

TRACINGS SPECIAL EDITION

REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL MEETING 2015

Regional Newsletter ISSUE 13 | Summer 2015 - Addendum

Queen of Peace Region | ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS | www.queenofpeaceregion.org

Highlights of the Annual Regional Fraternity Council Meeting 29-31 May 2015

Kim Pappas, OFS, Regional Minister opened the annual event at Christ the King Retreat Center at 7:00PM Friday. We were blessed by the attendance fifty nine Franciscans, two guests, and one Inquirer, representing 26 of the 28 established regional fraternities, both emerging fraternities and 1 newly forming group.

Following morning prayers and breakfast the Formation presentation was given by Fr Steve McMichael OFM, Conv. See article next page.

The Council approved a change to the Regional Guidelines as well as the 2016 budget.

Nichole Paladie, OFS gave the attendees a heads up on what promises to be a spectacular Regional Fall Gathering in Rochester MN on Saturday, September 19 at Assisi Heights. The speaker will be Sr. Ramona Miller, OSF and her theme will be "Journey with Francis and Clare on the Way to San Damiano". A follow-up session will be on the "Stigmata". Registration materials were handed out to the ministers. Further information can be obtained from Nicole at triparishff@hbcs.net.

The Co-Animators of the Regional JPIC effort, Cynthia Gunsolly, OFS and Mary Higgins, OFS, asked that fraternities update their JPIC contact information. In addition they would like to collect detailed information about what each of the fraternities is doing currently regarding apostolic action. There is a power point presentation available for the fraternities about JPIC and Catholic Social Teaching.



Francis at the Ambo of Christ the King Chapel
This marvelous display was created and developed by Kathy Taormina, OSF.



Food for the body was welcome as much as food for the soul!



Focus on Formation

by Bob Barnes, OFS

Fr. Steve McMichael, OFM Conv. walked participants through Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures" and its place in the medieval cultural and theological landscape of Francis' time. Fr. Steve made the case that instead of the traditional view that Francis was praising nature as it was; he was really describing a sacramental view of creation redeemed by Christ, "everything stamped with God's presence" and "creation participating in the Resurrection." In doing this Francis was showing himself to be an astute theologian.

Fr. Steve noted that medieval theology was obsessed with Genesis 1-3 and as we read it the parallels with the creation story were obvious. He described the 5-step movement scholars saw from Formation in the creation story through Deformation with the Fall of Genesis 3 to Reformation in Christ's life, death and Resurrection to Conformation as we conform ourselves to Christ and finally to the Transformation that life in Christ brings to us when we are faithful to it. Fr. Steve highlighted three commands from the Canticle: 1) to forgive/to extend



Fr. Steve McMichael delivers part I of his 3 part teaching on the "Canticle of the Creatures".

mercy, 2) to enter willingly into sickness and trial with compassion, and 3) to make peace.

Finally Fr. Steve presented Bonaventure's view of the relationship among God, creation and humankind: the Fall caused "disharmony" between man and God, and between man and Nature. In Bonaventure's theology Creation had four purposes before the Fall: 1) to testify to human dignity through subservience to humanity, 2) to offer beauty, 3) to provide wonder, and 4) to move us to action and to praise God. These didn't go away in the Fall of Genesis 3 but were "dimmed." Francis' life was a movement to return to the pre-Fall state. As Fr. Steve said, echoing Bonaventure, "The more we are reformed and conformed toward harmony by the Grace of the Holy Spirit working in us, the closer we come to that original relationship of creation." In other words, as we learn to see all of creation as brother and sister under God, worthy of care and respect instead of as mere commodities to be exploited for our benefit, we begin to experience Creation as God intended it.

It was pretty heady stuff but fits perfectly with that part of the Rule that states: "they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High,' and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship" (Article 18).

Bob Barnes, OFS, Fr. Solanus Casey Emerging Fraternity, Duluth, MN



Audience attention and participation was at a peak.