

Touchstones

Your Franciscan Federation Newsletter

Region Three

Autumn-Winter, 2011

Celebrating The “Spirit of Assisi”

Various congregations celebrate the 25th peace anniversary

A Joliet Response

By Marilyn Renninger, OSF



The 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's gathering of religious leaders of many faiths together in Assisi to pray for peace was commemorated by a spirited “**Spirit of Assisi**” celebration at the famous Rialto Square Theater in Joliet, IL. October 27, 2011 was an historic evening in Joliet for nine representatives of different faith communities led an assembly of 250 people in prayer for peace. The TAU Singers, St. Francis Woods, Frankfort, Illinois, St. Jude Music

Ministry, New Lenox, and the Sisters of St. Francis, Joliet, led the five hymns and the Blessing of St. Francis.

The interfaith prayer service consisted of prayers, readings, reflections and hymns on peace. As the people were leaving, some comments were: “It was very moving.” “I’m so happy I came this evening.” “It was an evening to remember.” “Don’t wait 25 more years to do this again.”

The Franciscan friars, sisters, and seculars in the Joliet area sponsored this inspiring and memorable event. A sad note is that not one of the news media contacted—six television outlets, three newspapers, and two radio stations—publicized this event for peace before, during, or after the service.



“Spirit of Assisi”...

A Wheaton Celebration

By Glenna Czachor, OSF

The Wheaton Franciscans hosted an Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace in honor of the 25th Anniversary of the Spirit of Assisi event, on October 27, 2011. Prior to the day, the Wheaton City Council declared October 27, “Spirit of Assisi Day” in Wheaton, and Mayor Mike Gresk read the proclamation at the service. The service also included readings from a variety of faith traditions, and a recitation from the Koran by a local Imam and a reading from the Sikh Holy Book by a leader of the Sikh community. During the service, each person present lit a candle as a sign of hope for future peace and harmony in our world.

Dubuque Franciscans continue to support their 2004 Sister Water Project. Safe water has been brought to nearly 40 villages in Tanzania and three mission teams have added their labor and love to the water efforts of the Honduran people. All Franciscans are invited to help.

Visit: <http://www.osfdbq.org>

Sister Doris Recker, OSF

We want to hear from you!

To all of you who are reading *Touchstones*, you are invited to send brief articles/pictures of events that have already taken place in your community, especially as they pertain to our theme from the AFC (Becoming A Sacred Flame) and/or our Justice and Peace goal of combating trafficking. We will not be advertising coming events because they are published in the Franciscan Federation's *Musings*.

Send *Touchstones'* articles, pictures to:
kzielins@sistersosf.org

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Trafficking of Human Beings: Our Franciscan Response

By Glenna Czachor, OSF

The Franciscan Federation adopted the following Resolution during the annual Conference in July, 2011. Each year the Federation's JPIC Standing Committee chooses a topic for focus and action for all Federation member congregations. (for the full resolution/resources visit: <http://franfed.org/2011%20Resolution.html>)



Statement of Resolution: *Be it resolved that we, as members of the Franciscan Federation, upholding the inherent dignity of each human person in the tradition of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, denounce all forms of human trafficking as criminal acts that violate basic human rights and exploit innocent people. We pledge to work for the elimination of human trafficking and its causes; to advocate for rescue, safety and justice for trafficked persons; and to demand prosecution of perpetrators.*

Save these dates!

Spring Reflection Day

“Clare: A Sacred Flame”

March 31, 2012

Ingrid Peterson, OSF

2012 AFC

“Our Ecclesial Identity”

July 27-30, 2012

Cincinnati, Ohio



And the Winner is:

Reflections from the the 2011 AFC lottery winners

I was one of the lucky winners of Region 3 to win the lottery to attend the 2011 AFC. I am truly grateful, because otherwise I would not have gone. It has been a number of years since I attended the AFC, and I was happy to experience the change since the Federation has a new structure. No longer was it top heavy with leadership, but the grassroots Franciscans were there to balance the spirit, the input, and the brightness of the Sacred Flame of our charism. Because there was an overflow attendance, we were truly elbow to elbow as we fanned each other's flame of dedication and determination to carry our Gospel Way of Life into an unknown future.

***Sister Mariette Kalbac , OSF
Wheaton Franciscan***



Region 3

I am most grateful to have been chosen for the Franciscan Federation Scholarship to attend the meeting in Milwaukee last July.

Being at the Conference was like a homecoming. It was seeing again many of my Franciscan friends from across the nation. It was a time to reconnect and to be renewed by the presentations, the music, the banquet and the special spirit of Franciscans. It was a time of transition for me, bringing to a close my ten years of being a home missionary with the Glenmarians in Mississippi and moving into the ministry of initial formation. Sister Nancy Schreck's reflection on the Gospel of John especially the pericope of the Samaritan woman at the well, continues to be a highlight of the inspiration received at our gathering in Milwaukee.

The Federation is to be commended for the work and the creativity of planning that went in to this assembly. God bless all of you.

***Mary Jean Morris, OSF
Joliet Franciscan***

What a blessed experience it was to sit in the midst of 500 plus Franciscans at the recent annual Franciscan Federation conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin! I was a lottery winner, gift of Region 3. My heartfelt thanks goes out to them.

The conference theme was how the Gospel of John was so inspiring to St. Francis of Assisi. Now it is more inspiring to me. Our main speakers, Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF and Rev. Michael Blastic, OFM reminded us that reading the Gospel can and must lead to action. There was an emphasis on the word **WE**. When **WE** carry out the words of Jesus, "Feed them yourselves," we become fire in the world. Francis and Clare always remained faithful to the Gospel and so must we.

***Sister Pat Zartman, OSF
Oldenberg Franciscan***

I was delighted to have the opportunity to attend this year's Franciscan Federation Conference. First was a road trip with my Sisters. Then it gladdened my heart to see so many other Franciscans gathered in one place. I also had the chance to have lunch with some of my friends from novitiate. I had had minor surgery the Friday before, so regrettably I missed the liturgy because I was worn out that day. It was fun to run into others I knew from various places—the Franciscan circle is wide yet small. I was impressed with all the planning it takes to coordinate such an event and grateful to have had the chance to participate.

***Gayle Lynn Rusbasan, OSF
Frankfort Franciscan***

Region 3 Steering Committee Meeting

From Marie Cacciatore, OSF

The Steering Committee members offer highlights from our October 22, 2011, gathering in Frankfort.

KUDOS, AFC Milwaukee!

Keynote speaker Nancy Schreck, OSF, warmed our hearts and souls in her keynote: "Becoming a Sacred Flame..." as did Michael Blastic, OFM: "Holding On To The Words...of Jesus" both are worthy of further reflection.

(Check out: www.franfed.org)

Region 3 Day of Reflection.

Committee members saw a great link with this year's AFC theme: "***Becoming a Sacred Flame***" and this year's study day topic. We hope to acknowledge the 800th anniversary of Clare's entering the Franciscan family and Nancy's vision of Clare as a "Sacred Flame." Plans are in process for The 2012 AFC in Cincinnati with Joe Chinnici, OFM and Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA.

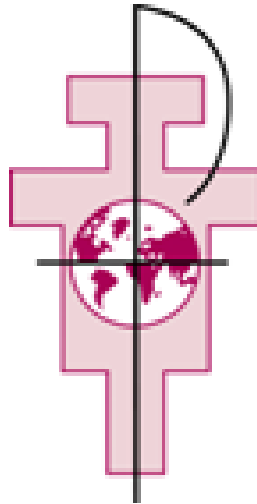
Who's your Region 3 Rep ?

Elections for new officers takes place at the spring Meeting. The hope is that every congregation will have a representative at this meeting. Presently, Sister Marilyn Renninger (Frankfort) is our chair, Sister Brigid (Joliet) is vice-chair, Sister Jeanine (Felician) is secretary and the treasurer is Sister Doris (Dubuque).

We are looking for techno tinkerers for greater inclusion at our Steering Committee Meetings.

The committee is grateful to Sister Arlene Bourquin FSP (Steering Committee Member from Franciscan Sisters of the Poor) for having edited and published our Region 3 Newsletter these last few years . With

great joy we welcome Sister Karen, another Steering Committee Member, who has offered her expert services as the new editor.



The Allegheny Franciscans will not be publishing their Advent/Lenten reflection booklets this year. The committee will be doing some research regarding this issue. As a result, registration for Region 3 membership for this coming year will be **\$5.00** which includes membership, an e-

copy of *Touchstones*- our newsletter, an opportunity for the lottery for the AFC and reduced rates at the Region 3 functions.

Region Three Steering Committee 2011-2012

Chairperson: Marilyn Renninger, OSF
Vice-chair: Brigid Jacobs, OSF
Secretary: Jeanine Heath, CSSF
Treasurer: Doris Recker, OSF
Registration: Dianne Kaimann, OSF;
Editor: Karen Zielinski, OSF

Members: Martha Amann, SCSC; Arleen Bourquin, SFP; Roberta (Bobbie) Doneth, OSF; Marie Cacciatore, OSF; Jean Marie Ciuffini, OSF; Maureen Dolan, OSF; Helene Galuszka, OSF; Bernadine Gutkowski, OSF; Maureen Irvin, OSF; Mariette Kalbac, OSF; Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF; Pat Meyer, OSF; Paula Nasenbeny, OSF; Joan Marie Paris, OSF; Maria Zeiman, OSF; Karen Zielinski, OSF.