to area parishes the weekend before Christmas. Inside each bag was a card that explained how St. Francis, who had a special love for all creation, wanted the brothers to remember to feed the birds even in the dead of winter. The card also briefly explained the work of Secular Franciscans and provided 2 contact numbers if people were interested in knowing more about our Order.

(Patrick Ruesch and Cheryl Erickson)





2016-

#### **Portiuncula Pardon**

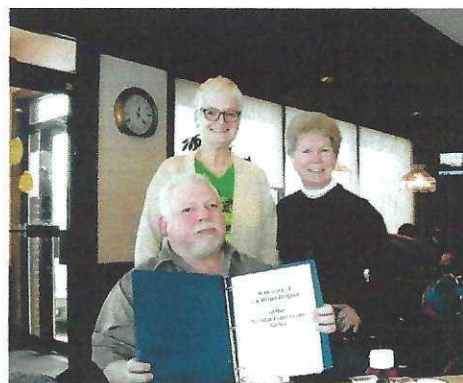
The Friars of the Assumption BVM Province and the brothers and sisters of St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity of Wind Lake welcomed guests to a celebration of the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Portiuncula Pardon. The Portiuncula chapel on the grounds of St. Francis Friary in Burlington was filled to overflowing. The sacrament of Reconciliation followed by a celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass followed in the St. Francis Chapel.

2017-2018

#### **La Verna Region History Project**

Sharon Dale OFS, Region Archivist, together with Teri Doughty OFS and Ken Beattie OFS spent several months compiling information and pictures to be included in this first attempt at our Regional History. It is hoped that, besides sending this to our National Archivist, each of our local fraternities will have a copy of this important work.

(Seated: Ken Beattie; Standing: Teri Doughty and Sharon Dale)



March 14, 2018

Jim Carlson OFS, Regional Minister (2011-2017), passed away after a long bout of cancer. He was passionate about the Secular Franciscan Order and served the Region faithfully until he felt he could give no more. He will be missed by all who knew him. Pax.



-Appendix A-  
 SECULAR FRANCISCAN PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH  
 COMPARATIVE RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS STATEMENT- SEPTEMBER, 1992

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>7/1/90 - 6/30/91</u>	<u>7/1/91 - 6/30/92</u>
Membership		
Per Capita from fraternities	\$25,314.17	\$27,196.25
Provincial Fraternities (isolated)	2,289.00	2,662.80
Donations- personal contributions & visitation stipends	2,472.75	2,826.36
Special Gift Offerings	8,341.36	4,381.22
Bequests	10,482.90	1,000.00
Franciscan Life Magazine	1,649.06	1,676.75
Franciscan Supplies	7,546.03	8,530.48
Postage	841.59	594.55
Rental Office Equipment	120.00	---
Exchange- Missions	2,976.90	1,264.20
Car Refund- Reimbursement	---	112.00
Masses	---	15.00
NAFRA Reimbursement	---	123.80
Rebate- Provincial Council Expenses	---	20.00
Petty Cash Donation	---	6.00
Interest Earned	113.81	92.46
Office Supplies	43.16	---
Telephone Refund	20.60	---
Royalties on Videotape	4.90	---
A.T.O.P	10.95	---
Refunds- St. Francis- Milwaukee	50.00	---
National Assistant	85.02	---
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$62,362.20</b>	<b>\$50,501.87</b>
<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>7/1/90 - 6/30/91</u>	<u>7/1/91 - 6/30/92</u>
Gross Salary		
Net Wages	\$ 9,144.20	\$ 9,644.78
Withholding Tax	3,859.99	4,060.03
Retirement Contributions	782.89	826.07
Workman's Compensation	163.00	169.00
Health Insurance	3,145.50	4,194.00
General Liability Insurance	462.00	499.00
Provincial Assistant Expenses		
Stipends	3,465.00	4,085.00
Visitation Travel/ Food/ Lodging	562.94	972.93
Visitation Travel/ Car Insurance/ Repair/ Gas	2,673.54	2,366.51
Provincial Council Expenses		
Provincial Minister SFO/ M.A. & S.S.	194.00	310.73
Executive Board	48.00	132.95
Visitation/ J.E.	---	12.00
Annual Meeting Expenses	568.20	515.62
Air Travel- Members	374.00	---
Air Travel- National/ M.A.	344.00	116.76 (car)

## -Appendix A (Continued)-

<u>Disbursements (continued)</u>	<u>7/1/90 - 6/30/91</u>	<u>7/1/91 - 6/30/92</u>
Rent of Milwaukee Office	\$ 3,850.00	\$ 4,200.00
NAFRA Per Capita	4,822.00	5,000.00
Postage- Meter/ Permit/ Rental/ Bulk	2,791.66	3,239.21
Telephone	1,142.99	1,463.86
Office Supplies	858.22	637.99
Office Maintenance Costs	889.98	799.03
Exchange- Mission	2,776.30	1,272.00
Petty Cash (Cleaning)	429.85	430.05
Franciscan Supplies	3,067.59	7,057.98
Franciscan Life Magazine/ Printing	1,906.40	1,113.48
Masses	245.00	310.00
Subscriptions	244.00	243.50
Christmas Gifts/ Employees	257.95	149.70
Library	5.78	67.70
Credit Card Fee	20.00	15.00
Miscellaneous- Video	13.07	15.00
Moving Expenses- Office	----	13.72
Bank- Service Charges	123.14	5.05
Audit Fee/ Gift	30.00	----
State of Wisconsin/ Exempt Status	10.00	10.00
TOTALS	<u>\$49,408.19</u>	<u>\$53,905.84</u>

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Balance in Checkbook 6/30/91	\$12,988.65
Balance in Checkbook 6/30/92	\$ 9,584.68



## -Appendix B- "Regionalization- Review, Update, and Reflection"

by Richard Morton SFO, Regionalization Chair

The regionalization study began at the October, 1987, National Directive Board meeting at Mount Saint Francis, Indiana. At the time, little was known of the concept, including long term implications. Even so, there seemed to be the feeling among the National Fraternity leadership that the manner in which local fraternities were grouped should be examined. It was thought that local fraternities could be stronger and present a more unified presence if they were organized on a geographical or regional basis rather than the present provincial structure. The expectation was that, if a new structure were to be adopted, it would enhance the Order in this country by making the local fraternities more effective in helping their members to live the Rule. Thus was born the Regionalization Committee and its work in the United States.

Now, in the winter of 1990, a little over three years into the study, would seem a good time to review and reflect on our progress.

I will try to give my impressions and hope they will stimulate some discussions in your fraternity and/or province.

The basic approach of the Regionalization Committee is to facilitate a study to determine the pros and cons of regionalization and to determine the practical problems that will be encountered. The establishment of several experimental regions in different areas of the country is the keystone of the study, and a recommended process has been approved to guide the procedure. The committee will assist the process from top down, but the implementation will be from the bottom up with the participating fraternities actively involved. It is anticipated that these experimental regions will uncover any problems and identify the advantages and disadvantages.

The initial steps in the formation of experimental regions have begun in two areas of the country. On the west coast, "Unity Days" are being held so that the members of all the fraternities from the provinces represented can meet and become acquainted. In the upper middle west, a planning committee is being formed to begin the initial phases of the process. On the east coast in the Boston area, an information meeting was held in September of last year with more education and communication to occur in the future.

I believe good progress is being made. The Committee, at the onset, decided that the study would be done in a slow and deliberate manner-- that it would be better to go too slow than too fast. This has been paying off. One of the lessons learned is that the concepts and issues of regionalization are not simple nor easily understood. It seems that in many cases they have to be introduced,

discussed, and reviewed several times before understanding and appreciation take place.

It is also evident that the word about regionalization has not been filtering down to every local fraternity or its membership. All leaders at the provincial and national levels have to be more effective in their communications and explanations. But factual exposure and frequent discussions should remedy that by the end of the year.

Aside from the fact that communication and understanding need to improve, there seems to be a growing interest in the subject and an anxiousness to get the process moving, according to James David Lynch SFO, our National Minister.

Encouragement is given to all fraternities of the different provinces in a given geographical area to begin to become acquainted with each other. In some places this has been going on for many years. In areas where it hasn't been common, it should begin immediately. We are all brothers and sisters in the same Order and we must get to know each other better than we have in the past.

From the beginning, there has been a concern centered on the spiritual assistants. The general consensus is that most local fraternities will see little or no change in how their spiritual assistance is provided. The major impact on spiritual assistance will occur on the regional fraternity level. We have the assurance of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants that the Seculars should "by all means, proceed with all and any proposals toward regionalization. We will work as expeditiously as we can on our end."

In summary, progress has been made and will continue to be made. As the establishment of experimental regions becomes a reality, there will be challenges, but it is my prayerful belief that we can meet them. Please keep the Committee and its work in your prayers, so that it will do and recommend the best for the Order in this country.

-This article appeared in the Secular Franciscan Order (National) Newsletter in the Spring, 1991 edition, pg.6-7.

-Appendix C-  
SUGGESTED MODEL FOR THE DRAFTING OF REGIONAL STATUTES  
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Working Paper..... Draft #1 January, 1991

Preamble to the Suggested Model:

The following "Suggested Model" is designed to assist Regional Fraternities in the drafting of their own proper Regional Statutes. The National Fraternity recognizes that each Regional Fraternity is different by reason of its origins, its geographical shape and its particular pastoral needs. The "Suggested Model" presents certain essential structures which must be provided for in Statutes. Appendix 1 illustrates some of the "Option Areas" which a Regional Fraternity might want to develop according to its own needs. The asterisk (\*) illustrates some of the "Option Areas."

Chapter One  
The Regional Fraternity

1. The Regional Fraternity of . . . (name). . . is an organic union of all the local Fraternities canonically established here named: (Listing of the local Fraternities)
2. The Regional Fraternity of . . . (name). . . has a moral personality in the National Secular Franciscan Fraternity of the United States of America.
3. The Regional Fraternity of . . . (name). . . has been formed because of: (Here mention is made of the reasons for the establishment of the particular Regional Fraternity.)
4. The Regional Fraternity shall have a Regional Chapter made up of Regional Officers and Representatives of the canonically established local Fraternities of the Region.
5. The Regional Fraternity shall have a Regional Council made up of its Officers and the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s).
6. Once constituted, the Regional Fraternity of . . . (name). . . may recommend the establishment of new local Fraternities, according to the provisions of the General Constitutions and the General and National Statutes.
7. In addition to the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s), later provided for by the Statutes, the Regional Fraternity invites, welcomes and encourages spiritual assistance given by Friars and Sisters of the Franciscan family and by other Religious and Diocesan Priests who are schooled in Franciscan spirituality.
8. \* Regional Statutes may be amended from time to time, by an absolute majority vote of all the members of the Regional Chapter, subject to the approval of the National Executive Council.

Chapter Two  
The Regional Chapter

9. The Regional Fraternity is represented most fully at the Regional Chapter.
  - \*a) The Regional Chapter is composed of the Regional Officers, one or more representatives from each local Fraternity, one of whom should be the local Fraternity Minister, and the Spiritual Assistant of each local Fraternity.
  - \*b) The Regional Chapter shall meet at least once a year in order to promote the life of the Regional Fraternity and the local Fraternities at a time and place determined by its membership.
  - \*c) The Regional Chapter suggests and approves Regional policies to be implemented by the Regional Council. Among such policies are:
    - 1) Visitation Guidelines, both Pastoral and Fraternal;
    - 2) Formation Guidelines, in conformity with National Guidelines and other requirements of the General Constitutions and Statutes;
    - 3) Guidelines for the Formation and Establishment of New Fraternities.
10. Every three years, or whenever the Regional Minister is to be elected, the Regional Chapter shall also be the Chapter of Elections.



- \*a) The National Minister or his/her delegate shall preside at and confirm the elections of the Regional Officers.
- \*b) Whenever present, the National Minister or his/her delegate shall also preside during the other business of the Regional Chapter.
- c) The term of office for the Regional Officers shall be three years.
- \*d) A Regional Officer may also, at the same time, be an Officer of a local Fraternity. If a local Fraternity Minister serves as a Regional Officer, he/she still represents the local Fraternity during the Regional Chapter business but with only one vote.
- e) The Regional Chapter shall determine nomination procedures for the election of Regional Officers.
- f) Election procedures shall follow the norms of the General Constitutions.
- \*g)
- 11. \*Fifty percent plus one of the membership of the Regional Chapter constitutes a quorum for doing business at any meeting.
- 12. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity is supported financially by its canonically established local Fraternities.
  - a) The Regional Chapter shall determine the annual per capita contribution made from the common fund of each local Fraternity for each of its active members (Professed and Novices).
  - b) The Regional Chapter shall determine the criteria for active membership.
- \*c)

### Chapter Three The Regional Council

- 13. The Regional Fraternity is animated and guided by the Regional Council. The Regional Council shall include at least the following Officers:
  - Regional Minister
  - Regional Vice Minister
  - Regional Secretary
  - Regional Treasurer
  - Regional Spiritual Assistant(s)
- \*--
- 14. \* In addition to the four Officers, additional officers may be elected to the Regional Council at the Regional Chapter.
- 15. The Regional Council functions together with the Regional Minister as the executive branch of the Regional Fraternity.
- 16. The purpose of the Regional Council is as follows:
  - a) To foster co-operation and communion among the local Fraternities, to suggest helpful policies to the Regional Chapter and to carry out the decisions and policies of the Regional Chapter;
  - b) To foster contact with other branches of the Franciscan family within the Region;
  - c) To make the charism of our Seraphic Father present in the life and mission of the Church wherein the Region is located;
  - d) To promote knowledge of the Franciscan way of life and commitment to it;
  - e) To approve the formation program for the instruction of Inquirers and Candidates in the local Fraternities;
  - f) To provide a forum for discussion of common problems and goals;
  - g) To be a voice in the public forum for Secular Franciscans;
  - h) To represent Secular Franciscans in contacts with other church or civil organizations, and to promote mutual relationships with such other organizations when appropriate;
  - i) To make Fraternal and Pastoral Visits to local Fraternities when requested, and when the life of the Fraternity requires;
  - j) To provide, in general, for the life of Secular Franciscans at the level of the Regional Fraternity;
  - k) To present the agenda for the Annual Regional Chapter.
- 17. \* The Regional Council meets at least twice each year, at a time and in a place determined by its membership.
- 18. Special meetings may be called at the request of the Regional Minister.

19. \* Notice of Regional Council Meetings shall again be given in writing by the Regional Minister at least one month prior to the Council meeting.
20. \* Fifty percent plus one of the Regional Officers constitutes a quorum for doing business at any meeting.
21. \* The Regional Officers present at such a meeting may continue to do business even if some Officers may withdraw so as to leave less than a quorum.
22. \* Action of the Regional Council is taken on the absolute majority vote of all Regional Officers.
23. The Regional Council may run functions, and may invest money, to supplement the finances of the Regional Fraternity. A full report of the Council's stewardship is to be made each year to the Regional Chapter.
24. \* All notes are in writing, unless the majority of the Officers present decide that the vote be oral.

#### Chapter Four The Regional Officers

25. The Regional Minister is the chief executive officer of the Regional Fraternity.
  - \*a) The Regional Minister shall carry out the duties of his/her office as determined by the General Constitutions and General Statutes, especially with regard to Presidency at and confirmation of the election of the local Fraternity Minister.
  - \*b) In addition to the duties prescribed by norms of the Secular Franciscan Order, the Regional Minister shall preside at the meetings of the Regional Council and the Regional Chapter, excepting when the National Minister or his/her delegate is present, and is the spokesperson for the Regional Fraternity in all contacts with other church and civil organizations as well as with the general public.
26. If the Regional Minister is absent or unable to act, the Vice Minister acts in place of the Regional Minister.
27. If the office of Regional Minister becomes vacant, the Vice Regional Minister assumes the office of Regional Minister for the remainder of the term.
28. The Vice Regional Minister performs such other duties as the Regional Council may designate.
29. The Regional Secretary makes, distributes and keeps all records of the minutes of both the Regional Council and Chapter; preserves the important documents and correspondence of the Regional Fraternity; assists the Regional Minister in sending out announcements of forthcoming meetings of the Regional Council and Chapter; and performs such other duties as the Regional Council requests.
30. The Regional Treasurer keeps accounts of all money and has the oversee of the property of the Regional Fraternity, unless otherwise determined by the Regional Council. The Treasurer deposits all funds of the Regional Fraternity in such bank accounts as the Regional Council designates and in the name of the Regional Fraternity.
31. The Regional Treasurer shall make Financial Reports for approval at each regular meeting of the Regional Council and Regional Chapter.
32. \* The Regional Treasurer pays out money, by check only, as the business of the Regional Fraternity may require, on the order of the Regional Council or of the Regional Minister. All checks need two signatures to operate. In addition to the Treasurer, one of the other signatories may be any of the following: Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary or other Officer if such is had on the Regional Council.
33. If an office other than that of Regional Minister becomes vacant, the Regional Council appoints a person to fill the office until the next meeting of the Regional Chapter, which then elects a replacement for the remainder of the term.

#### Chapter Five The Regional Spiritual Assistant(s)

34. The Regional Spiritual Assistant is a member of the Regional Council.
  - \*a) If there is more than one Regional Assistant or a College of Regional Assistants, they are all members of the Regional Council.
  - \*b) The Regional Spiritual Assistant or his/her delegate shall be present at the election of local Fraternity



- Ministers and shall conduct a Pastoral Visitation of each Fraternity at least once every three years.
- \*c) Together with the Regional Council, the Regional Assistant provides for the spiritual welfare of the Regional Fraternity, assists in achieving the purpose of the Regional Council and provides such other assistance and advice as may be requested from time to time.

## Chapter Six

### Relations with the National Directive Board

35. The Regional Minister and Council must invite the National Minister to make a Fraternal Visit to the Regional Fraternity at the time of the election of a Regional Minister. A Fraternal Visit by the National Minister may also be requested at other times for important reasons.
36. The Regional Minister, with the consent of the Regional Council, invites one of the National Assistants of the First Order or Third Order Regular to make a Pastoral Visit to the Regional Fraternity.
37. The Regional Minister shall represent his/her Region as a member of the National Directive Board. If he/she is impeded from attending the annual meeting of the National Directive Board, he/she shall be represented by the Vice Regional Minister or, if necessary, by some other Officer of the Regional Council.
38. \* The common fund of the Regional Fraternity shall absorb the travel expenses of the Regional Minister or his/her delegate to attend the annual meeting of the National Directive Board and to carry out the duties of Fraternal Visitation and Presidency and confirmation of the election of local Fraternity Ministers.
39. The Regional Fraternity contributes annually to the common fund of the National Fraternity as called for by the directives of the National Directive Board.

#### APPENDIX to proposed guidelines:

8. Or by some other qualified majority, e.g. two-thirds...
9. a) The number of representatives and that one of them should be the local Fraternity Minister are variables...as is representation by each local Spiritual Assistant...
10. a) There may be a question of Canon Law here about the necessity of the National Minister's presence for the election of Officers other than the Regional Minister.  
Normally, all Officers of the Regional Council are elected at the same meeting. A Region, however, may want to stagger the election of its Officers to guarantee continuity.  
Apart from questions of law, a Region might want to have the Regional Minister present for the election of Officers other than the local Fraternity Minister.
- b) The respect for the rights of the National Minister and his/her delegate is here presented...from analogy of Canon Law, because Fr. Larry [Fr. Lawrence Landini OFM, member of the Regionalization Committee] thinks there is more than courtesy involved here...but he is not sure.
- d) Optional
- g) The Regional Statutes may also want to suggest other qualifications for those elected to Regional Offices.
11. Some other determination to constitute a quorum may be desired
12. c) A specified amount may be given...
13. Other members of the Regional Council may here be provided for...
14. Additional Regional Officers which may be added to the Regional Council. If so, specify the number...
- 17; 19; 20; 21; 22. Some other determinations may be made...
22. Possibly add:
  - whether the voting is done in person, or by mail, or by telephone.
  - In exceptional circumstances, the regional council may vote on any proposition or question by mail or by telephone on the request of a majority of the Regional Council.

#### IF VOTING BY MAIL IS PERMITTED

The Regional Secretary sends a ballot by mail to all Regional Officers, stating the proposition or question to be voted on, and giving the name and address for the return of the ballot, and the last day when the ballot may be postmarked.

The last day may not be less than twenty-one days from the date of mailing the ballot to the Regional Officers. Any votes postmarked after the last day are not counted.

The ballot states the proposition or question to be voted on, whether the vote is "yes" or "no", "for" or "against" and is signed by the voter.

#### IF VOTING BY TELEPHONE IS PERMITTED

In exceptional circumstances, the Regional Council may vote on any proposition or question by telephone, on the request of a majority of the regional executive.

The Regional Minister and at least one other officer takes the telephone vote, preferably in the presence of the majority of the other officers.

24. Some other determination for oral voting may be desired...
25. a) Perhaps there is some question here of the required presence of the Regional Minister for the election of local Fraternity Officers other than the office of local Fraternity Minister. (See Appendix 1, note 10-b) Normatively, all Officers of the local Fraternity are elected at the same meeting. A Fraternity, however, may want to stagger the election of its Officers to guarantee continuity.  
b) A Region may want to specify some other specific tasks of the Regional Minister.
32. Some other provisions may be desired for the disbursement of funds.
34. a) A Region may want some other determination for the membership of Regional [Spiritual] Assistant on the Regional Council should there be more than one Regional [Spiritual] Assistant.

Some Options which come to mind in selection of the Regional [Spiritual] Assistant(s) are:

1. A selection process for more than one Regional [Spiritual] Assistant:  
The Regional Council asks each of the Major Superiors of the Friars represented in the Region for a suitable and well-prepared Friar as Regional [Spiritual] Assistant. Each of these Friars then serve together as a College of Regional Assistants and are members of the Regional Council.
2. A selection process for one Regional [Spiritual] Assistant:  
The Regional Council asks each of the Major Superiors of the Friars represented in the Region to nominate suitable and well-prepared Friars as Regional [Spiritual] Assistant. The Regional Council then selects one of the Friars to be the Regional Assistant and then asks all of the Major Superiors of the Friars represented in the Region to appoint this Friar as the Regional Spiritual Assistant.
- b) Some other determination of the frequency of Pastoral Visitation may be desired...
- c) A Region may want to draw upon special needs to further delineate the duties of a Regional Spiritual Assistant.
38. Some other financial determinations may be desired by a particular Region....



## -Appendix D-

### Emergence of Mission Statement (tentative #1)

The La Verna Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order has the prophetic and fraternal mission to advise and provide consultation to the local Secular Franciscan fraternities within its region which encompasses the state of Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of the state of Michigan with regard to the theology and spirituality of the Secular Franciscans in accordance to the Rule, Constitution, and its National Statutes.

Goal 1: To develop the skills of its members in order to provide leadership within the Order.

Goal 2: To provide guidance and promote spiritual growth of its sisters and brothers within the Order.

Goal 3: To act as a resource for Secular Franciscans, the church, and the secular community at large.

Goal 4: To provide formation and on-going formation material and guidelines.

Goal 5: To affirm and challenge the Secular Franciscans to become informed, to recognize, to understand and to embrace issues that are addressed by the four commissions which are an essential element of the Franciscan vocation as stated in the Rule.

Goal 6: To promote and support Franciscan charism and love among all Franciscan brothers and sisters.

Goal 7: To support and serve the local fraternities.

### Mission Statement (Tentative #2)

La Verna, born of seven Secular Franciscan Provinces, is formed for all Secular Franciscans in Upper Michigan and Wisconsin. Committed to our secular vocation of following Christ in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, we will live in a society as true brothers and sisters, using our Rule, Constitutions, and Scripture to shape our fraternal activities.

In union with the Friars and sisters of the Franciscan Order, we will become a visible sign of the Catholic Church in our area. We will collaborate in the areas of Family, Justice and Peace, Work and Ecology to make the La Verna Region a better place for all its citizens.

Prayer and Eucharist will be in the forefront of our formation as individuals, fraternities, and regional family. In our fraternities and in our regional gatherings, provisions will be made to help all Franciscans.

On the heights of his La Verna, Francis received the mark of the Cross on his body. Let us go into the depths of our La Verna to bring the Cross into our hearts.

-Appendix E-  
 SECULAR FRANCISCAN PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH  
 COMPARATIVE RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS STATEMENT- SEPTEMBER, 1995

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>7/1/93 - 6/30/94</u>	<u>7/1/94 - 6/30/95</u>
Membership		
Per Capita ( from lay fraternities)	\$ 25,301.93	\$ 14,844.32
Provincial Fraternities	2,153.52	1,943.55
Donations *	1,955.81	3,284.20
Donations- Air Conditioner	100.00	—
Repair of Computer	500.00	—
Special Gift Offering	3,966.84	1,935.50
Bequests	23,454.19	21,908.80
Franciscan Life Magazine	1,256.00	913.50
Franciscan Supplies	5,179.14	5,893.97
Postage	285.43	279.42
Exchange	2,799.32	1,000.15
Travel Refund	—	373.00
Petty Cash Donation	10.00	—
Workshop District V	46.19	—
Workshops- Province	—	1,012.00
Holding Account- New Regions	50.00	370.05
Office Supplies	—	3.15
C.D. at Firstar, plus interest	—	5,478.03
Library Liquidation from Franciscan Center	—	25.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 67,058.37</b>	<b>\$ 59,264.64</b>

\*Donations- Contributions/ Fraternity Closeout \$ 1,497.20  
 - Visitation Stipends to Fr. Ulric \$ 1,787.00

<u>Disbursements:</u>	<u>7/1/93 - 6/30/94</u>	<u>7/1/94 - 6/30/95</u>
Net Wages	\$ 10,413.75	\$ 10,820.24
Withholding Taxes	4,986.57	4,549.53
Retirement Contribution	892.79	967.60
Workman's Compensation	201.00	200.00
Health Insurance (2)	4,654.00	5,574.00
General Liability Insurance	556.00	681.00
Provincial Ass't Expenses- Stipends	4,200.00	4,200.00
- Visitations/ Meals/ Lodging	453.92	546.94
- Car/ Insurance/ Repairs/ Gas	1,811.90	1,951.61
- Air Travel	—	125.00
Provincial Council Expenses- Exec. Board	48.00	48.00
- Visitation/ JP	—	65.00
- Annual Meeting Expenses	1,205.00	1,015.00
- Air Travel to National Meeting	331.00	254.00
Rent for Milwaukee Office	4,200.00	4,200.00



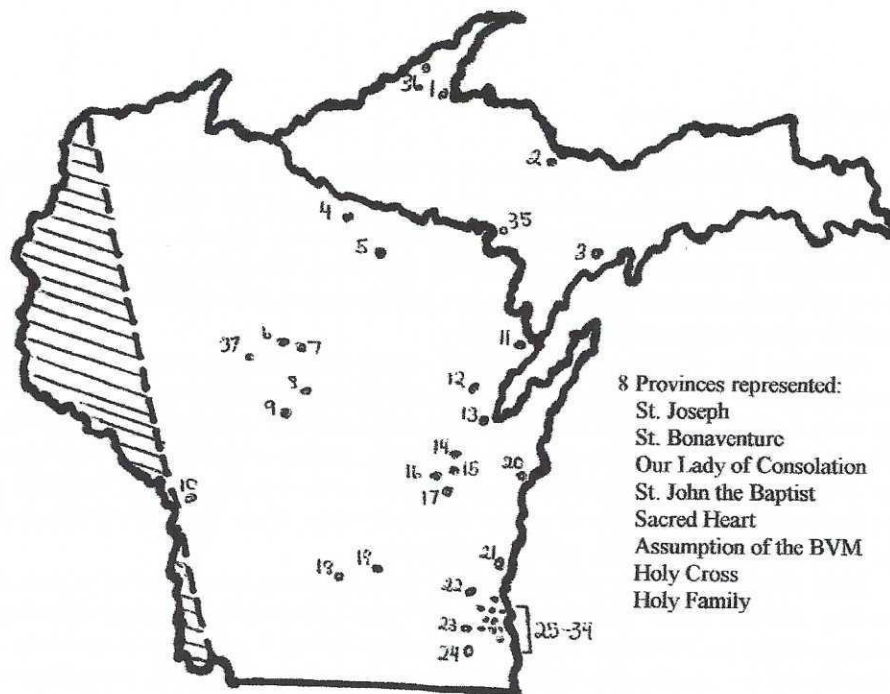
## -Appendix E (continued)-

NAFRA Per Capita	5,231.00	1,408.00
Postage- Meter Permit Rental Bulk	2,461.54	1,971.93
Telephone	1,547.15	848.87
Office Supplies	652.33	369.15
Office Maintenance Costs	—	408.08
- Air Conditioner	100.00	—
- Computer Repair	410.00	—
- Copier Yearly Maintenance	156.00	—
Exchange	2,839.32	1,125.88
Petty Cash (Cleaning)	322.61	356.68
Franciscan Supplies	3,150.71	4,848.12
Franciscan Life Printing	1,039.99	728.34
Masses for weekly living & deceased SFO's	295.00	275.00
Subscriptions	248.00	101.97
Christmas Gifts for Employees	185.00	160.00
Library	—	33.48
Fees/ Bank Printing- annual cost	31.90	82.39
ATOP District V Mtg. Rental	25.00	—
Donation to FAN Network	250.00	—
Donation to Capuchin Mission in Rwanda	—	250.00
Purchase CD (from Bequest)	10,000.00	—
Regional Holding Account	—	160.00
Workshops- Mount Calvary & Rhinelander	—	1,002.32
TOTALS	<u>\$ 62,899.48</u>	<u>\$ 49,280.13</u>

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Balance in Checkbook 6/30/94	\$ 9,663.47
Receipts	\$ 59,264.64
Disbursements	49,280.13
Net	\$ 9,987.11
Balance in Checkbook 6/30/95	\$ 19,647.98

## -Appendix F-



The New La Verna Region- October 13, 1995

## Fraternities

- |                                               |                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1. St. Ann- Baraga, MI                        | 19. St. Peter- Beaver Dam, WI                   |
| 2. St. Anthony- Marquette, MI                 | 20. Holy Innocents- Manitowoc, WI               |
| 3. St. Francis- Escanaba, MI                  | 21. St. Mary- Belgium, WI                       |
| 4. Our Lady of the Universe- Woodruff, WI     | 22. Immaculate Conception- Hrtfold, WI          |
| 5. St. John Neumann- Rhinelander, WI          | 23. St. James- Mukwonago, WI                    |
| 6. St. Anthony- Marathon, WI                  | 24. St. Paschal Baylon- Burlington, WI          |
| 7. St. James- Wausau, WI                      | 25. St. Rose of Lima- Milwaukee, WI             |
| 8. St. Peter- Stevens Point, WI               | 26. St. Anthony- Milwaukee, WI                  |
| 9. Our Lady Queen of Heaven- Wisc. Rapids, WI | 27. St. Francis- Milwaukee, WI                  |
| 10. Little Portion- LaCrosse, WI              | 28. Sts. Francis and Clare- Milwaukee, WI       |
| 11. St. Victoria- Marinette, WI               | 29. St. John Nepomuc- Milwaukee, WI             |
| 12. Sacred Heart- Shawano, WI                 | 30. St. Josaphat- Milwaukee, WI                 |
| 13. St. Ann- Green Bay, WI                    | 31. St. Thomas Aquinas- Milwaukee, WI           |
| 14. St. Joseph- Appleton, WI                  | 32. St. Clare- Greenfield, WI                   |
| 15. St. Francis Xavier- Menasha, WI           | 33. Holy Assumption- West Allis, WI             |
| 16. Sacred Heart- Oshkosh, WI                 | 34. St. Augustinc- West Allis, WI               |
| 17. St. Joseph- Fond du Lac, WI               | 35. St. Elizabeth of Hungary- Iron Mountain, MI |
| 18. Rainbow- Middleton, WI                    | 36. St. John the Baptist- Calumet, MI           |
|                                               | 37. St. Clare- Marshfield, WI                   |



-Appendix G-  
Letter of Betty Lou Pyka, Regional Commission Coordinator

My Fellow Secular Franciscans:

I have been asked to serve you in the La Verna Region as your Regional Commission Coordinator. This is no easy task since the reading material available is insurmountable. There are literally thousands of issues and concerns that need to be addressed by the Christian world today. There is so much wrong in the world today that it could be considered a missionary's paradise for sainthood. Whatever Saint Francis had to face and rectify in his time is the same ungodliness, hatred, greed, lust, and ignorance that we have to be concerned with today. Mankind has slipped right back to its weak side.

A good source of what needs to be done and where more support and manpower is needed would be our local newspapers and volunteer flyers. There is a constant demand for volunteers and for financial aid. The real problem is trying to find an apostolate that would be suited to us as practicing Roman Catholic Franciscan Christians. It is an awesome responsibility to be representatives of the Church. We represent Christ to everyone we meet. Who and what we get involved with will give witness to who we are. It should not be taken lightly as to which organizations we get involved with or who their sponsors are. Once we get involved, we will be identified with the organization, its sponsors and its membership.

Since I was professed in 1978, I have been serving the Secular Order of St. Francis in various capacities. In the role as minister, which had been a total of 13 years, I have been defining and activating the five commissions within my fraternity. One of the biggest problems to taking on an apostolate is commitment. An apostolate should be carefully prayed over before accepting it as a fraternity commitment. When apostolates are started too quickly they are also dropped very quickly when the novelty wears off and when the daily demand becomes too mundane. A lot of good people get hurt when we don't follow through with our commitment to them.

I would suggest that when your fraternity forms an apostolate for each of the commissions, that your fraternity assigns a chairperson to oversee the activity and the reading material. These commissioners should report to your fraternity at the monthly meetings and through your fraternity newsletters. The commission chairperson position should be rotated among the members so all members get a first hand experience with involvement and fostering total fraternity commitment.

I am still struggling with how much and how often the commission information should be mailed out to our fraternities. In order to set up this program properly, a handbook needs to be created and good records need to be kept so that accurate information can be passed on. To begin with, one or two issues per commission will be passed on to you so you can get started and develop your apostolate around [one of them] if you choose.

I recommend starting out small with your apostolates. Perhaps your fraternity could first just inform your members of various issues and concerns. Writing letters or signing petitions is an easy and one-time concrete involvement. Get your membership excited about taking part in world matters as well as local and national concerns.

If you have any concerns or suggestions write to me and let me know.

Peace in Christ,

*Betty Lou Pyka SFO*

Betty Lou Pyka SFO

La Verna Regional Commissions Coordinator

September, 1997

-Appendix H-  
Listing of Ministers of Local Fraternities by Districts, 1998

UPPER PENINSULA

St. Ann (Hancock)  
Bob Olson

St. John the Baptist (Calumet)  
Mary Kroeger

St. Francis of Assisi (Escanaba)  
Maria Neubauer

St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Iron Mtn.)  
Genevieve Musick

St. Anthony of Padua (Marquette)  
Jim Collins

CENTRAL WISCONSIN

St. Anthony (Marathon)  
Alvina Lensmire

St. John Neumann (Rhineland)  
Wayne Raymond

St. Peter (Stevens Point)  
Janet Chapley

St. James (Wausau)  
Betty Mondroski

Queen of Heaven (Wisc. Rapids)  
Blanche Schluter

Queen of the Universe (Woodruff)  
Nancy Kokstis

FOX VALLEY

St. Joseph (Appleton)  
Louise Faust

St. Joseph (Fond du Lac)  
Dorothy Henkes

St. Ann (Green Bay)  
Judy Rank

Holy Innocents (Manitowoc)  
Rodney Knier

St. Francis Xavier (Menasha)  
Sally Gerarden

St. Victoria (Menominee)  
Karen Roetzer

Sacred Heart (Oshkosh)  
Elizabeth MacDonald

Sacred Heart (Shawano)  
Mark Fuller

SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN

St. Peter (Beaver Dam)  
Francis Hanks

St. Pascal Baylon (Burlington)  
Dale Nees

St. Clare (Greenfield)  
Paula Alioto

SOUTHEAST WISC. Continued

Immaculate Conception (Hartford)  
Al Hannes

Rainbow Fraternity (Madison)  
Jo Terranova

St. Anthony (Milwaukee)  
Marguerite Jansen

St. Francis (Milwaukee)  
Jan Szemborski

SS. Francis and Clare (Milwaukee)  
Helen Filo

St. John de Nepemuc (Milwaukee)  
Robert Deahl

St. Josaphat (Milwaukee)  
Mary Wdowczyk

St. Thomas Aquinas (Milwaukee)  
Vickie Hessel

St. James (Mukwonago)  
Fran Vershowske

Holy Assumption (West Allis)  
Bruce Pauc



-Appendix I-  
Regional Fraternity Statement of Revenue & Expense (2010-2011)

<u>Beginning Balances:</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Regular Checking	\$ 1,011.47	\$ 80.89
Retreat Subsidy Fund	1,282.76	1,563.31
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	(620.54)	(627.47)
Cash on Hand	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Cash on Hand & in Banks	\$35,114.80	\$34,457.84
<u>Revenue:</u>		
Donations	\$ 1,505.80	\$ 2,894.65
Interest Income & VISA Bonus	65.00	368.84
Interest Endowment Fund	858.05	888.50
Special Memorials	600.00	60.00
Chapter	854.75	395.15
Fair Share	22,143.25	21,863.00
Misc. Income	<u>125.00</u>	<u>589.95</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 26,154.85	\$27,060.09
Total Available Funds	61,269.65	61,517.93
<u>Expenses:</u>		
Stipends	2,400.00	2,775.00
Materials and Supplies	678.40	1,083.15
Education/ Training	0.00	6,185.32
Meeting Room and Facilities	1,175.00	1,150.00
Office Supplies	155.29	134.69
Administrative Expenses	739.65	1,415.77
Newsletter	1,823.19	1,818.58
Travel Expenses	8,685.30	10,138.82
Fair Share to NAFRA	5,352.00	5,352.00
Annual Chapter	4,310.68	4,029.65
Visitation/ Election	814.80	484.11
Retreat Subsidy	577.50	410.00
Misc. Expense	<u>100.00</u>	<u>589.95</u>
Total Disbursements	\$ 26,811.81	\$35,567.04
Gain or (Loss) for Year	(656.96)	(8,506.95)
Ending Balance:	\$ 34,457.84	\$25,950.89

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Regular Checking (as of 12/31/11)	\$ 2,217.93
Retreat Endowment Fund (restricted)	2,041.81
Education/ Training Fund	0.00
Retreat Endowment CD	16,924.15
US Bank CD	4,994.55
VISA Credit Card	(690.05)
Cash on Hand	<u>462.50</u>
Total Cash on Hand and in Banks	\$ 25,950.89

-In Appreciation-

Many thanks to the late Mr. Jim Carlson OFS (1944-2018), who for many years saw the need for a Regional History. It was at our Regional Executive Council meeting in the spring of 2016 that the idea "hit home" with me. The REC appointed me Archivist for the Region that June, and it was in handling the mounds of papers and folders (mainly from the former offices of Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap) that I realized I had the basic material needed for such a project.

Ken Beattie OFS has been extremely helpful with his first-hand knowledge of the years under Provincial leadership of the 4 Major Orders and the tumultuous years of defining how and why it was necessary for the Secular Franciscan Fraternity to operate with its own identity.

Teri Doughty OFS, Region Councilor, has also contributed her thoughts to the history project and has checked grammar and "the look" of the project.

God bless you all. Pax et bonum.

Sharon Dale OFS  
Archivist and Historian  
La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscans