

FRANCISCAN MIRROR

SUMMER 2006

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

Ministers Approve 2007 Budget, Amend 2006 Budget Heinz Lists Active Outreach in 'State of Region' Address



Bill Heinz

The region's outreach featured a number of activities, Regional Minister William Heinz, SFO, reported in his State of the Region address at the Regional Annual Gathering held May 5-7 at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaneateles.

"It's definitely rewarding (for us) to get out into the region," Heinz told 59 ministers,

delegates and observers.

Activities included:

- three on-going formation workshops, "Francis, Clare and the Eucharist," covering each area of the region in 2005.
- two All-Commissions workshops, in the Western Area in 2005; plus the first of 2006 scheduled May 13 in the Central Area.

• a Lenten retreat in February featuring filmmaker Gerry Straub, SFO.

• a number of Peace & Justice presentations for fraternities.

• a youth/ecology initiative, with a pilot young adult formation.

• a redesigned newsletter, aimed at being both an informational and formation tool.

See ANNUAL— Page 3



Gerard Straub

Filmmaker Tells How to Respond to Poor Go into a Quiet Place and Discover What God Wants

by BOB and MARY STRONACH, SFO

Gerard Thomas Straub had become something of a Franciscan beggar, while pursuing a passion to bring the plight of the poor to light in film.

Now he lives day to day, he said, amused that he has

become something of a Franciscan beggar, while pursuing a passion to bring the plight of the poor to light in film.

Straub, a Secular Franciscan
See FILMMAKER — Page 8

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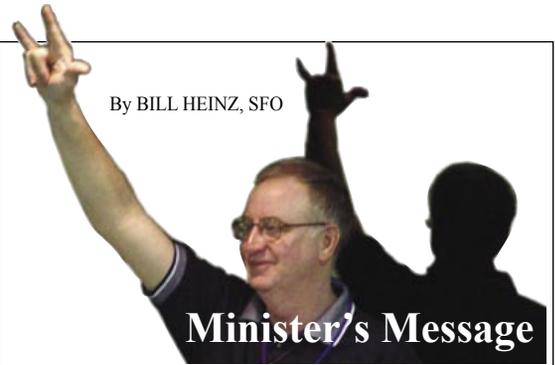
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FRANCISCAN MIRROR IS
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY.
DEADLINES: AUG. 15,
NOV. 15, FEB. 15, MAY 15

The SFO is a Catholic order of married and single people who strive to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.



By BILL HEINZ, SFO

Minister's Message

PRAY FOR SPIRIT-FILLED ELECTIONS

The Spirit of the Lord fills the whole world. It holds all things together and knows every word spoken by man, alleluia. Wisdom 1:7.

In the spirit of Pentecost, I would ask that we all, our Family, invoke the Holy Spirit to aid us in our upcoming elections. It is so important to pray for *discernment* on our pending future. I have seen in the last five years the making and breaking of Fraternities mainly because of elections. Please let us pray now.

We Franciscans of the United States will hold our *National elections* in October of 2006.

Our *Local Fraternities* in the Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region will hold elections in September, October, and November of this year.

Our *Regional Election* process begins this summer and concludes with our election in late April of 2007. At that election I will say farewell after serving you for five years as Minister.

We are a great Region with caring individuals and a great deal of talent. It is now time to step forward as good Franciscans and take on leadership roles. I have all the confidence in the world that we will spiritually grow together.

WORK COMMISSION CO-CHAIRS

It is my pleasure to announce that **Ed** and **Mary Zablocki** have taken on the role as our new Work Commission Co-Chairs. Thank you so much, Ed and Mary.

ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING

Continued from Page 1

There is a newly forming group in the Central Area, he reported, plus a new canonically established fraternity. An emerging Western Area group is seeking canonical recognition. In 2005, he said, the region had 507 active members, 32 inquirers, and 40 candidates.

Heinz said he was proud of apostolic works and apostolates in which fraternities and members were engaged. "We're making a great deal of progress."

SEEK OWN SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

The topic of spiritual assistants came up. "The bottom line is, it's up to the local fraternity to seek out and find a spiritual assistant," Heinz said. If no friar is available, consider a *lay spiritual assistant* (qualified Seculars can take the

Life-Giving Union course created by the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants); a *sister*; a *deacon*; a *diocesan priest*.

It should be "someone near enough to you to do the job," he said.

Several ministers encouraged fraternities to make sure non-Franciscans become familiar with the Franciscan charism and take the Life-Giving Union course. "They have to understand, it's the fraternity itself that runs the fraternity," Heinz said. "They're there to provide assistance."

PROMOTE SFO, UPDATE DATABASE

In an attempt to attract vocations, he encouraged fraternities to promote and advertise themselves. "The death rate is outpacing our new vocation rate."

He encouraged minis-

ters to share the *Franciscan Mirror*, and use it as a vocation tool. He urged them to share Regional Advisor Ed Czapla's "*Smoke Signals*" with members.

The national and regional databases need to be kept current, he noted. If fraternities update their information on the national database, it's important to also send those updates to Patti DeWitt, SFO, who oversees the region's database and mailing list. If fraternities don't have someone updating the national database, then Patti would update it for them. She may be contacted at: (716) 713-4076; pattidewittsfo@yahoo.com.

Heinz provided copies of the new regional guidelines. "The Minister's Manual should include the new guide-

lines."

URGES PRAYERFUL ELECTIONS

Noting that 2006 is the year of elections, with local fraternities conducting council elections this fall, he urged fraternities to "be very prayerful" in selecting their officers, and exhorted ministers to be prayerful as well "for the regional elections next year."

Heinz announced he would not run again for regional minister.

Regional Formation Director Patti DeWitt announced the region's intent to plan leadership training workshops to help newly elected fraternity councils transition into their roles. She asked for input from ministers. Details will be announced as plans are firmed up.

After lunch, attendees
Continued on Page 4



Ministers share a lighter moment during the Regional Annual Gathering.

ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING

Continued from Page 3

gathered in the chapel to remember deceased Secular Franciscans, particularly those who embraced Sister Death in the past year. Flowers placed in a vase on the altar represented each fraternity of the region.

FAMILIES OF THE YEAR

The Family of the Year awards were a highlight of Friday's business meeting. Heinz presented two awards – the previously announced 2005 winner, Duff and Bill Geary of Holy Family Fraternity in Vernon, and the 2006 honoree, Margaret and the late Tony Bellizia of St. John the Baptist Fraternity, Elmira.



Kim Marks places flower in altar vase during Service of Remembrance.



Regional Minister Bill Heinz presents Family of the Year awards to Bill and Duff Geary (above) and to Margaret Bellizia and her son, Joseph (below).



The Gearies, professed for over 25 years, have been involved a number of outreach ministries for the poor – from working in soup kitchens to raising supplies and money for programs locally and elsewhere. They had been involved in foster care for 30 years, even adopting two children. The Gearies have served

in a variety of fraternity positions (Bill is a former regional minister) and they helped found Holy Family Fraternity.

The Bellizias, married 55 years, had been involved in a variety of ministries – from serving as Eucharistic ministers to volunteering in food pantries and soup kitchens to visiting nursing homes and hos-

pitals. With the fraternity, Tony worked with formation, and Margaret served as minister and treasurer. Tony had been professed for over 25 years, and Margaret, for 15. They have two sons and two daughters, seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Their oldest son is adopted.

PROPOSED BUDGETS DRAW DISCUSSION

Regional Treasurer Donna Roberti introduced a 2007 budget proposal Friday morning to give ministers and delegates time to review it before discussing and voting on it in the afternoon. The proposed budget projected \$37,350 in revenues and \$36,050 in expenses. She also proposed an amended 2006 budget. The amended budget reflected changes in revenues and expenses. Revenues are expected to be \$34,800 this year, up from the \$26,870 figure in the adopted budget; and expenses are anticipated to be

\$32,800, rather than \$26,870. Several categories reflected an anticipated decrease in spending, such as stipends and supplies, while other categories showed an increase, such as travel/mileage and newsletter. She explained that at the time the 2006 budget was adopted, the old newsletter was still being produced and did not accurately reflect the commercial printing of a redesigned newsletter. The old newsletter was being duplicated at no charge at a church office, using old technology which is no longer available.

During the budget discussions, one delegate said his fraternity sent him to address budget issues. He objected to several spending



**Treasurer
Donna Roberti.**



**Mary Pariser
checks out Mirror.**



**Delegate Mike
Ruggiero**

ministers and delegates had left. It also passed overwhelmingly, 18 to 2.

MINISTERS
ENDORSE
LETTER TO
EDITOR

Then the

categories – stipends, conferences and meetings, and the newsletter, particularly printing the covers in color.

A number of ministers/delegates and regional representatives participated in the discussions, with a couple of people agreeing with the objections and others supporting the budget as presented. Regarding the newsletter, Heinz noted that in this year's annual sur-

vey to all ministers, he included a question on the Franciscan Mirror. "There were no negative comments," he said. "They were glowing comments."

The ministers and delegates approved the 2007 budget as presented, 21 to 3. With the budget discussions pushing the meeting into the dinner hour, the vote on the amended 2006 budget came later in the evening, after several

ministers and delegates unanimously endorsed a letter-to-the-editor addressing the related issues of Third World sweatshops and illegal immigrants and migrants. The letter asks the U.S., especially companies outsourcing and buying products made in the Third World, to ensure better working conditions and pay for workers; and encourages the use of Fair Trade products in support of better wages for farmers and worker cooperatives. The letter was introduced by All-Commissions Coordinators Bob and Mary Stro-nach, SFO, on behalf of St. Joseph Fraternity, Utica.



Barbara Spencer, Olga Larocque, David Green, Marie Diehl, Carol Slater

Continued on Page 6

ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING

Continued from Page 5

AMAZON RELIEF, FRANCISCAN ECOLOGY ARE HIGHLIGHTED

Jim Flickinger, SFO, founder of Amazon Relief, and Rob Breen, SFO, founder of the Franciscan Ecology Center, were Saturday's featured speakers.

What started 11 years ago as an effort to keep open a struggling parish school for the poor, 120 miles up the Amazon River in Brazil, has become a comprehensive, breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty undertaking, mostly supported by Secular Franciscans,



Jim and Lois Flickinger of Amazon Relief



Rob Breen of Franciscan Ecology Center

that now includes: six schools with a daily feeding program for over 1,000 children; two vocational schools; an arts and culture school for children of lepers; a tutoring program aimed at getting students into college; a number of soup kitchens in an one-million-population area suffering 80 percent unemployment, unrelenting equatorial heat, marsh-filled slums, and 45,000 lepers; food, medicine and clothing for three leprosariums; a program to build cha-

pels and provide motor boats for missionaries; support for a seminary on the verge of closing with 35 students, which now boasts 120 seminarians, including 20 Franciscans. Ministers and delegates were so moved by the story of Amazon Relief that they dug into their pockets and donated nearly \$2,100.

Breen spoke of his groundbreaking Franciscan ecology program that gets youth excited about environmental issues while introduc-

ing them to Franciscan spirituality. This effort has led to a pilot formation program for young adults. He offers training to fraternities that would like to get involved with youth through ecology.

NATIONAL VISITOR HEARS CONCERNS, PRAISES REGION

The National Fraternity, represented by National Treasurer Dennis Ross, SFO, conducted an official visitation during the regional meeting. He met with



Mary Havel and Shirley Uhrinec



Tim Suspanic & John Dutcher



Mae Schneeberger



Linda Robinson, MD, and Barb Quebral



Dorothy Gavin



Tutti Wagner and Ceil Beard

the Regional Executive Council the night before Friday's business meeting, and on Saturday, he moderated an open forum to address issues and questions. Among them:

- Concern over the potential impact on Fair Share by the International General Chapter's vote to raise the assessment on U.S. and other leading nations. The U.S. had been paying 50 cents per professed member to fund the International Fraternity's operations and outreach to nations around the world. The new assessment is one euro, or



Marie Meyer



Betty Mayerhouser and Anne Thomas



National Treasurer Dennis Ross

about \$1.20, more than doubling what the U.S. was paying. Both Ross and Heinz said their goal would be to avoid raising Fair Share, and instead juggle the national budget to accommodate the increased assessment. The National Fraternity will meet in October to address the issue.

- A question about the need to address multicultural issues. With the Secular Franciscan Order very active in the multicultural scene nationally, Ross said the region, sooner or later, should be addressing it.



Mary Hogan

It's "a coming issue." Basic SFO documents and formation materials are available in Spanish, and are being translated into other languages. Plus, he noted, the Quinquennial Congress in July 2007 will have a multicultural theme.

On Sunday morning, Ross briefed the gathering. This is "a very fine region," he said, with very capable leadership and a lot of activities, from formation workshops to a pilot youth/ecology program to staffing a Franciscan booth at the NY State Fair. He praised the officers, councilors and commissions chairs, and liked the idea of a state fair booth so much that he would take it back to share with others.

Ross urged the region to keep up its search for



Regional Minister Bill Heinz gives his trademark salute, "I love you" in sign language, reminding the gathering that "we are family."

a regional spiritual assistant, and to make up for the lack of a councilor in the Eastern Area. With local elections coming this year, he endorsed the concept of leadership training workshops to help ensure a good transition.

ELECTION NOTICE

Nominations for regional offices are due Aug. 1, 2006 to Election Committee Co-Chair Phylis Bruno, SFO, 3088 W. 42nd Street, Erie, PA, 16506-5318. Submit names and designated position (regional minister, vice minister, secretary, treasurer, formation director, area councilor).



David Pope

FILMMAKER GERRY STRAUB

Continued from Page 1

from Los Angeles, led a Day of Reflection March 5 for 100 Franciscan Sisters and 50 Secular Franciscans in the Buffalo suburb of Williamsville. Organized by the Sisters of St. Francis, the day was co-sponsored by the Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region of the Secular Franciscan Order. Ed Zablocki, SFO, who helped coordinate the day, noted it was one of eight speaking engagements arranged in the Buffalo area that week -- where Straub hoped to nudge young and old alike toward "God's call to be one with the poor and suffer-



Gerard Straub, SFO, center, with Ed Zablocki, SFO, who helped coordinate the Day of Reflection, and Sarah Nies, the campus minister at Canisius College who invited Straub to speak in the Buffalo area.

ing," and to raise money to continue his work.

Simply put, Straub said, "I put the power of film at the service of the poor."

He painted his talk with images of the poor and suffering from several of his films, from garbage dump dwell-

ers in the Philippines ("When Did I See You Hungry") to an Amazon leprosarium in Brazil ("Embracing the Leper") to migrant workers in Central America ("Endless Exodus").

He then showed his latest film, "Patients of a Saint," about the life

and work of Secular Franciscan Tony Lazara, M.D. The American physician left his comfortable lifestyle to go to Peru and care for destitute children. Straub said he spent two weeks with Dr. Tony, as he called him, filming his free clinic and home for children, which are funded entirely by donations.

Viewers of his films say they're gripping, even haunting.

"He relentlessly takes your breath away," one Secular Franciscan said, "and yet there are moments that give you relief and hope."

As Straub himself points out, there is the resilience of the human spirit and joy in the most unlikely places -- such as a stunning expression of faith by a blind, horribly disfigured leper. And there is the inspiration of individuals like Dr. Tony who discover a blessing in their sacrifice for the poor. Straub challenged the audience to go into



Filmmaker Straub addresses Secular Franciscans and Franciscan sisters.

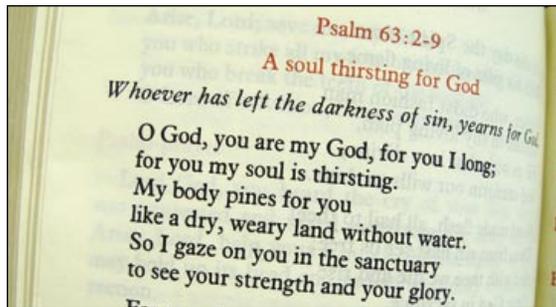
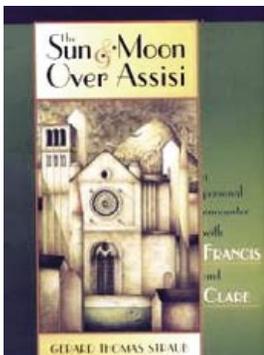
a quiet place with God – to go into prayer – and discover what God wants.

“As Dr. Tony did, we need to pause and ask God what he wants us to do.”

Straub offered a few suggestions: commit to praying for the poor; get involved, such as volunteering in a soup kitchen; or help fund the work of those sacrificing themselves for the poor.

“We cannot worship God and be indifferent to the poor,” he said. In fact, as Franciscans, “being one with the poor in not optional.”

Straub’s passion for the poor came after a conversion experience that led him to Assisi and those exemplars of Lady Poverty, Francis and Clare. His conver-



Psalm 63 flamed Straub's conversion.

sion culminated in a book, “Sun and Moon Over Assisi: A Personal Encounter with Francis and Clare,” published by St. Anthony Messenger Press in 2000, and then in a hectic pilgrimage to document the poor and suffering in the U.S. and abroad.

Raised in a Catholic family in New York, where he attended parochial school and even thought of becoming a priest, Straub fell away from his faith after embarking on a management fast-track with CBS. He ended up in Hollywood producing soap operas like General Hospital.

While working on a book, he hit a dead end, and decided to go to Rome, Italy to research the art there in hopes

of spurring on his writing. With the help of a Franciscan priest-friend, Straub was able to stay at a friary. After settling in, he found himself alone, since the friars were out working or in class, and decided to go for a walk, but instead felt drawn to the empty church at the friary. He sat down, picked up a Liturgy of the Hours book and started reading psalm 63, about a soul thirsting for God.

“Without warning, I felt an overwhelming presence of God,” he said. “And I knew God was real and loved me... When I got up to leave, I bowed to the tabernacle and felt an electricity through my body.”

Later he met with the friary superior, ending

up in what he described as a four-hour reconciliation, and the next day he received communion at mass.

After that, gradually, “St. Francis became my guide.”

Today, he noted, it means seeing “the face of Christ in the faces of the poor,” which goes beyond an emotional response and beyond seeing it as a political matter.

“It’s a profoundly spiritual issue.”

SFO DAY AUG. 20

The second annual SFO Day in the Western Area will begin with mass at noon Sunday, Aug. 20, at Sacred Heart Church, 5337 Genesee St., Bowmansville, NY. For info, call Marie Meyer, 716-835-5480.

On the same date, the annual SFO Day in the Eastern Area will start with mass at 10:30 a.m. at the National Shrine of Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha in Fonda, NY.

AROUND THE REGION

★ Wall of Honor ★

IN MEMORY OF

Elizabeth Almy

remembered by
St. Agnes of Assisi Fraternity

Helen Werth

remembered by
St. Agnes of Assisi Fraternity

Gen Burkhard, SFO

remembered by
Mae Schneeberger, SFO

Ruth Kloster, SFO

remembered by
Mae Schneeberger, SFO

Loretta Wagner, SFO

remembered by
St. Joseph Fraternity, Utica

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



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Mail your message/ad, with check made out to BKTR, to Franciscan Mirror, PO Box 232, Marcy, NY; or contact Mary Stronach at 315-796-9284, or at stronach1@adelphia.net.

MIRROR IN COLOR

This issue of The Mirror is brought to you in color, at no additional expense, thanks to donations and a friendly printer (Steffen Publishing of Holland Patent, NY) working with us to contain costs.

-- Editors

SISTER DEATH

Loretta Odelia Wagner, 86, embraced Sister Death April 6 at St. Joseph Nursing Home, Utica. She was a parishioner of St. Joseph St. Patrick Church, and past secretary of St. Joseph Fraternity. Loretta enjoyed drawing and writing stories.

MIRROR SPONSOR: PHYLIS BRUNO, SFO

In thanksgiving for Fair Share contributions by local fraternities.

"The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the SFO as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world." – Lester Bach, OFM Cap/Pick More Daisies'

KATRINA RELIEF *Continued from back cover*

spending a week doing relief work on the Gulf Coast. The other fraternity members were: Dutcher's wife, Anita; Agnes Brush (and her husband, Tom); and Larry and Bonnie Orsini, a couple in formation who took their RV to Mississippi to extend their time there.

"We were divided into groups of ten," Dutcher said. "It took three days to clean out and gut one house."

"Once you see the devastation, you can't believe it," he said.

He praised the students: "They worked like they'd been doing it for months. They knew it was important." Plus, he was impressed by the Franciscan spirit. Just before the buses departed campus, University President Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, distributed Tau crosses and "commissioned everyone to be Franciscans for the week, to behave like Franciscans."

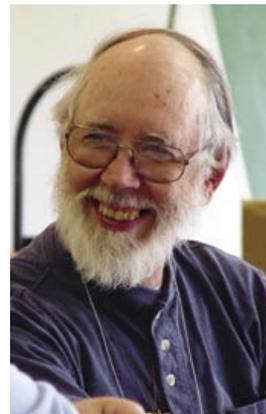
The work was so filthy, he said, that they

were instructed to wear clothes they could throw away, and save a clean set for the trip back home. They removed mud a foot deep, debris, drywall, and then painted the studs to prevent mold.

They stayed at an Episcopal relief center at night, and were bussed out to disaster sites in the morning. One house they worked

on was owned by an 80-year-old couple, he said, and a woman living across the street – she slept in a camper adjacent to her devastated home – "was so happy to see us helping her neighbors." In stoic style, "she said things were getting back to normal" because "mail delivery was going to resume on Monday."

-- by BOB STRONACH, SFO



**John Dutcher, SFO,
minister of St. Irenaeus
Emerging Fraternity**

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE 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 the form and mail it along

with a \$10 donation. Funds will be used by the Regional Fraternity 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 _____

Contact info: phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

Name of honoree _____

Select one: ___ in memory of ___ in honor of

List reason/occasion _____

(e.g., profession anniversary, gratitude for service, etc.)

Donation: \$10 per name.

Please make checks payable to Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha Region (BKTR).

Send completed form with check to:

The Franciscan Mirror, P.O. Box 232, Marcy, NY 13403

NY SECULAR FRANCISCANS JOIN KATRINA RELIEF IN MISSISSIPPI

Six months into the most massive relief effort in the nation's history, the thing that struck John Dutcher, SFO, about some Hurricane Katrina victims was this:

"They feel they've been forgotten."

They appreciated the help, he said, as volunteers finally arrived to gut flood-struck homes in Long Beach, Mississippi, and prepare them for repairing.

"They were just so

pleased that someone came to talk to them, let alone help," he added.

Those volunteer workers included five Secular Franciscans from St. Irenaeus Emerging Fraternity in West Clarksville, NY, where Dutcher is minister.

They joined 300 students and faculty from St. Bonaventure University who put a Franciscan twist on the notion of "Spring Break,"

Continued on Page 11



FROM LEFT: John Dutcher, Bonnie Orsini, Larry Orsini, Anita Dutcher, and Fr. David Blake, OFM, under a house they gutted to prep it for restoration. Houses there are on stilts to protect them from flooding -- except that Katrina waters rose to 25 feet, engulfing most everything.

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