

From the NFRA/Courageous Initiative Webinar #4 Chat wall 4/26/11

First discussion question:

How do you personally live your “sense of belonging to the Secular Franciscan Order

Pat Crotty Palmer SFO: New Orleans (St Joan of Arc Region)

I experience bonding with SFO's mostly thru the regional gatherings in meeting fellow SFOs from other states in our region and got to know how we share our difficulties in the world we live in and get support in knowing how others deal with the common problems we face on a daily basis; we also have an annual regional retreat. As formation director, the bonding is experienced as new candidates come forward to discern their vocation as SFOs. The love is so strong and so Franciscan.

Jane DeRose-Bamman: St. Anthony Fraternity, Albuquerque, NM.

Since many in our local fraternity do not work together, nor belong to the same parish, our focus is on bringing fraternity members together more frequently - monthly Franciscan Night Out. We also try to stay connected via emails. We have a very active infirmarian group to meet with those who can't make the monthly gatherings (and don't have internet). We also are working on recommitting to a fraternity apostolate so we can broaden our relationship with the greater Albuquerque community.

Faye Martin, SFO: In the BSSF Region

We have a person who receives our prayer requests. I think we all feel closer as we get to know each other. When my mother died, I received so many notes and mass cards that it made me feel connected within my fraternity and my region.

Mary Ackerly, SFO: Kansas

Building on Jane's comment (*which was made on phone*), I suggested a community activity to use recycled plastic bags to crochet mats for the homeless, Along with members of our Br. Jacoba fraternity, we have been meeting socially to focus on the community project and have made strides to learn more about one another personally. In addition, we have uncovered individual talents which can be marshaled for charitable causes. The social time added to our prayerful focus at monthly meetings has deepened our bonds.

Dan Mulholland:

Franciscans have a group spirituality, so at each level of Fraternity (local, regional, national, and international) we form solidarity. It's part of our nature to form fraternity. We do this when we meet with other groups as we are all children of the same Father.

Sandra Thompson:

I have come into the conversation late and I am sorry for that but if I understand what you are discussing, I think we need to keep telling the stories. When we know of people who are traveling to those countries or when we talk with refugees in our own country, their needs and they as people become real when we share their stories.

Pura Reyna: The Three Companions-Texas

Our solidarity comes through personal encounters even though we are from five different parishes. The telephone, cells, computer emails are all ways a means of making our bonds stronger. In our Region, we have three Portions which meet annually plus we meet yearly in Regional Chapter. I am that person

who sends best wishes, get well and sympathy cards through slow mail and email. And for the second question, our fraternity of San Jose Obrero in McAllen, TX are in contact with the three families-Friars, Poor Clares and the Secular. We gather money, food, clothes and other non-perishables across the border to the Clarisas in Mascota, and Reynosa Mexico and also to the Sisters in Alamo, TX. We feel their love because they tell us that we are in their Perpetual Adoration Prayers.

Second Discussion Question:

How do you balance the need to be personally connected with the poor and those in need beyond our national borders with a sense of helplessness in watching disaster or poverty out there on a global scale?

Pat Crotty Palmer SFO: Pat Palmer:

It was encouraging to hear Fr Chris mentioning the feeling of helplessness when we hear the needs of the poor around the world; our fraternity is "graying" and most of the SFO's are frail and sickly and cannot attend gatherings anymore, and we have established what we call "Ministers of Praise" and this is so important and keeps us aware of all the needs and how important it is to have dedicated prayer support especially when we are not physically or financially able to actually assist the poor in a tangible way.

Patti Giangrande:

I am the minister of the St. Louis the King fraternity in White Lake, MI. I am also a co-founder of Terra Sancta Pilgrimages, a Franciscan ministry aimed at building bridges between Americans and Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. I invite all to join us on a spiritually renewing pilgrimage, or to join us in any of our projects (like child sponsorships) or invite us to present at your parish. See www.TerraSanctaPilgrimages.org. or email me at mrsppattig@yahoo.com for more info. I can help you connect with our needy brothers and sisters in Bethlehem, or others in the West Bank, Jerusalem, etc. or send information on our Church's teachings on the Holy Land and being in solidarity with the Palestinian Christians. (Fr. Chris inserts: "Voices for Peace in the Holy Land," a parish study guide with prayers, resources, and study guide is available online through the Catholics Confront Global Poverty website at http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/ccgp_issues.shtml)

Third discussion question:

How can we Secular Franciscans give witness to God's love and kindness on a global scale?

Linda Solis:

Divine Mercy Region also had a Minister meeting in March and talked about JPIC. At that time we asked for a member from each fraternity to be the point person to get the information and bring it to their fraternite. This is going very well.

Steve White sfo:

Holy Trinity Regional Fraternity is getting more active with JPIC. We welcome these Webinars.

Sheri Hafeli, sfo:

Divine Mercy Region has also put links to all the webinars on our website and emailed all the ministers JPIC information. We also put information in our newsletter.

Jane DeRose-Bamman (presenters): thank you! Pace e Bene!

Pam Long: This webinar was well done, Kent and Father
Linda Solis: thank you for all that you do
Hans D Huemmer: well done !!!