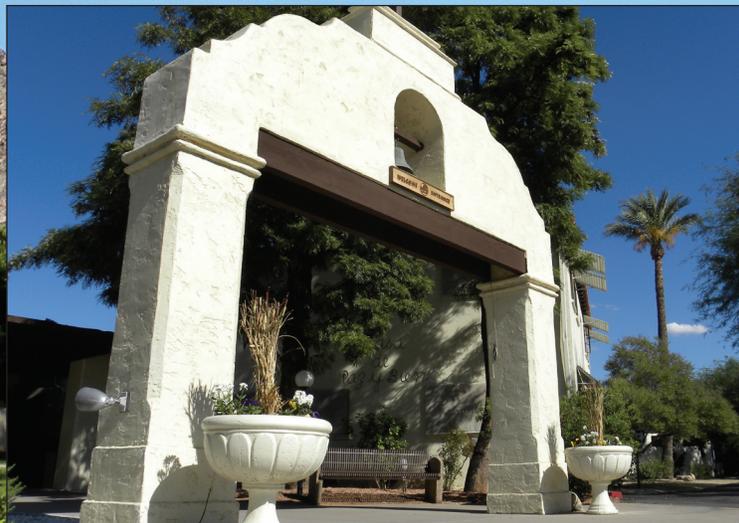


# 2010 Chapter

By BOB & MARY STRONACH, SFO

**A sense of family,  
a spirit of peace, and  
a hunger for courageous initiatives  
would pervade the annual chapter  
of the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order,  
held Oct. 26-31 in Arizona.**

Arriving at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, regional ministers, delegates and others were greeted by soaring palm trees, cacti of myriad shapes and sizes, and assorted desert flora, sprawling across white sand in gardens enveloping the center. A self-standing archway belltower beckoned all to enter “Casa de Paz y Bien” – house of peace and good. “Casa” is its nickname, reflecting a place set apart in the desert for renewal of the spirit.



*The courtyard, looking south toward Camelback Mountain. INSET: Entrance to the Franciscan Renewal Center.*



**Joanne Angeletti, SFO**  
St. Maximilian Kolbe Region  
(Northern Ohio)



**Mary Frances Charsky, SFO,**  
minister of Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha Region (Upstate New York & Northwest Pennsylvania), conducted the orientation for new regional ministers (left and below).



**Charlotte Collord, SFO**  
Ohana O'Ke Anuenu Region  
(Hawaii)



**Marian Crosby, SFO**  
Franciscans of Prairie Region  
(Central Illinois: Chicago to south)

**A PRE-CHAPTER** orientation for new regional ministers and first-time attendees occupied the afternoon, prior to the chapter's opening mass, which was celebrated by newly installed Phoenix Auxiliary Bishop Eduardo Nevares. During introductions before mass, National Vice Minister Elaine Hedtke presented the bishop with a Tau cross, which she had carved from "Sister Tree" that "Brother Wind" had toppled in her backyard. In the chapel, Bishop Nevares fastened it to a cord and donned the Tau as his pectoral cross – to the delight of some 80 Secular Francis-

cans, friars, Poor Clares and others, including Anglican and Ecumenical Franciscans attending the chapter.

"I think of St. Francis as a seed," the bishop preached. "...A seed that the Holy Spirit used to produce great fruit." The results, 800 years later, is a vast Franciscan family and "the innumerable others who have known and been touched by Franciscans."

"Brothers and sisters," he said, "we are all called to be saints, we are all called to be holy, we are all called to be seeds... There are living saints among us now who are living the love of God and neighbor in an heroic fash-

ion." He noted: St. Thomas Aquinas "reminds us, if you want to know Christ," look at the cross. "The cross will teach us about humility, the cross will teach us about patience, the cross will teach us about forgiveness, the cross will teach us about love."

Bishop Nevares said Francis of Assisi "meditated long and profoundly on the cross of Christ" – a good model for "you who have committed your lives to the teaching, example and spirituality of St. Francis."

"I pray in a great way for each of you so that your time here... will be greatly blessed... and (you will)



**Joan Geiger, SFO**  
Tau Cross Region  
(Greater NY City Area)



**Pat Houghton, SFO**  
St. Joan of Arc Region  
(MS, LA, E. TX, Memphis, TN)



**Josh Molidor, SFO**  
Los Tres Companeros Region  
(Central Texas)



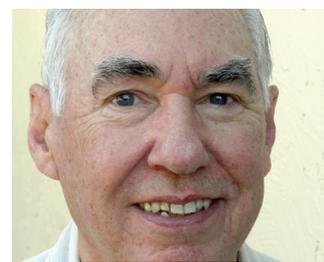
**Sherry Stevenson, SFO**  
St. Clare Region  
(Missouri, Illinois, Indiana)



**Sheri Hafeli, SFO**  
Divine Mercy Region  
(Lower Michigan & Toledo, OH)



**Cyl Maljan, SFO**  
Lady Poverty Region  
(Parts of PA, OH, WV, VA, MD)



**Jerry Rousseau, SFO**  
Bros & Srs of St. Francis Region  
(GA, NC, SC, AL, TN)



**Steve White, SFO**  
Holy Trinity Region  
(Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana)

be renewed in Franciscan spirituality and commitment, and go out to share the experience of St. Francis in the everyday.”

Following mass, National Minister Deacon Tom Bello said there were many nominations for the Peace Award, but the National Fraternity (NAFRA) had to settle on one most deserving. As the bishop said at mass, “if you want to see Christ, look at the cross,” Bello said. “If you want to see Francis of Assisi today, look at” Br. David Buer, OFM, friend to Arizona’s homeless and migrants. Bishop Nevares then presented the award to Brother David, and posed for pictures with the friar and his mother, Doris, who came in from Ballwin, MO.



**Bishop Eduardo Nevares presents Peace Award to Br. David.**

**THE NEXT DAY**, Bello opened the chapter assembly with talk of a Gospel vision, with four priority areas for the order – fraternity, formation, communication, youth. “The vision of the

order,” he said, “begins with us” -- Franciscans who live and work in “an increasingly pagan world,” where “Christ is not brought into the public discourse” very much, “except in profane ways.”

The theme of the chapter, he said, is “a call and a challenge” – *“Bringing the Gift of Gospel Living to Life: Our Credible Witnessing.”*

Continued Bello: “Our basic Secular Franciscan vision, as it says in our Rule, is to go from Gospel to life and life to Gospel, and to build the kingdom of God... We need to make Christ our goal, our life, our light.”

On the four priorities:

1. **Fraternity** is the community of love... The visible expression of the church.”

It’s where Franciscans are called to be; and, if there is a problem, it may be a failure of formation, the second priority.

2. Both the international and national fraternities are placing an emphasis on good **formation**. That’s why the

## Friar to the Homeless Gets Special Birthday Gift: 2010 Peace Award

SCOTTSDALE, AZ -- Brother David Buer, OFM, a Franciscan friar who has been working with the homeless and marginalized in Tucson and Las Vegas, received a special birthday gift on Oct. 26, a day after he turned 57 -- the National Peace Award from the Secular Franciscan Order.

“It’s my experience that we can expect God’s blessing when we bring these people -- the poor, the homeless, the migrants -- into our circle of love,” Brother David told some 80 ministers, delegates and observers representing 14,000 Secular Franciscans across the U.S.

He said he was humbled and honored to receive the same award that, in the past, also went to the likes of Dr. Martin Luther King



*Br. David Buer, OFM*

Jr. and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Brother David said he was inspired to work among the poor and homeless by the words of Jesus Christ and by a simple act of St. Francis of Assisi. A passage in Matthew’s Gospel “shot through me” – the one where Jesus says, “whatever you did for one of these

least brothers of mine, you did for me.” And St. Francis, the spoiled son of a wealthy merchant, had a life-changing moment when he encountered a leper on the road: Instead of giving him wide berth, Francis embraced the leper. “Who are the lepers of today?” Brother David asked. “Who are the marginalized people?”

Brother David entered religious life later in life, making his permanent profession as a Franciscan brother in 1996 – a year before he arrived in Las Vegas, where he established Poverello House, a daytime refuge for the homeless. In 2002 he established a second Poverello House in Henderson, NV. He also went on a two-week vigil and fast in Las Vegas, living in a tent

on a vacant lot to publicize the need for more shelters. A group of homeless men befriended and protected him during the vigil. “It put me in solidarity with those who have less.”

Next he was assigned to Tucson, AZ, where in 2008 he established another Poverello House and where, for the past five summers, he set up Cooling Centers at two churches six days a week (three days at each church). The homeless could escape the oppressive summer heat in an air conditioned center and find food, cold beverages and a place to relax and read.

The Award comes with a St. Francis statue and a \$2,000 prize.

“That money is going to Poverello House in Tucson,” Brother David said.



Dc. Tom Bello, SFO  
National Minister



Michelle Kim, SFO  
National Councilor



Arturo Villarreal, SFO  
National Councilor



Br. Bob Brady, OFM  
Nat'l Spiritual Assistant

National Formation Commission, chaired by Bob Fitzsimmons, will hold a workshop in May to unveil a formation manual for training formators (formation directors).

3. **Communication**, the third priority, “always needs improvement.” The national chapter and Tau-USA magazine are primary means of communication. “I challenge you to think about how we can do this better,” he said.

4. Regarding **youth**, Bello asked: “If you are 40 or younger, please stand up.” Two persons rose from their seats. The challenge, he said, is how to attract younger people to the Secular Franciscan life when so much of their world is not God-centered. “How can we give that credible witnessing and show that joy...so they’ll come to us?”

**ALSO ON WEDNESDAY**, other national leaders got to share a few thoughts.

Holding up a tiny, three-ring pretzel, National Councilor Michelle Kim declared it a picture of “diversity in unity.” She spoke of the project to translate articles in Tau-USA into key languages found in a growing number of U.S. fraternities, such as Korean and Spanish.

National Councilor Arturo Villarreal said he was inspired by discussion of “what we’re doing” around the country, such as what’s represented in the Peace Award. “We work with the poor, we comfort the sick, we love our brothers and sisters. This is who we are.”

As the bishop noted the night before, he said, “there are saints among us... Today

we’re living the life of Francis.” He urged: “Do what is necessary; then you will do what is possible; and finally, you will do the impossible.”

In pointing to the need to have a good spiritual assistant for every fraternity, National Spiritual Assistant Br. Bob Brady, OFM, noted that the spiritual assistant training curriculum, Franciscan Family Connections, was being updated on an on-going basis.

Quoting scripture, he offered: “He sent you into the world so that you may bear witness to his voice.”

“Consider,” he added, “what morsel you can bring to the table” to plant “a seed of Christ”.

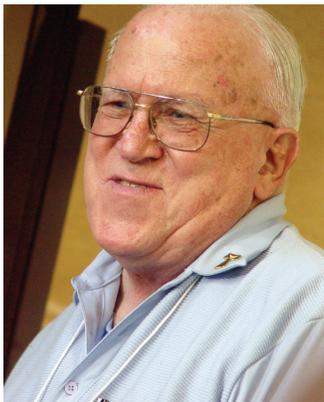
Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap., national spiritual assistant and author of forma-

tion books, noted that despite the turmoil in the world, “our Franciscan vocation invites us to see the signs of the times in a forward-looking light.” In other words, instead of wringing their hands, “Franciscans sing the joy of God’s love.” And our profession recognizes that “we are called to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Paraphrasing Pope Benedict XVI, he said one does not make the world more human by acting inhumanely; we are called to do good now.

U.S. International Councilor Anne Mulqueen sees “love relationships” in the Franciscan charism. “My dream for us is to enter into a relationship of love, at all levels.” She quoted Br. Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap., who spoke at the international chapter:

“With profession, our relationship is stronger than blood.” She described a “dynamic relationship of God and us and others,” and summed up: “We look at each other as individual, as unique, as irrepeatable, and without one of us, we are diminished.”

Then she introduced the international



Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap  
Nat'l Spiritual Assistant



Anne Mulqueen, SFO  
U.S. International Councilor



Tibor Kausar & Fr. Amanuel  
International Visitors

fraternal visitor, Tibor Kauser of Hungary, the international councilor for English-speaking countries (Area 1).

After extending greetings from General Minister Encarnita del Pozo of Spain and General Vice Minister Doug Clorey of Canada, Kauser immediately assured the assembly that as fraternal visitor, he was not an inspector. "I'm one of you...I'm here to share in your joy and in your challenges."

He said his goal was "to listen, to learn, to share" and that he especially wanted to learn as "you have many treasures" in the U.S. order.

"I have come here to serve you. I would like to ask you to receive me as one from among you."

Pointing to the local fraternity as "the most important place in the order," he urged: "Strengthen the bond in your local fraternity."

Fr. Amanuel Mesgun Temelso, OFM Cap., the pastoral visitor from Rome, spoke of the unity of the Franciscan family. "We are one," he said, because our founder's aim and purpose was the same – "to build the church of Christ." He said he was inspired by the unity and the example of Secular Franciscans. "I thank you for living the Gospel...in the world and...among the people."

**WITH SHARING** going on in geographic groups and among attendees, the subject of vocations came up. Kim Smolik of Franciscan Mission Service mentioned she had been in Zambia recently where "religious vocations are blossoming" and where the number of Secular Fran-



Ed Shirley  
*Ecumenical/Interfaith Chair*



Kent Ferris  
*JPIC Chair*

ciscans is growing so fast, they can't keep track of the numbers. Father Amanuel concurred that, unlike the U.S. and Europe, Africa was booming with vocations, which is why the International Fraternity has taken on "the African Project" to help provide resources for formation. Africa lacks funds for formation materials, he said.

**THE TOPIC OF** youth, as one of the four priorities, drew some discussion, too. "If we're serious about reaching youth, we have to think like them...and realize they're asking different questions today," offered Ed Shirley, theology professor and Ecumenical/Interfaith chair. He gave an example: Youth today ask questions like "how am I connected?" rather than "what's my purpose in life?"

Kent Ferris, the new JPIC chair, suggested meeting youth "where they are" – such as in their interest in ecology and the environment, or the way they use technology such as Facebook and Twitter.



Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR  
*National Spiritual Assistant*

National Spiritual Assistant Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, piped up that he was organizing a group of college students to go to World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain next August and the Franciscan Youth (YouthFra) gathering immediately preceding it. "My dream is I'll come back with 12 fired-up youth who want to start a Franciscan Youth/Young Adult group." He mentioned he was trying to raise funds to help defray the travel expenses, especially since some of the students were barely scraping by with their college costs. The chapter later voted to donate \$2,400 from the Youth/Young Adult budget and sponsor

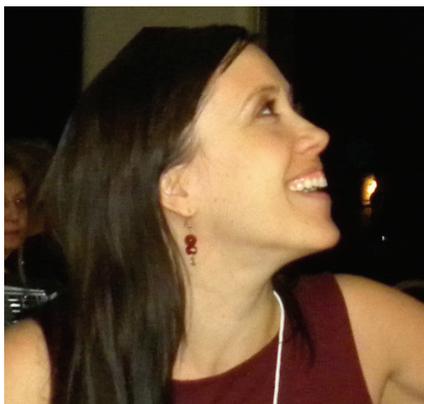
two of the students.

**AT LATE AFTERNOON** MASS, Father Kevin spoke of "servant leaders not being in it for the power or glory." They are "called by God to serve." One line from the scripture reading jumped out at him, he said. "Doing the will of God from the heart, willingly serving the Lord." That's what living out profession is, he said. It's continuous, unending. So, "do his will, willingly from the heart."

**THE EVENING** began with a presentation on Franciscan Mission Service (FMS), which sends lay missionaries to work alongside Franciscans in Third World countries, and then was capped off by a panel presentation on immigration.

"Poverty is so great in the countries we serve," said FMS Director Kim Smolik.

"Our hope," she added, "is that the Secular Franciscan Order will join Franciscan Mission Ser-



Kim Smolik  
*Franciscan Mission Service*



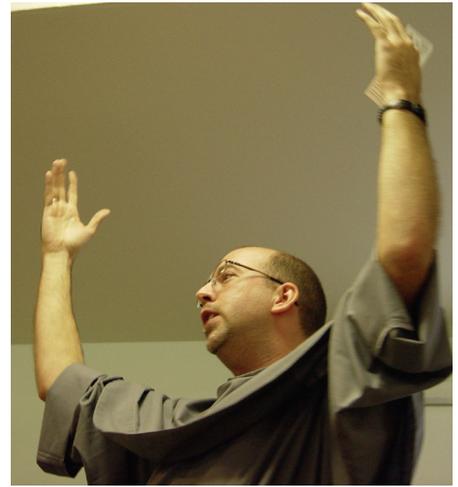
Patti Sills-Trausch  
*Immigration Panelist*



Connie Andersen  
*Immigration Panelist*



Fr. Larry Janezic, OFM  
*Franciscan Action Network*



Fr. Michael Lasky, OFM Conv.  
*Franciscans International*

vice in a deliberate partnership to spread and deepen the Franciscan charism.”

She noted that missionaries go through 16 weeks of Franciscan formation before departing for a three-year assignment, and that it costs \$1,500 a month to support one missionary. She hoped Secular Franciscans would support FMS through prayer, by getting the word out, and with donations. “If I were able to say that every region of the Secular Franciscan Order across the United States supports us, there’s power in that.”

**WITH A** controversial immigration law bringing national attention to Arizona, immigration has become “a very polarizing issue among us in the faithful community,” noted panelist Patti Sills-Trausch of Casa Advocacy Network.

What it boils down to is the “people come here for economic reasons,” said the other panelist, Connie Andersen of Valley Interfaith Project.

She offered a brief history of U.S. immigration policy

and noted that because of restrictions in immigration law and bureaucratic redtape, it is virtually impossible for the overwhelming majority of migrants coming from Mexico to legally come to the U.S. to work.

Congress, she said, needs to pass legislation allowing migrants better access to work in America and making it easier for U.S. companies to obtain plentiful work visas for migrants.

“What we hear in the news is not so much tied to facts as to fear,” Andersen said. “Are we going to let our fear govern us, or our faith?”

Over the next few days, attendees would discuss immigration and then approve a statement declaring solidarity with migrants.



*Franciscans International’s Fr. Michael Lasky, OFM Conv., had everyone raising their arms in praise.*

**THURSDAY MORNING** featured brief remarks by national appointees and presentations by Franciscan Action Network’s Fr. Larry Janezic, OFM, and Franciscans International’s Fr. Michael Lasky, OFM Conv.

Father Larry spoke of creating conditions to possibly have “an impact on transforming public policy” and promoted FAN’s “Care for Creation,” a Franciscan ecological training program.

Franciscans International, with offices at the United Nations, “is the only shared ministry of the entire Franciscan family,” noted Father Michael. Goals include ending poverty, stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS, and improving maternal and child health. Father Larry appealed

for donations, asking Secular Franciscans to donate \$5 a month and then ask five people to do the same.

**THE AFTERNOON** was devoted to On-Going Formation. Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, spiritual assistant to the National Formation Commission, gave a two-part talk on the importance and sacredness of profession.

He quoted Br. Felice Cangelosi, the vicar general of the Capuchin Franciscans, who declared at the international chapter that the Church recognizes Secular Franciscans as belonging to a real Order, and that profession in the Order is of the same importance as religious profession -- different, but of equal import.

“It is seen by the universal church as the same thing, as giving ourselves over to God,” Father Richard said.

Profession has a number of “awesome” elements:

- It is Holy Spirit-driven: An invitation to vocation. Furthermore, the minister invokes the Holy Spirit and calls the Holy Spirit down on the people being professed.

- It is a fundamental moment and an intense moment with God.

- It's a ritual done in a public arena, in the presence of the fraternity, and a platform to give a response to God.

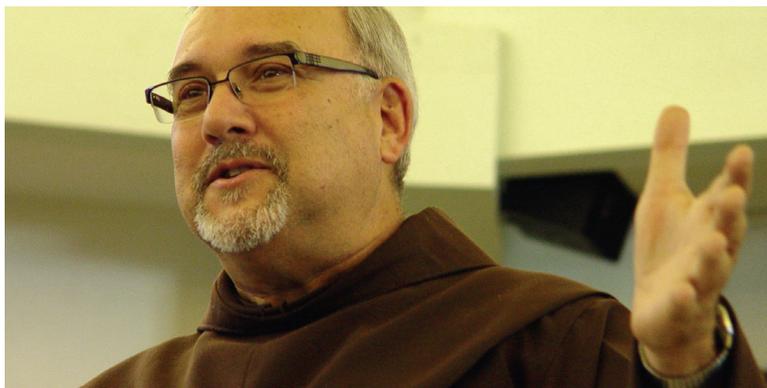
- It's dedicating oneself to service of God's kingdom, and it's grace-filled, because "we couldn't do that without a big dose of God's grace."

- It's a consecration, a dedication to God's exclusive service while living in the world as a single or married person... to be at God's disposal.

Because of the significance of profession, it is vital to have a discernment process during the formation of candidates.

The profession ceremony should take place during Mass, with a friar or priest present to be the witness for the church and Order, he said. He even encouraged fraternities to postpone profession until a friar or priest can be scheduled to participate.

"You are Franciscan men and Franciscan women in your own right," he said, and quoting Brother Felice, he added: "The SFO profession has the dignity of solemn and religious profession and cannot be considered lesser than that of a religious profession."



Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM  
*Speaking on the Significance of Profession*

**AT MASS** following Ongoing Formation, Father Richard continued the profession theme. He compared professed SFOs to the apostle since they are being called to a deeper relationship with God and are experiencing the gradual unfolding of the revelation of God. Brother Felice, he went on, made a connection between profession and the Eucharist. "We present ourselves as an oblation, much the same as bread and wine on the altar... We place ourselves on the altar during profession."

He added: "Permanent profession is an on-going glorification of God." So every time SFOs go to mass and partake of the Eucharist, it's like an on-going act of profession.

**THURSDAY EVENING** began with Secular Franciscan Alan Ouimet talking

up his Franciscan Family Apostolate. With some 1,400 sponsors, the apostolate is making a difference in the lives of destitute families in India. He asks new sponsors to donate a minimum of \$25 a month. Families being helped may earn \$10 a month, "so \$25 is like manna from heaven."

He works with religious sisters in India to identify families and pressing needs. He showed a video of one family with a disabled father and a handicapped grandchild living in a dilapidated structure. The apostolate was able to provide the family with a new home.

"I need your help. We can't do it alone." He noted that 90 percent of the sponsors are Secular Franciscans, and he could use many more. "We have over 1,000 families on a waiting list."

**THE EVENING** ended with *Francesco's Café*, a round robin of displays by national committees and special guests.

For example, the new Tau-USA editor, **Anna Geraci**, was handing out a special color run of the national newsletter;

National Archivist **Sharon Deveaux** had a packet of tips for every regional minister; National Historian **Bill Wicks** was signing copies of his Volume I history, and talking up his forthcoming Volume II; Ecumenical/Interfaith Chair **Ed Shirley** was offering to come to regions to give talks and share his ecumenical journey, which began when he was born to a Catholic dad and a Baptist mom; Spirit and Life Team (SALT) coordinator **Marie Amore** was urging regions to schedule the SALT experience, which she described as a weekend journey of life-giving growth; and the self-described Nerd Herd (Computer Committee members **Dan Mulholland**, **Bob Herbelin** and **Roger Raupp**) was anything but nerdy, belting out old tunes with National Secretary Jan Parker, Fr. Lester Bach, and other visitors who plopped down and stayed.



Alan Ouimet, SFO  
Fran. Family Apostolate



*Francesco's Cafe* featured, among others, Editor Anna Geraci, Archivist Sharon Deveaux and Historian Bill Wicks, SALT team's Marie Amore, and Nerd Herd's Dan Mulholland, Roger Raupp and Bob Herbelin.



**Attendees pose for a group photo, squinting in bright sunlight, before visiting nearby Phoenix. All 30 regions were represented at the Chapter, except for one, whose minister arrived in Arizona only to have to rush her mother to the hospital.**

**FRIDAY'S SCHEDULE** provided an afternoon of sightseeing in nearby Phoenix, culminating in Mass and supper at St. Mary's Basilica. The downtown Franciscan parish, regarded as Phoenix's mother church, is located literally in the shadow of the city's convention center. Its adjacent park boasts sculptures of St. Francis, Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul

II (commemorating his 1987 visit). Fr. Vince Mesi, OFM, is the rector, and he likes to sing. His homily and the readings were the only parts of the mass that he didn't lift in song. He even serenaded chapter attendees with Italian ballads during a pasta feast in the church basement.

**PRIOR TO THE** "half-day away", chapter

participants had "credible witnessing" and "courageous initiatives" on their minds during the morning session.

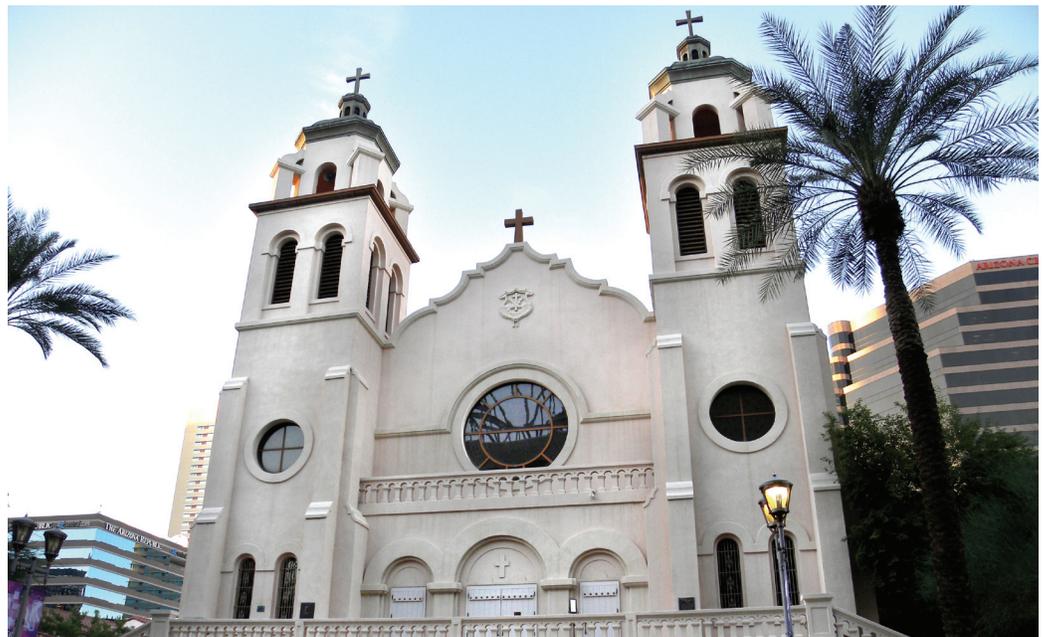
JPIC Chair Kent Ferris proposed partnering with Catholic Relief Services in its "Catholics Confront Global Poverty" campaign. It's an opportunity to involve "local, regional and national fraternities." He suggested a one-year trial, asking

Secular Franciscans to "pray, learn, act/advocate, and finally give" to the campaign. Throughout the coming year, JPIC would organize monthly or periodic "webinars" (a meeting or seminar over the World Wide Web) involving interested people from regions and fraternities.

The assembly unanimously voted to endorse Ferris' vision.



*Fr. Vince Mesi, OFM, the singing rector at St. Mary's Basilica in Phoenix (right).*



## U.S. Secular Franciscan Order Declares Solidarity with Migrants

The U.S. Secular Franciscan Order declared its “solidarity with migrants in our midst” during its national gathering Oct. 29 at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, AZ.

The national body, representing 14,000 Secular Franciscans across the United States, unanimously

approved a statement declaring “some current harsh attitudes towards migration” as intolerable and deploring “the fear and anxiety paralyzing our immigrant brothers and sisters.”

“As Franciscans, we intentionally chose to come to Arizona to stand in soli-

arity with the migrants in our midst,” the statement reads.

The statement goes on to say:

- “We endorse the United States Catholic Bishops’ urgent call for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, including their strong support for

the DREAM act.”

- “We support and encourage all the humanitarian efforts to assist immigrants who are struggling to survive.”

- “We pray for peace and harmony, and we always remember in prayer families who are being torn apart.”

That was immediately followed by a resolution to endorse a statement on immigration prepared by Father Kevin, Kent Ferris and Brother David. It passed unanimously and declared solidarity with migrants.

**SATURDAY WAS** the final day of chapter business, with Sunday primarily a travel day – although a post-chapter roundtable discussion awaited those who could hang around before heading to the airport.

Br. Bob Brady helped kick off Saturday by encouraging attendees to be open to “God moments.”

He challenged: “Go back to your fraternities” and “see God in the context of the poor.”

**WITH THE** national fraternity already a sponsoring member of FAN, National Minister Tom Bello proposed donating to other Franciscan causes: Amazon Relief, Franciscan Family Apostolate, Franciscan Mission Service and Franciscans International. The chapter unanimously approved giving \$1,000 to each of those ministries from the donor fund.

That was quickly followed by unanimous approval to send \$1,000 to Catholic Relief Services for Pakistani flood relief, and to urge Secular Franciscans to contribute to the donor fund and increase the amount going to Pakistani relief.

Regarding the donor fund, National Treasurer Dennis Ross reported that donations

coming to the fund made it possible to give \$19,473 to Haiti disaster relief and another \$2,340 for Philippines disaster relief in 2010. In addition, the Youth/Young Adult H2O Project raised \$20,832 for 2009 Peace Award Recipient Don Ryder’s Kenya Water Project.

“I’m impressed,” Juan de Padillo Regional Minister Frank Carpinelli said to murmurs of agreement. “\$42,000! We were able to give out (that much) in donations.”

He also said he was amazed the treasurer and executive council were able to propose a \$216,000 budget for 2011 -- the same bottom line as 2010.

“That’s a major achievement.”

The assembly then approved the budget.

### THE CHAPTER ALSO:

- unanimously endorsed the establishment of a *Care for Creation Award*, with a mandate to come back next year with guidelines for launching it.

- unanimously adopted, with applause, a *U.S. Secular Franciscan Vocation Prayer*.

Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Minister Marian Crosby, who was inspired to write the prayer during the Chapter, noted: “God’s already given vocations. It’s our job to locate them.”

Translation teams have since translated the vocation prayer into Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Polish. See Pages 4-5.



Brother Bob, National Minister Tom Bello, Treasurer Dennis Ross and Vocation Prayer Author Marian Crosby.

AS THE CHAPTER was about to come to a close, international visitors offered final remarks, and the assembly moved outdoors to the center's Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine for the annual Rite of Remembrance in honor of deceased Franciscans across the country.

The Chapter's closing weekend coincided with the blessing of animals and pet adopt-a-thon – with scores of humane societies, animal rescue groups and pet organizations setting up exhibits. Hundreds of people walked the grounds with dogs of all breeds, and the friars came out to bless the animals.



Rite of Remembrance at Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine.



Pat Houghton, SFO, and Michelle Kim, SFO, took a stroll through the exhibits at the St. Francis Festival and Pet Adopt-A-Thon.



Peggy Alfano brought Keagen, a Border Collie, to visit St. Francis and receive a blessing from the friars. She adopted Keagen from Arizona Border Collie Rescue, one of a number of rescue groups at the St. Francis Festival. "They're awesome," she said.

**DURING CLOSING MASS,** Father Amanuel noted: “By our vocation, we are called to be brothers, sisters, mothers and spouses of Christ.”

We’re brothers and sisters when we “strive to do the will of the Father.”

We’re mothers when, “by our good example, others see Christ.”

We’re spouses when, “through the Holy Spirit, through the reading of the Bible and especially through receiving the Holy Eucharist...we are united with Christ.”

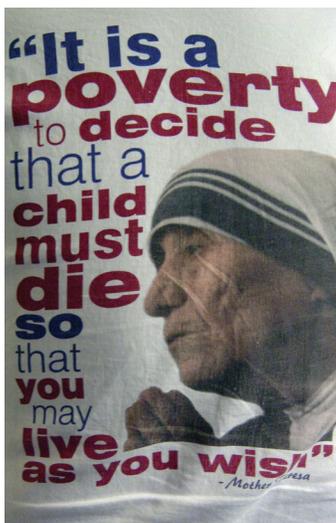
“We are blessed,” he concluded, “because we taste heaven when we are still on earth.”



### Find NAFRA On Facebook

With talk of how youth stay connected via social media like Facebook and Twitter, Randy Heinz of Our Lady of the Rockies Region launched a Facebook page for NAFRA at the Chapter. To see and become part of it, go to Facebook.com and type “NAFRA” in the search box.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES: SECULAR FRANCISCANS AND THEIR CHAPTER T-SHIRTS



## FACES OF THE TIMES: FRANCISCANS AT NATIONAL GATHERING



Vice Minister Elaine Hedtke.

BELOW:  
National Councilor Mary Bittner and Secretary Jan Parker.



Rev. Deacon Joan Verret represented the Anglican Third Order Society of St. Francis, and Susan Kay (right) represented the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans. They offered, Tom Bello said, “a holy witness to our Franciscan journey together.”



Sue Simeone, minister of the host St. Thomas More Region, and her husband, Deacon Phil, who planned the Chapter’s liturgies. National Minister Tom Bello praised the regional council and all the volunteers who spent 10,000 man hours helping to make the chapter a success.



Mary Frances Charsky, SFO, was struck by a sculpture of her region's namesake, portraying Mohawk maiden Kateri Tekakwitha in the graceful act of washing her hair.



Josh Molitor, SFO, and Marie Amore, SFO, discuss spicing up regions with a little SALT.



Ken Beattie, SFO  
LaVerna Region



Hans Huemmer, SFO  
Five Franciscan Martyrs



Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO, Formation Commission chair



Ed Feiler, SFO  
Queen of Peace



Daily praying and singing...and experiencing joy (below).



Sylvia Paoli, SFO  
St. Francis Region



THE AUTHORS  
Bob & Mary Stronach, SFO

