



The Joy of Francis

Together for the Gospel!

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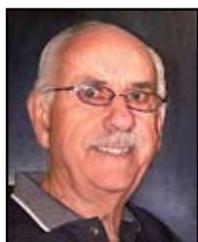


Regional Gathering

Speaker Lucky Lynch of the Kalaidoscope Institute, with Language Facilitators Peter Nguyen, SFO (Regional Councilor), Armando Lomeli SFO (Regional Councilor) and Augustin Lee SFO (Lay Spiritual Assistant). Story on pages 8-9.

In This Issue

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Regional Gathering 2007 | Page 1 |
| To my Franciscan Family | Page 1 |
| 2007 Regional Retreat | Page 2 |
| St. Elizabeth of Hungary | Page 2 |
| Towards 2008 | Page 3 |
| St. Clare Fraternity Est. | Page 3 |
| JPIC | Page 4 |
| Ephram the Syrian | Page 4 |
| Sister Bertha, SFO | Page 5 |
| Retablo & St. Elizabeth | Page 5 |
| Formation Seminars, 2007 | Page 6 |
| Regional Gathering 2007 | Page 8 |
| Praying the Psalms | Page 10 |
| Peace & Justice | Page 12 |
| People Follow Love | Page 14 |
| Ministers Meeting 2008 | Page 15 |
| Regional Directory | Page 15 |



To my Franciscan Family:

The Blessings of our Diversity

by Rock DeSpain, Regional Minister

When I became Regional Minister, I had no idea of how diverse our region was, nor did I realize the great potential of our diversity. I soon learned that the great potential was not limited to the growth in numbers for our region. It soon became apparent to me that the greatest potential for our region was the beautiful spirituality that each culture had to offer. It was an opportunity for Ongoing Formation that is so very important for our vocation. As I spent more time with the different cultures, I realized what they had to offer was their commitment they have as a family to each other. This strong bond reminded me of what had drifted away from the Irish Catholic culture I was raised in. Their respect for the elderly in their communities was heartfelt.

Diversity, continued page 2



Another thing I appreciated in the diverse cultures was their desire to follow our Rule and other documents that guide us. Granted, like some Anglo fraternities, they were lacking in their understanding and knowledge of these documents, but I soon realized that if we spent the time with them, that they would blossom into fine fraternities. Today, we are able to see the advantages of the diversity. We are learning much from each other.

In January of 2005, we had an election that was greatly influenced by the Holy Spirit. We elected a Councilor (at large) from the Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese speaking communities. This not only gave these language groups representation on the Regional Executive Council, but added their compassion and charity to the discussions and motions that we vote on. They have been a great asset to the Council.

This year at our Annual Regional Gathering, we had the opportunity for all of us to be with each other the entire day. It showed our diversity as strength, rather than a chore. In February of 2008, a few of us will be taking the classes at Kaleidoscope Institute, whose lecturers did such an outstanding job at our Regional Gathering, so that we may learn more and better ways to utilize the blessings of our diverse region.

I love this job.

Peace and blessings,

Rock DeSpain, SFO
Regional Minister



From Bill Musatto, Minister, Holy Spirit Fraternity, Claremont:
At our Regional Retreat, we learned that theology applied to our personal life is our spirituality. Prior to St Francis, the primary emphasis was on the Divinity of Christ, mainly to counter various heresies. Francis found Christ's humanity in the Gospels reminding us that man has been redeemed and is no longer evil. This lead Francis to emphasize living the Gospel in the world, rather than in a monastery. While we may be a grain of sand compared to God, God did not create any two of us alike. Know who you are: your strengths and your weaknesses. The Lord wants to work through us as we are, but we must permit it.



St. Elizabeth of Hungary and the Call to Gospel Life

Royal Patroness of the SFO

We are in celebration of the 8th centenary of the birth of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. The Jubilee celebration began on her feast day on November 17, 2006, and will continue until November 17, 2008.

The Secular Franciscan Order honors her as our patroness, and the whole Franciscan family counts her among its glories. She is an exceptional example of devotion to God the Father, in the following of Christ and in the dissolving of her whole being in the God who is Love.



The Franciscan Family as a whole also is preparing to call to mind the origins of the Franciscan charism. In three years it will be 800 years since a dozen men presented themselves before the pope to ask for recognition and approval of their gospel life (1209 A.D.).



Turning Towards the Year 2008 800 Years After the Conversion of St. Francis

by **Federica Menghinella**

Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv., invites everyone to reflect on the following:

The year of grace two thousand and eight. Eight hundred years after that precious 1208 when St Francis arrived in Assisi during the Spring after serving the lepers of Gubbio and was overcome by his evangelical apostolic vocation at Portziuncola. He arrives at Portziuncola where he listens to the Gospel of the votive Mass to the Apostles, eight hundred years ago. This holy place saw one of the most illuminating events for the world. In the *First Life of St Francis of Assisi*, the first biography of St Francis by Thomas of Celano, the author recounts that St Francis referred to that precise year of grace that became the scene of this conversion that he often said to the monks:

“Beware my sons, never leave this place. If you are ever driven away from one direction, return from the other; because this place is truly holy and is inhabited by God. Here, when we were few, God on High multiplied us; here he enlightened the hearts of the poor with his wisdom; here he lit the fire of his love in our wills. Whoever prays here with devotion will receive what he asks for, and whoever profanes this place shall be punished severely. Therefore, sons, deem this place

worthy of all honours, the abode of God, and with all your heart, with triumphant voice praise the Lord” (F.F. 503).

To hear such words after eight hundred years, leads us to reflect on the topicality of St Francis’ message, each line never being more true than now to the lives we lead. Never leave Portziuncola, a place of conversion and mysticism. From Portziuncola to the path of our soul: Tomas of Celano quotes the words of St Francis that seem to invite us to persevere in the quest for the places of God, such as St Damian, the Holy Hovel in Rivotorto, but also in the depths of our being where we will never be alone.

At Portziuncola, St Francis received his new brothers that gathered



around him and formed the first Franciscan Order, and eight hundred years later, to think of the contagious faith of that primordial nucleus of brothers warms the heart and gives faith in the future. To think that original fervour, of the flame that led a group of men along the difficult path towards God can and must spur us on. This is why we will look to the year 2008 with conscience and hope, *praising the Lord* with all our heart. **T**



Establishment of St. Clare Fraternity

From Magdalena Jean Hong SFO, Minister St. Clare Fraternity: We, St. Clare Fraternity of Westminster, held the Rite of Establishment celebrated under Fr. Christian Mondor, OFM, and Regional Minister Rock DeSpain on December 10, 2006, at the Korean Martyrs Catholic Center at Westminster, CA. We have 19 SFO members and 11 Candidates. **T**



JPIC

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation

by Ray Hardwick, SFO

May the Lord give you Peace.

Since the articles in the current **Tau** have been published on the JPIC, there seems to be concern in our Region. As Peace and Justice Chair of the former commission I thought I should try and clear up some of the misconceptions that are out there.

First, JPIC stands for *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation*. It is a council with which all Franciscans, except SFO's, are quite familiar. Jo-Ann and I served on the St. Barbara Province JPIC Council for three years and we enjoyed the interaction with the friars.

Second, this gives National and the Regions a more efficient way of helping all of us to live out Articles 15 - 19 of our Rule. All of the former commissions would be under one entity. Work, family, ecology, peace and justice would be represented at the National level of JPIC. Each Region would have one JPIC representative and from these people National would will choose from each of the areas to serve as the National JPIC council.

Third, each fraternity would have a JPIC person to get information either from the Regional JPIC person or from the National network and list-serv on line. Now information will be transmitted more efficiently and we all would be working together to help the members live

out that part of the Rule.

I can tell you from personal experience that this is a good thing and will benefit every one of us. The ad hoc committee has not finalized the way every thing will work out so we need to be patient and not panic about this. God is always doing something new and He asks us "can you not perceive it?" (Is 43:19)

On final note. We have joined the **FAN, Franciscan Advocacy Network**, which joins us with the First, Second, and Third Order Religious Franciscans in presenting a united voice to our country and the world. All that is happening will be truly Franciscan.

Peace and all Good, Ray



EPHREM THE SYRIAN

THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF CHRISTIANITY

VATICAN CITY, NOV 28, 2007 (VIS) -

Benedict XVI today dedicated his general audience to the figure of St. Ephrem the Syrian, "the most famous poet of the patristic age."

"The roots of the Christian religion," the Pope explained, "are in the Old Testament, hence in Jerusalem and the Semitic world. And Christianity constantly draws nourishment from these Old Testament roots. The spread of Christianity in the early centuries was directed both westwards - to the Greco-Latin world where it later inspired European culture - and eastwards to Persia and India, where it contributed to the

formation of a specific culture, in Semitic languages and with its own identity."

Benedict XVI indicated that "in to order demonstrate the one Christian faith's multiplicity of cultural form ever since its inception" he had chosen to focus his audience on St. Ephrem, a theologian and a poet who was born in Nisibis around the year 306 and died in Edessa in 373.

"Poetry," the Holy Father explained, "enabled him to deepen his theological reflections through the use of paradox and images."

Benedict XVI dwelt briefly on Ephrem's ideas concerning God the Creator, saying: "Nothing in the Creation is isolated and the world is - alongside Sacred Scripture - a Bible of God. Using his freedom wrongly, man overturns the order of the universe."

For Ephrem, "Jesus' presence in Mary's womb greatly raised the dignity of women ... about whom he always speaks with sensitivity and respect," said the Pope. "Just as there is no Redemption without Jesus, so there is no Incarnation without Mary. And the divine and human dimensions of the mystery of our Redemption are already to be found in the saint's writings."

Honored in tradition with the title of "Harp of the Holy Spirit," Ephrem remained a deacon of the Church throughout his life. "This was a decisive and emblematic choice," said the Holy Father. "He was a deacon, in other words a servant in liturgical ministry and, more radically, in the love of Christ ... as well as in charity towards his brethren who, with great skill, he introduced to a knowledge of the divine Revelation."





Our Sister Bertha Van Bruyssel, SFO

In the words of her daughter, Nelly Dow Edited from the Assisian, Sts. Simon & Jude Fraternity, Huntington Beach, CA

Bertha Van Bruyssel (nee de Wispeleir) was born in Belgium on May 29, 1907. Her father was the groundskeeper, her mother the housekeeper on the estate of a baron's castle, so Bertha, oldest of five children, three sisters and one brother, grew up in these lovely surroundings. Bertha graduated from St. Vincent Academy at age 17 and entered the College of Our Lady of the Presentation.

In 1933, Bertha, at age 26, married her sweetheart, Leon Van Bruyssel. Their happy marriage produced three girls. Sadness struck in 1943 when the youngest, Denise, died at the age of 2 ½. Leon died four months later. He was buried Christmas eve. Bertha was devastated, but more problems were yet to come. WWII was still being waged, and in May, Bertha's house was bombed. Nevertheless, she went about the neighborhood helping the doctor treat those with severe injuries.

Bertha, continued on page 14

Dedication of the Grand Retablo and Presentation on St. Elizabeth of Hungary

From "The Dove," Newsletter of the San Juan Capistrano Fraternity

It was a grand dedication for a Grand Retablo at the Basilica last month (July 21, 2007). It was indeed an historical event for the Mission founded by Bl. Junipero Serra. He must have been looking down proudly. Bishop Brown commented that when this project was presented to him some two years ago, he thought it would be wonderful, but also wondered if it would ever come to be. He said well, it has come to be and the Mission's nickname, *The Jewel of the Missions*, has probably added a few karats!

The \$2 million retablo is the creation of Talleres de Arte Granda, Spain, and stands 42 feet tall, 30 feet wide and weighs 16 tons. The piece was inspired by the retablo in the historic Serra Chapel, and features images of the Holy Trinity, Blessed Junipero Serra, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Joseph and Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of the Diocese of Orange.



Grand Retablo, Mission San Juan Capistrano Basilica

It was a blessing to see our own Franciscan presence there. The Secular Franciscans, led by our own Deacon Sire, SFO, who read the Gospel, to our early-morning risers who came to say Morning Prayers together before Mass. It was great.



Maria DiSanto

We were also pleased to host a special live presentation by a talented actress on the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary - and happily on the Saint's feastday, Nov. 17! Maria DiSanto, who works at St. Timothy Parish as an office manager, portrayed the very human trials of St. Elizabeth as she sought to follow the ideal of Franciscan poverty and charity in an ever-changing worldly state. Maria is a Master-Catechist and is currently studying for a Master's degree in Pastoral Theology through Loyola Marymount University as part of the Orange Diocese Cohort. She can be reached at:

mdisanto@st-timsr.org



Regional Formation Seminars, 2007







Richard Prindle and Lucky Lynch



Regional Gathering 2007

(by Cathy from Pax et Bonum, the SFO Fraternity Newsletter of the San Damiano Fraternity in Palm Desert, CA)

Sisters and Brothers,

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend our annual Regional Gathering in Torrance, last Saturday. It was wonderful to see so many Secular Franciscans, from a variety of cultures and places, at one gathering.

Bill Wicks, National SFO Historian (bottom left photo) was available to sign his just published, *History of the SFO in the United States*, the first of three volumes.

We were introduced to two guest speakers who gave us tools for improving our communication and leadership skills. Lucky Lynch and Richard Prindle from the Kaleidoscope Institute, spoke about Respectful Communication Guidelines in the first session, and the Mutual Invitation Process in the afternoon.

In the morning presentation Rick said that their mission was to train competent leaders in our diverse and changing world. Rick gave us six attributes of a good leader, including self-awareness and discipline.

We were then asked to consider and discuss how we show respect, agreement, and disagreement in our cultures, homes, and communities. We shared these ideas with the whole group. The following guidelines





were given to help us improve communication:

R – take *RESPONSIBILITY* for what you say and feel without blaming others

E – use *EMPATHETIC* listening

S – be *SENSITIVE* to differences in communication styles

P – *PONDER* what you hear and feel before you speak

E – *EXAMINE* your own assumptions and your pre-conceptions

C – keep *CONFIDENTIALITY*

T – *TRUST* ambiguity because we are NOT here to debate who is right or wrong

After lunch, we were asked to implement the Respect Guidelines as we broke into groups to share our thoughts on parts of the Franciscan Peace Prayer. With guidance from Lucky, we were instructed how to begin the sharing with a leader, who shared thoughts, and then invited another member of the group to share their thoughts. The next to speak had the privilege to pass or invite, until all had a turn. At any time a member could decline to share by simply saying “pass” or “pass for now.” This is an example of the Mutual Invitation Process.

At the end of the day, I felt that we were able to share our thoughts and experiences quite well, and we were closer because of the process. In conclusion, Rick stressed that inclusively recognizes diversity. It is alright not to agree, we must trust ambiguity. By implementing the two communication skills, we empower one another with respect. Our Regional Minister, Rock, expressed his hope that by using these tools, we could build peace in our communities and in the world. – *Peace and All Good.* 



PRAYING THE PSALMS

Submitted by Sylvia L. Paoli, SFO, Vice-Minister of St. Francis Region, editor of *Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity newsletter*, from September, 07, newsletter.

So often we hear people say: "The Psalms don't mean anything to me. They're about Old Testament times, wars, etc., and have nothing to do with today." At first reading, that is probably a typical reaction. But a continued reading, study, and praying of the Psalms - the foundation of the daily prayers of the Church - will show you something different.

The excerpt below is taken from a small book called "The School of Prayer, An Introduction to The Divine Office for All Christians" by John Brook, published by The Liturgical Press, Saint John's Abbey, P.O. Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321-7500, phone (800) 858-5450. They are online at: www.litpress.org.

Psalm 81

The heading for this psalm, Solemn Renewal of the Covenant, puts it in the setting of the Feast of Tabernacles, the greatest of the three annual pilgrim feasts of Israel. At the Feast of Tabernacles, the Law was read and the people were exhorted to renew their trust in God and their obedience to his commandments.

The Christian equivalent is the renewal of baptismal vows during the Easter liturgy. At Tabernacles, the events of the journey through

the wilderness were relived and celebrated in the temple liturgy. All of these threads are woven together in this psalm.

The major section of the psalm is a prophecy in which God urges his people to listen to his word and 'walk in his ways'. The prophecy is preceded by a call to worship:

Ring out your joy to God our strength, shout in triumph to the God of Jacob, Raise a song and sound the timbrel, the sweet-sounding harp and the lute, blow the trumpet at the new moon, when the moon is full, on our feast.

Each autumn Israel celebrated a complex festive season which began on the first day of the seventh month (*the new moon*) and continued through to the fifteenth day (*the full moon*), when the Feast of Tabernacles began (see Leviticus 23:23-43). The beginning of the whole season was marked by the blowing of the ram's horn, *the trumpet*, on the day of the new moon. Tabernacles was a very joyful feast, as is clear from first verses of the psalm. It was a time for singing, shouting, dancing, and music.

For this is Israel's law, a command of the God of Jacob; He imposed it as a rule on Joseph, when he went out against the land of Egypt.

The feast is appointed by God and has its beginning in the Exodus (Exodus 23:14ff) when God *went out against the land of Egypt*, when he sent the plagues on Egypt to persuade Pharaoh to let the people go. *Joseph* may refer to the northern tribes or to the whole nation.

A voice I did not know said to me: I freed your shoulder from the burden; Your hands were freed from the load; You called in distress and I saved you.

The prophet speaks as if he is Israel in Egypt hearing the voice of the Lord for the first time. It is a new voice, a *voice I did not know*, a voice that promised freedom from the *burden* of slavery, from the making and carrying of heavy *loads* of bricks to build the Pharaoh's cities.

The Lord says to the people: *You called in distress and I saved you.*

The present congregation and their ancestors who left Egypt generations ago are addressed as one people. The Exodus was the salvation of the whole nation for all time. As members of the new Israel, grafted on to the tree, the Exodus is our salvation, completed in Christ. In Christ our shoulders were *freed* from the *burden* of sin.

I answered, concealed in the storm cloud, at the waters of Meribah I tested you. Listen, my people, to my warning, O Israel, if only you would heed!

The prophecy moves from the Exodus to Mount Sinai, where God spoke from out of *the storm cloud*. Later, at *Meribah*, he *tested* the people. It was a *Meribah* that the people ran out of water and accused Moses, and hence the Lord, of bringing them out of Egypt to die of thirst in the desert. The Lord's response was to make water flow from the rock. In Exodus the incident is described as Israel testing God (Exodus 17:1-7), but in this psalm it is put the other



way round. At Meribah God was testing Israel, testing the depth of their faith.

The solemn call: *Listen, my people* introduces the next verse:

Let there be no foreign god among you, no worship of an alien god. I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

We are back at Mount Sinai, where God gave Israel the Law. The first commandment of the Law said: 'You shall have no other gods besides me.' (Exodus 20:3). *Let there be no foreign god among you.* It was Israel's repeated disobedience to this first commandment that was one of the major causes of her downfall. The commandments were not the way Israel earned God's favour. His salvation came first (the deliverance *from the land of Egypt*) and their obedience was to be a grateful response to God's grace.

The invitation *Open wide your mouth and I will fill it* is God's promise to bless the people physically and spiritually. If only they will be loyal to him they will have food aplenty. In Israel the Feast of Tabernacles was the festival at which the nation gave thanks for the harvest and prayed for rain for the coming season. It was on the last day of this feast that Jesus said: 'If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink.' (John 7:37).

But my people did not heed my voice and Israel would not obey, so I left them in their stubbornness of heart, to follow their own designs.

These tragic words describe the attitude of Israel not only in the wilderness, but right down through her history. Time after time she 'seized [God's] servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third' (Matthew 21:35). The **sentence** [that precedes the psalm] warns Christians against falling into precisely the same trap:

Take care that no one among you has a wicked, unbelieving heart (Hebrews 3:12). When the people blatantly rejected God, he left them . . . to follow their own designs.

O that my people would heed me, that Israel would walk in my ways! At once I would subdue their foes, turn my hand against their enemies.

At the end of the Law, in Deuteronomy 28, the Lord laid out two ways before Israel: the way of life and the way of death, blessing and curse. Blessing was promised 'if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, by keeping and observing all his commandments' (Deuteronomy 28:1). If they kept God's commandments, then the promise was: 'The enemies who attack you, the Lord will defeat before your eyes' (Deuteronomy 28:6). In our fight against 'the world, the flesh and the devil' obedience to Christ's commands assures us of God's protection and victory.

The Lord's enemies would cringe at their feet and their subjection would last for ever. But Israel I would feed with finest wheat' and fill them with honey from the rock.

Another aspect of the blessing

promised to those who obeyed God's commandments was blessing on 'the yield of your soil' (Deuteronomy 28:4), *the finest wheat. Honey from the rock* was wild honey, a choice delicacy.

In these lines the Christian cannot fail to be reminded of the blessing of the Eucharist, where 'The Lord has fed us with finest wheat' (Holy Thursday and Eastertide antiphon), with the bread which becomes the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Each Eucharist is a renewal of the new covenant. We relive the saving events of the cross and resurrection, the events which prove to us that nothing can ever separate us from the love of Christ, and in the Eucharist we pledge ourselves to Christ as we hear and believe his Word, as we eat his body and drink his blood.

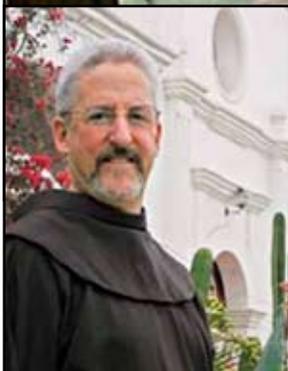
Meditation questions for SFOs:
How have we obeyed the Lord?
How have we disobeyed Him?

Our profession calls us to an *additional* commitment to our Lord. We are spoken of in many documents as the laity who are "consecrated" to the Lord. Many good Catholic Christians in every parish help as they should, as Eucharistic ministers, lectors, teachers, ministers to the sick, ministers to the bereaved, and many more. Our profession calls upon us to do *more*, to *be* more, to take Christ and His message to the *world*, not to those who already know and follow it. So, in following our call, how have we taken Christ's message to our neighbors, to those

continued on page 14



We are a Peaceful People Retreat and 2nd Annual Prayer Breakfast, Mission San Luis Rey



SFO and Friends group photo at the **We are a Peaceful People** Retreat held at Mission San Luis Rey, in Oceanside, CA. Rear, left to right are Fr. Louie Vitale, OFM; Jess Green, SFO; Ruth Green; Carol Bryant, SFO; Ray Madrigal, SFO; Ray Hardwick, SFO; Ted Hewitt, SFO; and Fra. Mark Schroeder, OFM. Left to right front are Jeanette Arquist, Director of the Office of Social Concerns, Diocese of San Bernardino (Jess' daughter); John Ubelhor, SFO; Ken Wilde, SFO; Bob Garon, SFO; Inset to the left is Fra. James Lockman, OFM, who, with Fr. Vitale, guided the retreat.

On October 12-14, 2007, Mission San Luis Rey held a Franciscan retreat which focused on deepening our "right relationships" as we walk together on Mother Earth as peaceful people. We looked at the creative power of non-violence through experiences of prayer, discussion, silence and exploring nature.

We were led by Fr. Louie Vitale, OFM, who has a background in sociology and a focus on the Sociology of Religion and social movements. He is a long time social activist. A Franciscan friar who served as the Provincial of the West Coast Franciscan Friars from

1979 to 1988, he co-founded the Nevada Desert Experience and its enduring movement to end nuclear testing. Co-presenter was Friar James Lockman, OFM, Executive Director of Mission San Luis Rey, who had the opportunity to work for a number of years in the Brazilian Amazon on issues of sustainability in forestry and agriculture.

Among the guided reflections was one on the *Wolf of Gobbio*, and how we are called to be peacemakers and seekers of justice in the Franciscan tradition. Who is our "wolf"?

Included in this retreat was the Mission's 2nd Annual *Celebrating*

Creation Prayer Breakfast, with workshops on Environmental Justice. The workshops included organic gardening, energy, water, alternative fuel, recycling, endangered species, respect for creation and a special workshop for children presented by Judy Bishop, Executive Director of the San Diego Eco-Center.



New Justice and Peace Newsletter

The Franciscans Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation office is now producing a bi-monthly online newsletter. The newsletter is a great place to learn about the Justice & Peace work of the Franciscan Friars, important legislation pending in both state and federal government, etc.

<http://www.sbfranciscans.org/ABOUTUS/JPIC/index.htm>



Lenten Retreat

March 8, 2007 San Bndo

The Diocese of San Bernardino Office of Social Concerns is collaborating with the Office of Small Faith Sharing Communities to host a Lenten Retreat on March 8, 2008. They have engaged Fr. Michael Harvey, OFM as the English presenter and Fr. Jose Marcos Gonzales, OFM as the Spanish presenter. These Franciscan Friars will develop the theme of Repentance.

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Fr. Louie Vitale, OFM & Fr. Steve Kelly, SJ, are Serving Five Months in Prison for Putting Torture on Trial

from <http://paceebene.org/>

October 17, 2007 -- Pace e Bene co-founder Fr. Louie Vitale, O.F.M. and Fr. Steve Kelly, S.J. were sentenced today by Magistrate Hector Estrada to five months in federal prison for nonviolent action they engaged in last year at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. Training in torture techniques have been documented at this US Army base.

They began their sentences immediately.

Major General Antonio M. Tacuba, who served in Iraq and wrote a report critical of torture carried out at Abu Ghraib prison, phoned the Franciscan and Jesuit priests the night before to convey his support and to express his belief that "history will honor your actions." Their lawyer, Bill Quigley, shared General Tacuba's words of support with the court.

The judge, who confessed that the case had put him in "an uncomfortable position," meted out to both men three months in prison for trespass and two months for disobeying an officer. They will be incarcerated at a federal prison.

The case stems from a November 19, 2006, witness-against-torture that the two priests engaged in at the southern Arizona army base. The two attempted to speak with enlisted personnel and deliver a letter denouncing torture and the Military Commissions Act of 2006 to Major General Barbara Fast, commander at Fort Huachuca, who had headed the Abu Ghraib prison when revelations on torture at the facility broke.

In a statement read to supporters who gathered outside the courthouse Frs. Vitale & Kelly declared:

"The real crime here has always been the teaching of torture at Fort Huachuca and the practice of torture around the world. We sought to deliver a letter asking that the teaching of torture be stopped and were arrested.

We tried to put the evidence of torture on full and honest display in the courthouse and were denied. We were prepared to put on evidence about the widespread use of torture and human rights abuses committed during interrogations at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This evidence was gathered by the military itself and by governmental and human rights investigations. Because the court will not allow the truth of torture to be a part of our trial, we plead no contest.

We are uninterested in a court hearing limited to who was walking where and how many steps it was to the gate. History will judge whether silencing the facts of torture is just or not. Far too many people have died

because of our national silence about torture. Far too many of our young people in the military have been permanently damaged after following orders to torture and violate the human rights of other humans.

We will keep trying to stop the teaching and practice of torture whether we are sent to jail or out. We have done our part. Now it is up to every woman and man of conscience to do their part to stop the injustice of torture."



October 17, 2007 - 75 year old Fr. Louie Vitale, OFM, days after hosting our Peace Retreat, was sentenced to five months in prison for standing up for peace and against torture.

If the actions of Fr. Louie and Fr. Steve have moved you, encouraged you, or enriched your spirit in some way, please thank them by writing them a letter.

To write to Fr. Louie:

R.A.D.F.
Louis Vitale
ID #292487
Booking #879645
P.O. Box 679
El Centro, CA 92244

To write to Fr. Steve:

Stephen Kelly #00816111
CCA
P. O. Box 6300
Florence, AZ 85232



All People Follow What They Love

A reflection on a Franciscan Spirituality Seminar by Ted Hewitt



Fr. Tom Herbst, OFM

In July of this year I went on a Franciscan Spirituality Retreat at the Mission San Luis Rey presented by Fr. Tom Herbst, OFM. Fr. Tom is a professor of Systematic

Theology at the Franciscan International Study Centre, in Canturbury, England. Fr. Tom began by examining the foundational Christian spirituality of St. Augustine's *Confession*. Augustine realized that his loves were not of God - his loves were disordered, and thus his loves remained sinful. Only centered in the love of God are we free to be who we really are.

St. Francis had a similar revelation when he gave up his knightly aspirations and all the pomp of the world to become the little poor man whose armor was prayer, and whose glory was God. Both Augustine and Francis understood that conversion never meant becoming someone else - but by God's grace becoming what we were always intended to be with all our hopes and loves intact, rightly oriented in God.

In the San Damiano Crucifix, Francis saw the crucified Christ overlaid with Christ the King. He realized that the nature of God was total service & poverty in a love called Kenotic Love: a love that

totally pours itself out. God poured out his Godhood by becoming man, then poured out his life on the cross becoming totally poor for us - and thus at the name of Jesus every knee should bend.

Centered in the Love of God, we will find with Francis that what was bitter becomes sweet, humility becomes glory, poverty becomes riches, and death to ourselves becomes eternal life with God. **T**

Psalms, continued from page 11

in our workplaces, to those we meet on the street, to those in the places we shop???

Re-read Rule 6: . . . *Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her [Church's] mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. . . .* And Rule 14: about building a more fraternal and evangelical world. And Rule 15: that mentions our *public life*, and Rule 16: that speaks of *service of the human community*.

Rule 19: talks of being *bearers of peace and dialogue* and the *transforming power of love and pardon*, followed by telling us we are *messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance* and *should strive to bring joy and hope to others*.

These rules speak to our bringing Christ's message *to the world* - that is, the whole world, not our little self-made worlds of fraternity and parish and immediate family.

So, let us re-light the fire of Christ's love in our hearts and in our lives and bring that love to the world around us. **T**

Bertha, continued from page 5

In early 1949, Leon's eldest brother, Alfred, came home to Belgium on a visit from his new homeland, America. They were married that year and started a new life. Alfred returned to America, and Bertha and her daughters soon followed. In 1969, after 20 years of marriage, Alfred died, and for the first time in her life, Bertha was on her own.

She moved to Huntington Beach to fulfill a life-long dream of "a Cottage by the Sea," the title of one of her father's favorite songs. An active member of Sts. Simon & Jude Church, she worked in the thrift shop for 15 years. She was awarded a Significant Volunteer Certificate, contributing over 1500 hours preparing and serving meals to the elderly at TLC. She became a dedicated member of the Huntington Beach Franciscan community, helping the hostesses and making afghans, sweaters, and caps to help the poor and disabled. **T**

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A Reminder

Mike Morris SFO, Web Master

If you know of any events we might be able to attend together, let me know. Also, if you have access to the Internet you can look at our Calendar located on our Regions website,

www.stfrancisregion.org

Please send any information regarding events in your area to our Calendar Coordinator:

sylviapaoli@earthlink.net

Annual Ministers' Meeting

Jan. 18 - 20th, 2008

Every year the ministers of the St Francis Region meet to share ideas on how to be Franciscan in So. California. As always, it is on the Martin Luther King Holiday weekend and this year it will be at:

Marywood Retreat House

2811 E. Villa Real Drive

Orange, CA 92867

Phone: (714) 282-3098



I promise to live all
days of my life the
Gospel of our Lord
Jesus Christ in the
Secular Franciscan
Order by observing
the Rule of Life.
May the grace of
the Holy Spirit,
the intercession of
the Virgin Mary
and our holy father
Francis, and the
fraternal bonds of the
community always
be my help, so that
I may reach the goal
of perfect Christian
Love.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with
him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be
gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the
sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say
to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the
world: for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you
gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care
of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will
answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave
you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was
it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave
you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and
visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as
you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,
you did it to me." - Matthew 25:31-40

Almighty God, by your grace your servant Elizabeth of Hungary
recognized and honored Jesus in the poor of this world: Grant that
we, following her example, may with love and gladness serve those
in any need or trouble, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
for ever. Amen.

The Joy of Francis



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