



Franciscan Federation Musings

Volume 7: Number 12, December 8, 2009

Welcome to the monthly Newsletter of the Franciscan Federation

Please send news items to the National Office, franfed@aol.com by the 15th of the month.

NEW ON THE WEBSITE: WWW.FRANFED.ORG

- Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (ACFU) 2010 Symposium (go to Events section)
- Update Federation Sale Item flier (go to Federation Resources/Sales Items)
- Upcoming Retreats and Advent Reflection at St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin, OH (go to Region 3 webpage)
- Job Listing – Director of Prairiewoods (go to Job Listings, Dir. Prairiewoods)

COMMISSION OF ELECTED LEADERS (CEL)

In October, CEL members received from the Executive Committee a set of written reflections and resources to assist them in developing their responses to the Apostolic Visitation from a particularly Franciscan perspective. We are most grateful for to Srs. Louise Hembrecht, Mary Elizabeth Imler, Elise Saggau, and Kathleen Moffatt for preparing these resources.

Our upcoming December meeting will include some early preparation for the AFC along with attention to communications issues and Federation finances.

COMMISSION OF CHARISM SERVICES (CCS)

The CCS Executive Committee met November 11-13 at Neumann University in Aston, PA. We were delighted to have our Executive Director, Ann Lyons, FSSJ join us on the 11th & 12th. We include Candice Tucci OSF as part of our Committee as she is our liaison to the Implementation Task Force and we find her input invaluable. We reviewed the history of the development of the Commission structure and our specific CCS responsibilities. We then worked on the components of the Communication Plan that will be further developed and submitted for the AFC 2010.

All the information collected at the 2009 AFC was reviewed and we will share our responses to the questions and comments in upcoming issues of Musings. We also discussed what we can possibly accomplish this year and how we can assist the membership to prepare for the 2010 AFC. We have secured a facilitator for the CCS session at the 2010 AFC. The Committee is also considering suggestions for the 2011 AFC (as stated in the Bylaws). We will be doing homework and will have a conference call in January to check on progress.

COMMISSION OF REGIONS (COR)

COR is delighted that Bea Eichten OSF will facilitate the commission meeting at the AFC. The executive committee is looking forward to meeting face-to-face in January during the weekend of the 22nd to the 24th. We will meet in Aston, PA.

UPDATE FROM IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE (ITF)

The ITF met in Chicago on Oct 30-31 at the Felician Motherhouse in Chicago. We identified our role as more of a background, supportive type of presence and resourcing to the commissions and the national board.

The three task force members who have served as liaisons since 2008, Ss. Candice Tucci and Marlene Kline and Fr. Giles Schinelli continue to work in a mentoring role with the commissions. We received reports of their work to date and addressed several questions raised by their Executive Committees.

Our meeting overlapped with the meeting of the National Board, which provided time for us to work together on several issues. The ITF and National Board discussed the importance of a communication plan to facilitate networking and the flow of information throughout the Federation.

This plan would be activated during the year and would be presented at the 2010 AFC. We also brought recommendations regarding a Reconciliation Committee to the National Board; work on this committee would take place during this coming year.

IFC-TOR Council Meets

“Becoming a Disturbing Presence in Today’s World: Christ, through Francis, Clare, and ... Me”



Back in May, 135 Franciscan general ministers came together in Assisi and declared, *“We are disturbed by the range of social, economic, ecclesial, technological, political and legal challenges as well as those within our religious congregations. We desire to respond to these challenges in faith, walking with Francis and Clare in the footprints of Jesus.”*¹

From October 19-22, 2009 the newly elected IFC-TOR Council met to determine how the Conference itself could respond and assist our congregations to respond to these challenges. At this meeting it was clear that many responses to concrete needs must happen at the local level. As an international organization, the council and staff hope to provide resources and specific programs for the members especially to areas with little access to TOR formation.

Much time at the meeting was spent on creating a mechanism for sharing Franciscan resources for ongoing formation of member congregations. A Spirit and Life Director soon will be hired to collect Franciscan resources, seek translations, and help further enhance the website in service to Third Order Franciscans. In addition, work will be done to promote JPIC issues with Franciscans International and other partners.

All TOR congregations are encouraged to become members of the IFC-TOR. It is our international organization in service to our charism and the gospel. If your congregation is not currently a member, consider being part of our global TOR voice. Contact Sr. Janet Gardner sjgardner@osfprov.org or Sr. Louise Hembrecht slouise@fscclalledtobe.org or the IFC-TOR directly for information: www.ifc-tor.org.

EVANGELICAL LIFE RETREAT – CHIARA CENTER, SPRINGFIELD, IL

Dates: March 7 - March 13, 2010

Presenters: Andre Cirino, OFM & Anne Bremmer, OSF

Place: Chiara Center, Springfield, Il

For more information contact: chiaracenter.org / 217-523-0901

REVIEWS of Franciscan Morning and Evening Praise

I am happy for this opportunity to add my congratulations to you for the hard work on the Franciscan Breviary. Each morning when we pray, we are so inspired by using our own Franciscan readings and prayers. I don’t think we realized before how rich our heritage is until we read some beautiful phrase every day! Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

I just had a conversation with one of our venerable elders who commented that she just loves this new prayer book, and she especially feels much closer to Francis, who was speechless when trying to name God. She is at a similar stage in her own prayer life. It is moving to her to read these words of Francis as part of her prayer. So more thanks from the Sisters in Baltimore!

Joanne Schatzlein

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We have prayed from our new Franciscan prayer book since late August as a small local community of four and love the new books. We feel very connected to our Franciscan roots and are deepening our understanding of what it means to be a Franciscan. The prayer books were well worth the hassle and wait! God is very good!!!  
Diana De Bruin

## **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

On the one hand, charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples. It strives to build the earthly city according to law and justice. The earthly city is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009

**Action:** During this busy season, ponder and be aware of how you are building relationships of “gratuitousness, mercy and communion” in order to “build the earthly city according to love and justice”.

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## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON “GREEN FUNERALS”**

Our congregation, the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls MN, is researching "green funerals" in hopes of getting some guidelines set up in the near future. If you are already involved in this process, please send suggestions/information to Sr. Maurita Bernet OSF at [mrbernet@yahoo.com](mailto:mrbernet@yahoo.com)

## **SHARING THE FRANCISCAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION AT AFCU SYMPOSIUM**

The Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (ACFU) 2010 Symposium at the University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, Indiana, is being held on June 8-11, 2010. The theme is *Educating for the Care of Creation: Contemporary Verses for the Canticle of the Creatures*. Keynote speaker, Br Keith Warner OFM, will address *The Incarnation Matters! Franciscan Education for Ecological Conversion*. Plenary speakers include Srs Kathleen Moffatt OSF and Patricia Smith OSF on *Sharing the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition* and Bill Cook Ph.D. and Esperanca Camera Ph. D., *Franciscan Reflections on Created Beauty*. Br Bill Short OFM will facilitate the discussion, process, and application of the symposium theme.

We invite you to join us as we learn to apply the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition to our care of creation and make the learning come alive on our campuses and in our lives. A link to registration information is available at the AFCU website: [www.franciscancollegesuniversities.org](http://www.franciscancollegesuniversities.org)

## **“LOVE HOLDING LOVE” Mantras Drawn from the Writing of Saints Francis and Clare**

Twenty-six mantras taken directly from the writings of Saints Francis and Clare on two CDs, background information on Francis and Clare, and a 16 page booklet explaining each chant. Five mantras are in Spanish and English. Music by Josef Raischl SFO, Konrad Raischl and David Dargie. Produced by Josef Raischl SFO and André Cirino OFM. Suggested donation is \$25 plus \$4 total shipping for orders of 1 to 9 CDs. For more information and to hear samples of the mantras visit [www.assisijourney.com](http://www.assisijourney.com) or [www.FranciscanPilgrimages.com](http://www.FranciscanPilgrimages.com)

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## **CHRISTMAS WISHES**

May the increasing light of the season, represented by the Advent candles and the seasonal lights on our streets and in our homes, represent for us the emerging light of Christ that guides us as a Federation on the path of transformation. Margaret and I thank you for your continued prayerful and financial support. We know that each member community is a great blessing to the Franciscan Federation.

We wish you a blessed Advent and a happy and joyful Christmas. We pray that the advent of Christ grant us the gift of the Spirit so that we may ever proclaim the gospel message of Love.

The National Office will be closed December 22, 2009—January 4, 2010.

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## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Franciscans and friends,

Recalling the story of Christmas Eve, 1223, at Greccio focuses our attention on the Franciscan view of Christmas. Roch Niemier OFM said it well in his book, *In the Footsteps of Francis and Clare*: “In this dramatic reenactment of the events of Bethlehem, Francis wished to recall the simplicity and poverty, the inconveniences and humility of the Christ Child’s birth”.

The Christ Child's birth, the Incarnation, opened to us an infinite access to God's Love. We followers of Jesus continue to share in the abundance of His Love while we extend that Love in special ways through the Christmas season. Living in **simplicity and poverty** are ways that we give an example and an antidote for the consumerism in our secular society. What a great message of hope we give our neighbors struggling to provide for their families when they see us joyful without yearning for more. We embrace the **inconveniences and humility** of our own humanity consoled that Jesus left His divine status to be with us. In solidarity with the poor, we too shall know the ***Peace on Earth*** that no money can purchase. And, we live with the hope that striving for justice will bring peace and love for all peoples of the earth. "Buon Natale"!

Your sister, Ramona

Ramona Miller OSF  
Franciscan Federation President