

**Minutes**  
**Our Lady of the Angels Region**  
**Chapter of Ministers Meeting and Election**  
**St. Francis of Assisi Church**  
**50 Lodi St., Hackensack, NJ**  
**November 19, 2011**

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**Executive Council Members Present:** Ron Pihokker, SFO; Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM; Diane Menditto, SFO; Virginia Chin, SFO; Richard Spana, SFO; Kate Asselin, SFO; Julia McCants, SFO; Andy Klutkowski, SFO; Sheila Tuohy, SFO.

**Absent:** Alex Kiczek, SFO; Fr. Robert Williams, OFM cap.

**Visitor:** Deacon Tom Bello, SFO, National Minister

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**9:30am Opening Prayer**

Ron led the opening prayer. Special prayers were offered for Alex Kiczek, Jean Haddad and her mother and for the health and well-being of all our brothers and sisters.

**Roll Call**

Kate read the roll call; 35 fraternities were represented by ministers or their designees (see list).

**Welcome by Regional Minister**

Ron addressed the assembled ministers, thanked everyone for coming and St. Francis fraternity for hosting the meeting in their newly renovated Hall.

**Introduction of Visitors**

Ron welcomed Dcn. Tom Bello, National Minister, who will preside over the election.

**Approval of Minutes of Chapter 2010**

Two corrections were noted. C. Belliveau moved to approve and H. Henky seconded. The Minutes of the 2010 Regional Chapter of Minister's meeting were approved.

**Minister's Report**

Thanks to All Ron Pihokker thanked the Executive Council and Spiritual Assistants for their service to the Region. Special thanks to Anna Geraci, who is responsible for both the regional and national newsletters, as well as the regional database; Jean Haddad, regional JPIC Coordinator; Rich Spana, who coordinates our regional retreats; and to Diane Menditto, for managing regional communication including the website and for all she does as Vice Minister for the Region. Kate Asselin was also thanked for her service as secretary and Virginia Chin for developing the regional formation programs.

Gatherings The Region's annual retreat has grown and become very successful; last year was a sell-out. In contrast, attendance at last year's Convivenza in Yonkers was a disappointment. The various events that Councilors have organized in the Clusters were noted with appreciation.

Ministers are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the few opportunities to gather as a region and to encourage all members of their fraternities to attend as well.

### **National Visitor's Remarks**

Membership National Meeting highlights included the following statistics: in 2011, US SFO members numbered 13,420 active professed. Membership has dropped from 15,811 in 2008 to 14,70 in 2009 to 14,000 in 2010 and continues to decline. This trend is due primarily to an aging membership and the failure to attract new and younger members, as well as improved accounting. (Our own Regional membership statistics show the same pattern). This trend is expected to continue and has important budget implications at all levels, viz., the recently approved increase in per capita contributions .

Leadership The challenge of leadership remains the same: to build fraternity and keep the spirit alive. Reference was made to John 21: 15—17. *Feed my sheep*: this is the call to leadership. In the SFO, this is a call to care for our brothers and sisters in fraternity. Priorities are prayer, formation (initial and continuing); and social: *knowing and caring for each other*. See Tom's articles in the *Tau* as well as Article 92.1 of the Rule, which describes our purpose as ministers.

Fraternity The four marks of fraternity are: spiritual growth; formation; ongoing conversion, and transformation through fraternity. These are translated into action as: build the family; live as a community of love; witness to the world; and apostolic work. Reference was made to Isaiah 58. *Do not forget your own, your brothers and sisters in fraternity*. Reach out to lapsed or unaffiliated members. Ministers have special leadership responsibilities, including growing new leaders from among the membership.

Quinquennial Every fraternity is invited and encouraged to send at least one member to the". Sr. Ilia Delio will be the keynote speaker on the Franciscan view of God and understanding of the human person. Bro. Bill Short will present on Franciscan identity—who we are as a Franciscan family. For more information, visit the website.

### **Spiritual Assistant's Report**

Fraternities Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, reported that pastoral visitations show that spirituality is alive and well throughout the region. Challenge is to develop the specifically Franciscan focus. The transformation of this spirituality into *action* is also a work in progress. A spirit of "apostolic adventure" should be cultivated. In regard to leadership, Fr. Richard noted his concern that so few are willing to serve, as seen the difficulty some fraternities have in fielding a council and in the absence of nominees for this election. Continuing formation is the answer.

Responsibilities of Spiritual Assistants include: attending all council meetings and as many fraternity meetings as possible; leading or participating in all formation programs. Ministers should ensure that each SA has the Handbook and the FUN [*For Until Now*] manual. Spiritual assistants should be invited to all SFO/fraternity events. In the face of the declining ranks of friars, other Franciscan religious communities are being called to serve as spiritual assistants, and this trend is expected to continue.

Challenges for All Response to economic challenges should include greater JPIC involvement in peace and justice opportunities; future health of SFO requires leadership development: members taking to opportunities to serve, leaders supporting those who are willing to step up. Formation, formation, formation: this is fundamental to meeting our challenges and it needs to be done in fraternity.

### **Formation Director's Report**

Programming Virginia Chin thanked Fr. Richard, Ron, members of the Council, all formation directors and candidate-participants and the hosting fraternities for their support of the regional formation program.

Programming has grown to include both formators (formation directors) and candidates in initial formation. This year four training programs will be held; for the future, we will be building in more opportunities for interaction among candidates.

All formation directors and their teams should attend the January 2012 Workshop on the FUN manual. Current formation directors should remain part of formation team for the next two years at least even if going out of office. Bob Fitzsimmons, the National formation director will be at this Workshop.

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### **“Evangelized to Evangelize”**

Ron presented a slide program, followed by a discussion of the meaning of evangelization and what it means to be an evangelist: *to be a messenger of good news*. Mark 1:15 was cited, and various historical and contemporary evangelists were mentioned as examples, including: St. Francis, Pope Paul VI and St. John the Evangelist.

From Gospel to life and life to Gospel: conversion is a dynamic process and evangelization takes place in cultural context. Reference was made to Pope John Paul II ‘new evangelization’ and the divine power of the Gospel to change hearts.

Evangelization is *the* ministry of the Church, even before the Eucharist. Jesus is the first evangelist. See Pope Paul VI’s “On Evangelization in the Modern World.” In order to be evangelizers, we ourselves need to be constantly evangelized.

The Church is inseparable from Christ and from His mission. The Great Commission is three-fold: first, to make disciples; second, to baptize; and third, to teach.

First, establish a relationship with the Lord. This is a three-stage conversion process:

- a) Awakening: This is *the* moment of conversion, e.g., Francis kissing the leper. Also experienced as “faith shock,” this is an extraordinary awareness of Christ’s love and the sense that all one might seek—unity, truth, goodness, beauty—is satisfied in the love of God.

- b) Metanoia: “Turning oneself inside out” This is a change in perspective that comes about because of the awakening moment. Our response is change of mind and heart. “Was blind but now I see...”
- c) Discipleship: Following Jesus in the community of the Church. See Acts 2:42—47. The four elements are: prayer, teaching, sharing in community and Eucharist. These correspond to the four pillars of catechism, four spiritual hungers, and four elements of apostolic church.

What does this say about the SFO and its members? We are witnesses; don't tell it, show it, live it, do it! SFOs are evangelistic organizations. Christian conversion is the goal of evangelization, for each of us, formed in the communion of fraternity and for all.

### **Treasurer's Report**

#### Current Report

Richard Spana reported that as of end of October 2011, the Region had a balance of approximately \$16,000 in the checking account. Bernie moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as is; Sheila and Anna seconded the motion; and by voice vote, the motion to accept the Treasurer's report carried. (See written report)

#### Per Capita Increase

An original and a revised budget were presented for the ministers to review and approve. Primarily due to declining membership, National has voted to increase the per capita contribution by \$5.00 in FY13. The national decline in membership is also reflected in our own region, where again we find fewer members having to contribute more to meet obligations.

Expense Reduction Various ways of reducing expenses--as opposed to increasing contributions--were discussed, including discontinuing the mailed paper issues of the *Troubador* in favor of an e-newsletter. It was agreed that with email addresses provided by less than one-quarter of the membership, this is not currently feasible.

Revised FY12 Budget Passed To make the \$5.00 per capita increase more feasible, Rick recommended that we budget an increase of \$2.50 in FY12 and another increase of \$2.50 in FY13. The per capita contribution shown in the original budget as \$34 is increased to \$36.50 in the revised budget. (The increase will be held in reserve until 2013). The alternative is to vote no increase in FY12 (original budget) and approve a budget with the \$5.00 increase in 2013. The treasurer called for a vote and the revised budget was approved 29 to 2.

### **Regional Election**

National Minister Tom Bello conducted the election. There were 35 voting ministers; 18 required for a majority.\* The relevant Articles and National, International and Spiritual Assistants Statutes and SFO Rules were referenced.

#### Results:

Minister: Ron Pihokker was re- elected and accepted.

Vice Minister: Diane Menditto was re- elected and accepted.

Treasurer: Rich Spana was re-elected and accepted.

Formation Director: Nancy Conroy was elected and accepted

*\* Following this election, the number of voters increased to 36;19 required for a majority.*

Secretary: Kate Asselin was re- elected and accepted

Councilor – North Jersey: Andy Klutkowski was re-elected and accepted.

Councilor – Central Jersey: Mary Frances Reavey was elected and accepted

Councilor – Manhattan: JuilaMcCants was re-elected and accepted.

Councilor – Westchester – Sheila Tuohy was re-elected and accepted.

#### National Minister's Comments

Tom Bello noted that except for the Formation Director and Central Jersey Councilor, the entire Council was re-elected and that all positions were uncontested—a unique election in his experience. These circumstances are both a compliment to present leadership and a clear challenge to the Region to develop new leadership for the future.

**Closing Prayer:** Fr. Richard led the closing prayer.

**4:00pm Adjournment**

*Faithfully Submitted  
Kate Asselin, SFO  
December 10, 2011*