

Secular Franciscan Order

FRANCISCAN MIRROR

SPRING
2011

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region
covering most of Upstate New York & Northwestern Pennsylvania

ANNUAL GATHERING TO FEATURE FORMATION SESSION



Sr. Mary Beth Ingham

Sr. Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ, author of books and articles on Franciscan Philosopher-Theologian John Duns Scotus, will lead a day-long formation workshop during the Regional Annual Chapter on Saturday, April 9, at Stella Maris Retreat Center,

Skaneateles, NY. For registration information, contact Regional Vice Minister Kim Marks at 716-668-3830 or via email at marks@bktr.org.

The topic is: "Praying the Gospels with John Duns Scotus."

Sr. Mary Beth is chair of the Philoso-

phy Department at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, Calif. Her book, "Scotus for Dunces: an Introduction to the Subtle Doctor" (Franciscan Institute 2006), offers a basic overview of the Franciscan vision of Duns Scotus.



Franciscan author Teresa Baker, SFO, led the Alma Kraus Memorial Formation Workshop held at Stella Maris Retreat Center last October. PAGE 6.

FORMATION DIRECTOR

Mary Stronach, SFO, was appointed regional formation director in February after Donna Roberti, SFO, resigned, Regional Minister Mary Frances Charsky, SFO, announced.

BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA REGION
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**Justice, Peace & Integrity
of Creation Commission.*

**FRANCISCAN
MIRROR**

SPRING 2011

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DEADLINES: FEB. 15,
MAY 15, AUG. 15, NOV. 15.



**DON'T MISS ANNUAL CHAPTER
AND FORMATION WEEKEND**

Pax et bonum!

The Regional Chapter and Alma Kraus Memorial Formation Weekend is scheduled for April 8-10, 2011, at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaneateles, NY. This will be a joyful occasion to gather with our Franciscan brothers and sisters. Fraternity Ministers are expected to participate. All Franciscans in the region are welcome to participate in this opportunity for prayer, formation, fellowship and refreshment.

Sister Mary Beth Ingham will be with us for the Formation part of the weekend. The topic is ***“Praying the Gospels with John Duns Scotus.”*** Presentations include:

- God so loved the world.
- He came into His own.
- From his fullness, we have all received.

What a perfect way to engage in the Franciscan way of life, FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO GOSPEL!

Let us praise and glorify God forever. “O Lord our God, You are worthy to receive praise, glory, honor, thanksgiving and blessing.”

SFO DAY TO FOCUS ON SPIRITUALITY, FRATERNITY

“Live the Gospel in the Manner of St. Francis” is the topic for a regional Day of Reflection on Saturday, June 11 at the Franciscan Church of the Assumption, 812 North Salina St., Syracuse.

The day features two speakers – Fr. Brad Milunski, OFM Conv., vicar provincial for the Conventual Franciscan Friars’ Immaculate Conception Province, and Kathy Taormina, SFO, former national Youth/Young Adult Commission chair for



Fr. Brad Milunski

the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order.

Father Brad will discuss, "Building Our Foundation: Seven Pillars of Franciscan Spirituality." Kathy's topic is, "Making It All Work – Living Within a Fraternity."

There will be Mass at 8 a.m., followed by registration at 9. A break for a brown bag lunch will take place around noon. Coffee and dessert will be provided. The afternoon session will start at about 1 p.m. and end around 3. Sunday vigil Mass is at 4.

To pre-register or obtain more information, contact Rosemary Costa, SFO, at 315-288-5395. The Day of Reflection is being hosted by St. Elizabeth-St. Bonaventure Fraternity.



Kathy Taormina

Wall of Honor

In Memory Of

Edward J. Sesock, SFO

remembered by
Joan Sesock

In Honor Of

Karen Szczesniak, SFO

In gratitude for Franciscan generosity
by *Betty Frank, SFO*

How to participate in the Wall of Honor – Page 11.

FRATERNITY LIFE TOPIC FOR SUMMER SEMINAR

“Aspects of Fraternity Life” is the topic for the 4th Annual Summer Seminar for Secular Franciscans that runs Thursday evening, June 23, to Sunday lunch, June 26, at St. Francis University in Loretto, PA.

Presenters are National Spiritual Assistant Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap., and National Councilor Mary Bittner, SFO.

Early registration is \$260 for single room or \$220 per person for double room. After April 30, fee is \$285 and \$240 per person, respectively.

To register, send check (payable to St. Francis University) with name, fraternity and region, address, home phone, work/cell phone and email address to: Cecilia Maljan, SFO, 1111 Freyburg Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203-1211. Go online to bktr.org for registration form and info.

SFOS CELEBRATE KATERI FEAST ON TUSCARORA RESERVATION

Each year on July 14, Secular Franciscans gather on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation to celebrate the feast day of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Hosted by St. Anthony Fraternity in Lockport and assisted by Our Lady of Angels Fraternity in Niagara Falls/Lewiston, Holy Family Chapel was filled to capacity.

Fr. Peter Calabrese, pastor and a Barnabite priest, offered the Mass for over 50 Secular Franciscans. Parishioners filled the remaining places in the chapel.

In attendance also were members from other Western New York fraternities – St. Thomas More, St. Joseph and St. Francis/Athol Springs. After mass, parishioners hosted a meal in the church hall, featuring Indian recipes.

-- Al Picogna, SFO

Photos by KAREN SZCZESNIAK, SFO, and MARY STRONACH, SFO



Regional Minister Mary Frances Charsky welcomed SFOs to Fonda.

'ST. PETER' JOINS FRANCISCANS AT FONDA

Some 90 to 100 people from at least nine fraternities converged on the Kateri National Shrine in Fonda on Sunday, Aug. 15, for the annual Secular Franciscan Day.

They ranged from inquirers to those who

have been professed for 70 years.

The day started with Mass, with celebrant **Fr. Patrick Gallagher**, OFM Conv., giving a homily on the Blessed Mother and the Feast of the Assumption.

Following mass, Re-

gional Minister **Mary Frances Charsky**, SFO, welcomed everyone, then introduced four other members of the Regional Executive Council and the ministers of nine fraternities.

It was a day, she said, for fondly remember-



Some of the Secular Franciscans visiting Fonda.

Living Gospel Ministry's Matthew Zawisza as St. Peter.



ing spiritual assistant and shrine director Fr. Kevin Kenny, OFM Conv., who died last October.

She introduced the Living Gospel Drama and Storytelling Ministry's Matthew Zawisza, who performed a dramatic presentation on

the denial by St. Peter.

Following lunch hosted by local fraternities, Ad Hoc Panel member **Mary Stronach**, SFO, gave a presentation on the Region's 11-point vision for the future and invited audience participation.



Mary Stronach, SFO



Some of the Secular and Religious Franciscans at Fonda (above & top right).

FRATERNITIES GET COURSE IN PLANNING FORMATION EVENTS

Fraternity formation teams got a crash course in how to plan for days of reflection or retreats, thanks to the Alma Kraus Memorial Formation Workshop held Oct. 8-10 at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaaneateles, NY.

Former National Formation Co-Chair Teresa Baker, SFO, guided some 45 formation directors, ministers and other Secular Franciscans from some 25 fraternities through a “Praxis” activity, where they saw how to build a



Franciscan author Teresa Baker, SFO, led the Alma Kraus Memorial Formation Workshop held at Stella Maris Retreat Center in October 2010.

lesson plan around a practical activity. In her example, she had them reflect on the San Damiano Cross and ultimately asked them to make a small life-changing choice in their spiritual life or in how they live the Secular Franciscan Rule.

Participants spent much of the second day developing the

pieces for their own customized days of reflection, and then, as an added treat, Baker presented them with Giotto’s frescoes, which highlight the life of St. Francis at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi where the saint is entombed. In viewing some of the life-changing events in Francis’ life, she asked

participants to zero in on events in their own lives that they related to individual frescoes, and to reflect on each event and how it led to change in their life today.

The workshop was sponsored and funded by the Alma Kraus Fund at St. Bonaventure University. Alma Kraus was a Secular Franciscan from the

FORMATION WORKSHOP CANDIDS



Layna Mahar



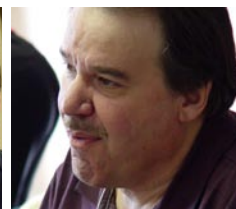
Jeannette Williams



Ceil Beard



Robert Goodlander



Thomas Miller



Mary Laforest



Kathy Schmidt



David Green



Ruth Stanek



Jim White & Joanne Lockwood



Marie Meyer



Marie Kuhn



Mae Schneeberger



Rosemary Costa



Bonnie Orsini

Buffalo area who bequeathed a source of funding to provide formation education and training.

The workshop was coordinated by the Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha Region Formation Team headed by Regional Minister Mary Frances Charsky, SFO, and

then-Formation Director Donna Roberti, SFO.

Noted Mary Frances: "The Alma Kraus Formation Workshop was a spirit-filled training on Praxis and the three examples -- the San Damiano Crucifix, Clare's mirror and the story about the little boy -- sure brought the pro-

cess full circle. The idea that we can teach as Jesus did/does with the parables is wonderful."

Regional Spiritual Assistant Richard Trezza, OFM, offered daily mass and participated in a closing panel discussion. Father Richard gave an overview of what the National

Formation Team is planning, including a 2011 national formation workshop to introduce guidelines from the international and national fraternities. Titled "Forming the Formators," that national workshop takes place May 12-15 at Our Lady of Snows, Belleville, IL



Joseph Madonia



Larry Orsini



Madeline Mertz



Rita Hausle

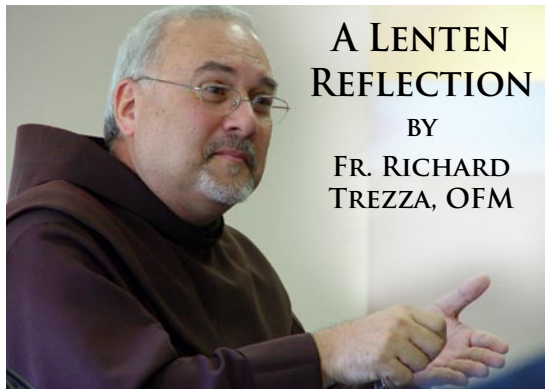


Mary Smith

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Here we are in another season of Lent. By now, Secular Franciscans have come to know these forty days as a microcosm of their Seraphic world. As Brothers and Sisters of Penance, everyday is Lent. Why? Because penance is a way of life for the professed Secular. Here I encourage and challenge you to see penance as much more than just a single act of self-denial. Penance is much more than a string of isolated acts of mortification.

During this liturgical season, much is made of the symbol of the desert. Remember that Jesus' public ministry had its beginnings in the desert after a fast of forty days and forty nights. That lonely place, that desolate place is the preferred place which God chooses to speak, in dramatic ways, to the



A LENTEN REFLECTION

BY
FR. RICHARD
TREZZA, OFM

human heart.

Without distraction the soul in the desert is completely naked before its Creator. It comes to know the spiritual realities with raw honesty. It is uncomfortable because we cannot endure the “real” us for too long. While the rest of the Church takes the time to look at itself during Lent, the Secular Franciscan finds the desert as a home where the Franciscan heart comes to life. And why not? God is there.

While we are there, we pray and dialogue with God. We fast,

constantly making room for the Divine in our lives by forcing out of our hearts those encumbrances which make it difficult for us to recognize God in the mix. We give alms and turn our thoughts to the needs of our sisters and brothers. There are acts of charity to perform and sacrifices to make for one another – both for the living and the dead.

If we spend our time well in the desert, we come to realize that we are home. There is no other place we would rather be. We are at our most honest selves

– we become real to God, ourselves and others. Our experience of prayer is sweet and we show that we truly believe in what we say we believe in because we are always living our faith in the service of others.

For Franciscans, this is a way of life. This IS penance. It is not drudgery. It is not the enduring of a period of forty interminable days. It is the stuff which Lent is made of. But we are not meant to remain in the desert. We will be called out of that privileged place to be taken up to heaven to join Jesus whose resurrection from the dead changes us dramatically so that we may share that divine life forever.

Easter is the end of the desert experience for most. For Franciscans, Easter is the moment which plays

itself out no matter where we are. We are Christians only because we always remember Christ in His resurrected mode. This is how He relates to us. He transcends all we know which is of a temporary nature. The Easter miracle places us in that very real place where we take advantage of the hope of eternal life. As Franciscans we are called to bring that hope to others by the way we live out our Profession.

But it all begins with our perpetual Franciscan Lent. May the Lord grace us with the courage to make a good journey this year. May His grace help us to realize that our hearts are wherever we can come face to face with our loving God and allow others to do the same.

SFO DAYS IN ATHOL SPRINGS AND CATSKILL



An SFO Day in the Western Area last July 24 was hosted by St. Francis Fraternity in Athol Springs and featured a workshop on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) by then-JPIC Chair Mary Stronach, SFO. She also gave an Ad Hoc Panel update. BELOW: Participants took part small-group discussions during the seminar.



An SFO Day in the Eastern Area in Catskill on Nov. 6 featured a talk on "Spiritual Renewal of SFO Members" by Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, provincial spiritual assistant (4th from left, standing). Hosted by St. Anthony Fraternity, the day concluded with an Ad Hoc Panel update by Mary Stronach, SFO (left, standing).

NEWLY PROFESSED AT BUFFALO FRATERNITY

Michael D. Catalano made his profession into the Secular Franciscan Order on Nov. 14 as a

member of St. Joseph Fraternity in Buffalo. The mass and rite of profession took place at

Our Lady of the Angels Convent of the Sisters of St. Francis (OSF) in Williamsville.

ELEMENTS OF FRATERNITY-BUILDING

While the guidelines for establishing new fraternities specify a minimum of five professed members as a condition for granting forming group status, this critically low number is not intended to be the norm in determining fraternity size. It is used in the expectation that the group will grow in numbers in a reasonable length of time. This assumes, also, that conditions are favorable for such growth, that a real potential is there, and therefore, little risk of failure will be taken. Furthermore, the mere fact of five professed members does not, in itself, impose an obligation on the higher council to grant the status that is petitioned. Other factors are also carefully weighed. In the end, it is the sole responsibility of the higher council to evaluate the progress, development and worth of the enterprise



‘SMOKE SIGNALS’

BY
ED CZAPLA

and, unhampered from outside, conscientiously to come to its decision, in favor of, or against, approval.

In the most recent local council elections in our region, the vital importance of relatively higher numbers has been demonstrated when, in so many instances, the election committees were hard-pressed to find enough capable nominees who could accept the responsibility of elective office. In most such instances the “bare bones” stipulations of the present Constitutions were met, with little or nothing to spare. It is really an undesirable situation when fraternities are

strapped to this extent, for essential leadership.

In past decades under the preceding Rule and Constitutions, the Secular Franciscan Order (then, Third Order of St. Francis) was seen in a different light, while its doors were open to all Catholic people who were seriously attempting to reform their lives. Today, under the Pauline Rule, in a vastly different social climate, we are obliged to discern vocations to the Franciscan life – so we screen inquirers and observe candidates in the process of formation. This screening, by its very nature, tends to lower the number of those who may be

admitted. As councils learn by doing, that number may drop even lower – and, perhaps, this may be a good thing.

Because we are accepting only those who demonstrate a vocation, we must be all the more certain that the communities we assemble are in a definitely more viable condition – robust enough to withstand whatever difficulties the new millennium may bring with it. No longer will the fraternity be a convenient haven for mutual support of its members, as in the past. Beyond that, it will have to be a dynamo of spiritual energy that will carry the community through the difficult times and the austere – making its influence felt in the family, the neighborhood and in the workplace.

While the trend in declining friar numbers continues, the Seculars,

themselves, will be called upon to nurture their confreres, to provide optimum formation for those they attract and to maintain proper internal discipline. Only by standing firmly on solid ground will the Order hold its own and hope to survive and prosper, maintaining its own integrity. This solid ground must be the sound formation of its members, convening in a carefully assembled fraternity – with the blessing of the Lord.

For the benefit of the

minority who nostalgically prefer a fraternity that is small in numbers, it should be pointed out that Christian gatherings that are faithful to their mission – that openly live out their vocation – cannot fail to attract a following. Franciscans, moreover, are called, not for their own benefit, but for the sake of others. If for a time no vocations are realized, we ought not be disappointed, but look at ourselves, our outreach, our mission – then take corrective

measures. Vocations cannot be imparted by teaching; they are a free gift from God.

Finally, all of us have, at one time or another, prayed for vocations to the priesthood and to religious life. In the future, let us continue to do so, but let us not fail to pray, with equal fervor and sincerity, for vocations to Secular Franciscan life!

Ed Czaplak is advisor to the Regional Executive Council and author of the periodic newsletter, Smoke Signals.

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We need sponsors to help defray printing cost so that the Regional Fraternity can continue to improve your *Franciscan Mirror*.

- 6"x1" ads
- \$100: inside page.
- \$150: inside cover.
- \$200: back cover.

Mail your message/ad, with check made out to BKTR, c/o Franciscan Mirror, PO Box 232, Marcy, NY; or contact Mary Stronach at 315-796-9284, or at stonach@bktr.org.

YOU CAN REMEMBER OR HONOR SOMEONE IN THE WALL OF HONOR

A Wall of Honor page offers a way to remember, honor or thank Franciscans, family members, friends, business associates. Fill out and mail form along with a \$10 donation. Funds will be used to help pay for publications aimed at benefiting the region's fraternities (such as The Mirror and formation materials).

WALL OF HONOR FORM	
Name of Person Submitting Form _____	
Name of Person/Group Doing the Honoring (if different from above) _____	
Contact info: Phone _____	Email _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____	
Name of honoree _____	
Select one: <input type="checkbox"/> in memory of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> in honor of _____	
List reason/occasion _____ <i>(e.g., profession anniversary, gratitude for service, etc.)</i>	
Donation: \$10 per name. <i>Please make checks payable to Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha Region (BKTR).</i>	
Send completed form with check to: The Franciscan Mirror, P.O. Box 232, Marcy, NY 13403	

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OCT. WORKSHOP TO INTRODUCE FORMATION MATERIALS

Regional Formation Team members who attend the National Formation Workshop in May will conduct a Regional Formation Workshop Oct. 14-16 at Christ the King Retreat Center, Syracuse..

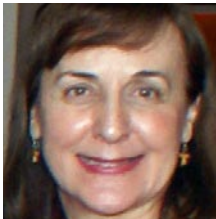
The team plans to share the

new National Formation Manual with local fraternity formation directors and other local team members who can participate.

"We plan to demonstrate some sample lessons," said Regional Minister Mary Frances Charsky, SFO. More information will

be forthcoming. In addition to Mary Frances, the Regional Formation Team includes:

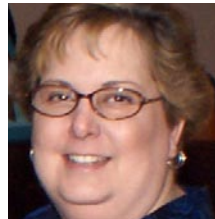
- Newly Appointed Formation Director Mary Stronach.
- Vice Minister Kim Marks.
- Secretary Joanne Lockwood.
- Councilor Cathy Feheley.



Mary Frances Charsky



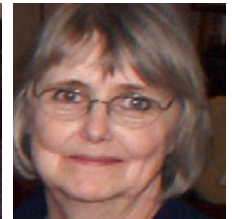
Mary Stronach



Kim Marks



Joanne Lockwood



Cathy Feheley