

# Franciscan Focus

*Secular Franciscan Order- Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada*

*Editor – Michel David < micheldavid@rogers.com > June 2011*

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## “The Spirituality of the Chapter”

St. Francis early established the custom of holding chapters. They were held at the Portiuncula and were the occasion for Francis to see his first companions, to become acquainted with friars who had recently entered the Order, to give to all paternal advice, and to make adaptations to their way of life he deemed necessary.

The most famous of all was the "Chapter of Mats" at which were present five thousand friars. They were entirely occupied in prayer and in rendering one another charitable service or in talking of spiritual things. The temporary shelters set up in the fields, some of rush mats, gave its name to this famous chapter. Since then the Chapter has always been most important in the Franciscan family. History shows that Chapters have brought about complete renewal in several Institutes and Provinces.

The time for our regional chapter is fast approaching. Like the friars gathered for their chapter at St. Mary of the Angels, we may ask ourselves: "Besides elections of officers and other organization matters, what are the spiritual reasons for our gathering in chapter?" Our vocation as Secular Franciscans is, first of all, to live the Gospel. Times change and our living the Gospel, if it is to be adapted to our society today, requires a continual renewal on our part as a Regional Fraternity, hence the importance of the Chapter!

**A: The primary purpose of the Chapter** - I state emphatically, that the purpose of the Chapter is first and above all the spiritual advancement of the brothers and sisters in the pursuit of their common Franciscan ideal. As for St. Francis and his companions, chapters are held not only to elect officers and adopt new legislation, even though these are indispensable for the life of the Fraternity. Concern for the spiritual life of the brothers and sisters should be paramount. They are the first beneficiaries of the Chapter. Saint Francis convoked his brothers to the famous Chapter of Mats at Assisi in 1217, because he had a marked interest in their spiritual advancement. He wanted to help them remain faithful to the Gospel and to the Rule which the Lord himself had inspired him. On that important occasion he insisted on three fundamental points: prayer, life in fraternity, and service to others.

**B: How to prepare for the chapter** - Evidently, all do not have the same assignment or duty in the preparation of the chapter. For instance, that of the Minister is different from that of the Director of Formation or the Treasurer. But all strive for the spiritual welfare of the members. There is a common concern: "What can I do to help my brothers and sisters to live a more intense spiritual life?" That is how each member, according to his or her part, as well as members who have no special responsibility, are to prepare for the chapter. For that, the importance of prayer must not be overlooked.

### **C: Preparations to be made:**

**1) a time of prayer** -The presence of the Holy Spirit in our Fraternities, and especially during the Chapter, is paramount; it is he who directs our Fraternity, We must therefore invoke him especially during the preparation of the Chapter. Since the Holy Spirit is the main agent of our chapters, it is only proper that we often pray to him, hence the importance of

the Liturgical Prayer, the Eucharist and also Personal prayer during the preparation of the Chapter and also during the Chapter.

**2) Gospel teachings:** -Jesus gave us certain counsels that should be recalled before the Chapter: -"*It is I, Do not be afraid*, (Jn 6, 20) The Master of the Absolute will not abandon those who consecrated to him their lives and all their activities. -To the Apostles frightened on the sea, Jesus cried to them: "*Why are you so frightened, you men of little fame?*" (Mt 8, 26) The greatest storms of history can do nothing against the disciples of Jesus. At the Transfiguration, after having revealed himself to his Apostles, Jesus said to them; "*Stand up and do not be afraid*" (Mt 17, 8) Jesus knew that if his Apostles lived under the continual eye of the Holy Spirit they would have nothing to fear. They now had to continue in their task. The Transfiguration was not an end in itself, but a point of departure. The Holy Spirit does not work without our cooperation; that is why it is up to all the members to work attentively for the preparation of the Chapter, under the leadership of the Minister. Like the first Christian communities, who had but one heart and one soul, all members should willingly place their talents at the service of the Fraternity.



**3) To accept a function asked of us** - The Holy Spirit is present in a special way during the time of the elections. Those elected should consider it a pleasure as well as a duty to accept a function in a spirit of service. There are three attitudes that definitely are to be avoided.

**A)** To consider oneself unworthy. Such members refuse to accept a function and prefer having others, who they consider more worthy, accept the responsibility. That is not a fraternal attitude. As humans before God, no one is worthy to fill a function, More seriously still, one may use being unworthiness as a pretext in order to avoid being involved and to remain free of any responsibility.

**B)** To be afraid of a function, it is a fear that has to be overcome. There are those timid persons who remained unnoticed, but whose talents are discovered at a chapter. It is understandable that these persons are intimidated when invited to assume a new responsibility. We must remember that the Holy Spirit invoked before and during the Chapter is present to uphold the courage of those who are elected.

**C)** Lack of time or illness - It is possible that someone may not be able to accept a function because of family, work or illness. These could be valid reasons. Still, such a situation must not be taken lightly and should be considered seriously before God. If there is no serious hindrance, one should accept the function. That way the charge is not relayed to a member who may not have the ability for it. To refuse a function without serious reason could be a lack of love for other members and the Fraternity.

**D)** To refuse through lack of interest in one's Fraternity. It would be regrettable that one who is well qualified would refuse a function because of lack of interest in the Fraternity. There is always the commandment of love of neighbour, the obligation of the Rule to which a member is committed by a serious promise, One has to remember that accepting a function, one has an excellent opportunity to serve the fraternity and help members progress in their spiritual life.

**Conclusion** - May the foregoing observations help us to better prepare spiritually the next Chapter of our Region. Let us invoke the Holy Spirit so that we may celebrate our Chapter with the same fervour as St. Francis and his brothers did for the Chapter of Mats in 1217. Our Chapter will then may produce the spiritual results expected.

#### **Atlantic Area Vice - Minister's Report by Leonarda MacNeil (Continued from page 8)**

The fraternity led the Way of Cross on the theme Development and Peace on April 18<sup>th</sup> in the parish. As part of this event, Doug Clorey presented a talk and power point presentation on his visit to the Secular Franciscans in Haiti last June. The JPIC team led a reflection on our call to respect and protect all of creation during the April meeting. For Earth Day, members participated in an "Owl Prowl" on Saturday, April 16, discovering many fascinating things about this beautiful creature and learning how to call the owl when out in the forest. The Social and Hospitality team have organized a potluck for the May meeting. Brother Leo members are invited, and Fr. Brian MacDougall will present on Mary, Star of Evangelization. Many thanks to all for the wonderful work you are doing in all our fraternities. And many thanks to all who participated in, and contributed to our Area meetings and events. Hope to see you in August at our Regional Chapter.

## The Regional Elective Chapter 2011



**When: August 5 to August 7, 2011**  
**Where: Le Cénacle, Cacouna, QC**

### What is the Regional Elective Chapter?

The Regional Elective Chapter is a gathering of SFO delegates, observers and visitors representing all local fraternities within our region of Eastern Canada who are required by our Constitution and Statutes to gather every three years. The primary reason that we gather is spiritual! Our purpose is, above all, the spiritual advancement of the sisters and brothers in the pursuit of their common Franciscan ideal and vocation. It is an opportunity to pray together, learn about the spirituality of St. Francis, discuss business items relevant to our Region, and elect a new Regional Council for 2011-2014. It is a time of discernment and a time of celebration and a time to evaluate the past three years and set regional goals for the next three years. **You are urged to read the excellent article on “The Spirituality of the Chapter” by Fr. Andre Comtois, ofm, our Regional Spiritual Assistant reprinted in this issue of Franciscan Focus.**

**Who may attend the Elective Chapter?** As per National Statutes Appendix A and Article 4.5, the Regional Chapter shall comprise:

- 1) One (1) **Delegate** from each Local Fraternity, along with the Local Fraternity Ministers, Spiritual Assistants, Members of the Regional Council who have a vote and an active voice.
- 2) Two (2) **Observers** per Fraternity. Note: Observers are present to learn and understand the procedure of Elections and other voting matters. Observers can neither speak from the floor, nor can they vote. If they have a question they may direct it to their delegate and their delegate can speak for her/him. However, observers are an integral part of the Chapter.
- 3- **Visitors:** (SFO) members are most welcome for the Chapter but have no official voice. Observers and Visitors are most welcome to participate in all the liturgies, presentations and social functions throughout the Elective Chapter.

Attending an Elective Chapter is a special experience of prayerful solidarity with our larger Franciscan family as it will include visitors from our National and International Councils and will include wonderful presentations that will allow us the opportunity to learn about the joys and challenges experienced by our Franciscan brothers and sisters in other parts of Canada and the world.

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY using the form on page 4 or contact your local fraternity Minister



**Happy Birthday Mabel!** On February 28<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday of Mrs. Mabel Bennett, a beloved member of Immaculate Conception Fraternity. Mrs. Bennett was professed on October 16, 1932. A Happy and Blessed Year, Mabel!

**Best Practices No. 1:** Ask Mabel.

**Best Practices No. 2:** Look up Eastern Canada YOUFRA on Facebook



**Secular Franciscan Order  
Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada**

**Regional Elective Chapter  
August 5-7, 2011  
Le Cénacle, Cacouna, Québec**

**Registration Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enter your address, phone number or e-mail address so we can contact you, if necessary.

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Fraternity name and location: \_\_\_\_\_

Special room and/or food requests: (we will reserve a section as women-only)

\_\_\_\_\_

Private room \_\_\_ Shared room \_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_

- The **deposit** for this conference is \$30.00
- The cost is \$108.00 for a shared room and \$118.00 for a private room. This covers all expenses for the weekend except your travel costs.
- Private rooms are usually in demand so please submit your applications early. There are no toilets in private rooms.
- Everyone is required to bring their own sheets, pillow case, towel, face cloth, etc.



- **The deadline for submission of Registration Forms is July 1, 2011.**

**Forward the form and deposit/payment to:**

**Leonard MacGuigan, Registrar, 392 Queen St., Charlottetown, PE C1A 4E1  
Contact information: [jlmacguigan@hotmail.com](mailto:jlmacguigan@hotmail.com) Phone: 902-566-5506**

Please make cheques payable to: **The Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada**

**Secular Franciscan Order  
Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
Elective Chapter 2011**

**Nomination Form**



Fraternities are invited to nominate individual, permanently professed members of their fraternity or members from other fraternities across our region, for the six elected positions on the 2011-2014 Regional.

You are encouraged to nominate one qualified person for each office. All Nominees must give their consent to stand for office.

If a Nominee has given consent to stand for office, he/she must be present at the Elective Chapter either as a local fraternity minister, a delegate, observer or visitor. However, for unforeseen circumstances, a Nominee can be elected without being present - (a written signature would be expected).

Nominations from the floor will be accepted, but it is preferable that they be nominated in advance.

There are six positions to be filled: **Regional Minister, Vice-Minister - Que/Ont Area, Vice-Minister - Atlantic Area, Director of Formation, Treasurer, Secretary.**

The Regional Spiritual Assistant is appointed by Fr. Provincial of the First Order.

The Nominees for the office of Vice-Minister for each of the two Areas must live within the Area represented by that same office.(RS4.4)

The term of office is for three years. A person may be elected to serve a second term ***but*** to serve for a ***third term in the same office*** would required that the nominee obtain ***75%*** of the votes cast on the first ballot.

**PLEASE SUBMIT NOMINATION USING THE FORM ON page 6**

SUBMIT ALL NOMINATIONS TO:

Mila Osdon, Nominations Chair  
111 Cedarcrest  
Dollard-des-Ormeaux, QC, H9A 1G1  
Email: [milaosdon@gmail.com](mailto:milaosdon@gmail.com)



***Deadline for Submitting Nominations: July 1, 2011***

**Secular Franciscan Order  
Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada  
Elective Chapter 2011**



**Nomination Form (Please Print)**

**We submit the following nomination(s) to serve on the Regional Council for 2011-2014.**

**Nominated by:** .....

**Seconded By:** .....

**Name of Your Fraternity:** .....

**Date:** .....

**1) For REGIONAL MINISTER:** .....

**Person accepts the Nomination?** .....

**Name of Fraternity of Nominee:** .....

**2) For Area Vice-Minister (Que/Ont):** .....

**Person accepts the nomination?** .....

**Name of Fraternity of Nominee:** .....

**3) For Area Vice-Minister (Atlantic):** .....

**Person accepts the Nomination?** .....

**Name of Fraternity of Nominee:** .....

**4) For Director of Formation:** .....

**Person Accepts the Nomination?** .....

**Name of Fraternity of Nominee:** .....

**5) For Secretary:** .....

**Person Accepts the Nomination?** .....

**Name of Fraternity of Nominee:** .....

**6) For Treasurer:** .....

**Person Accepts the Nomination?** .....

**Name of Fraternity of Nominee:** .....



**Mail or Email all Nominations to: Nomination Chair:**

**Mila Osdon**

**111 Cedarcrest**

**Dollard-des-Ormeaux, QC, H9A 1G1**

**Email: [milaosdon@gmail.com](mailto:milaosdon@gmail.com)**



## Eastern Canada Region Regional Minister's Report by Tom Wilkinson



As I prepare this last article for Franciscan Focus as your Regional Minister, I am reminded of the wonderful gift that God has given me to be part of your Regional leadership team over these past nine years. During this time, I have had the joy of serving with many members elected over these years, to serve on your **Regional Council**. I wish to express my sincere thanks to each of them for their advice, support and numerous contributions.

I also want to express my gratitude for the many **local fraternity Ministers and Councils** that I have had the privilege to work with and to support in these years. One of the special duties of a Regional Minister is to preside at local fraternity Elective Chapters and to carry out the Fraternal Visit required by our Rule and Constitution. During these interactions with fraternities, I have witnessed many examples of Secular Franciscan hearts filled with love and action as they live out their Franciscan vocation and their commitment made at profession. That is our calling, to live the gospel life and to give witness to the gospels in our communities through our prayerfulness, our consistent participation in fraternity life, growing in holiness with meaningful on-going formation and as St. Francis instructed us: "Go preach the gospel and when necessary use words".

Through the years, I have been impressed with our members who recognize the joy of our calling and want to gather to celebrate and to learn from each other, as well as from various speakers, and who understand that a Secular Franciscan vocation must be nourished on a regular basis. This we do through attending our monthly meetings, participating in fraternity life and in the many fraternity ministries and social action projects, particularly with the poor, the abandoned and those who thirst for spiritual and human contact. We have also been blessed by the opportunity to come together in such large numbers to participate in our Regional Spiritual Conferences and our Area retreats and Area gatherings. I thank all of you who have played a part in making these gatherings so successful both as participants and leaders.

While it is true that each fraternity may be somewhat unique, it is also important to understand that, as part of an official Order of the Church, we are obliged to conform ourselves to living our Holy Rule and using our inspired Constitution and Statutes to witness for Christ and the Church. Hence, I encourage you to continue to support and participate in our retreats, leadership seminars, meetings and conferences. These are a means of strengthening your fraternity, your understanding of our Franciscan spiritual life and your ability to use your skills and talent in contributing to fraternal life.

Our Regional Elective Chapter, August 5-7, 2011 at LeCenacle in Cacouna, Quebec is a specially blessed opportunity to come together for prayer, discernment and election of a new Regional Council. I encourage you to come, see and experience the joy, prayerfulness and decision process of our Order. I also ask that you **pray fervently** for the Holy Spirit to help us in our discernment of strong and willing candidates to serve on the Regional Council for the next three years. We are all busy people and can find many excuses not to serve but I hope that many will answer the call of the Spirit, nominate strong candidates and also allow their names to be placed in Nomination. Trust the Spirit, and not the devil, to guide you in this discernment.

Over the past nine years, I am grateful to have received so much from so many of you who have shared your lives, your desire for holiness and your love for our Franciscan journey to the Father. May you continue to serve the Lord by active participation in the life of your fraternity, support for our leadership at all levels of our Secular Franciscan Order and by **praying daily for each other**. With love in Francis and Clare, Tom

## Québec-Ontario Area Vice-Minister's Report by Eric Lasota

The winter has come to an end. I should not complain, as I missed six weeks of old man winter by being in the Dominican Republic. I had a wonderful experience with three different groups of Canadian High School students who came to the island for 10 day periods. In that short time they transformed dumpy dirty schools in to clean functional buildings. It was a beautiful experience working with the students and the Dominicans.



A sad note was to hear about the passing of my good friend and gentle Franciscan, Brother Peter Muir, from Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Peter had a wonderful and kind sense of humor. He was always ready to laugh and share a funny story with all. We offer our condolences to you, Patricia, your children, and grandchildren.

Immaculate Conception also mourned the loss of their long time member Sister Pomona Pefanis. This lady was before my time, but from my knowledge was a dedicated and humble Franciscan. She helped establish new fraternities but also wrote many articles on our spirituality. Hopefully in the future, Immaculate Conception can make these writings available to us.



The formation at the **Filipino Mission Church** is coming to an end and the candidates are discerning about their commitment to the Secular Franciscan Order. Thanks to Betty McKoy and Clayton Marolly who were also part of the Formation Team. The group has a beautiful faith and a great devotion to their church and their community. I look forward to their presence and participation in area and regional activities. Their profession will be held at their church on the 19th of June. Please keep them in prayer as they decide on this commitment. They will be canonically established in September and will also be holding their elective chapter. **Elective Chapters** will also be held in St. Patricks and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Fraternities in June. St. Mary of the Angels has been in a recess mode for the past few months, but will also be holding an elective chapter in September. Please keep these Fraternities in prayer as they discern their future leaders.

We recently held our **annual general meeting in Cornwall**. Thanks to all the ministers who gave up their day to attend this meeting. Many items were discussed and it also gave us a chance to get to know each other a little better and the ongoings in their fraternities. As this goes to press we are heading to our **area retreat**, with great excitement, as Father Lester Bach will be our guide. On the 29th of May we will be gathering at St. Malachy's Church for our annual Communion Breakfast hosted by St. Patrick's Fraternity.

The Regional Elective Chapter is August 5th to the 7th at Cacouna. Hopefully all ministers are well on their way in planning the trip to this important event. I would like to remind all the Ministers of the Fraternities that a **summary report for the past three years** should be forwarded to Michel David by June 1st. With the election we will be saying goodbye to **our leader, Tom Wilkinson**. We are certainly going to miss him. Tom has truly made a commitment to the Eastern Region for the last nine years. He is a man of many skills and talents. He is the calm when difficulties arise. He is the teacher of our spirituality and has given a number of workshops that helped us to think and become better Franciscans. He has always been welcoming and made us proud to be Franciscans and to be able to call him a friend. God bless you, Tom, and thank you for your leadership.

Also at Cacouna we will be **saying goodbye to our spiritual assistant**, our beloved Father André. Father André has served the region for the past twelve years. His gentle mannerism and kindness are his trade marks. His love for St. Francis and his calling to the Franciscans was always evident in the way he dealt with us. We will always remember him for his way of dealing with life situations, simplicity, simplicity, simplicity. **Father André, thank you for your dedication and commitment to our region over the many years.**

I also would like to thank the ministers for your cooperation and commitment to your fraternities over the past five years that I have served as Vice-Minister. It has been a pleasure to have gotten to know you and work with you and see you grow in your spirituality. In particular I would like to **thank Sister Edith Purdon** for taking care of the books over the past Sister Edith Purdon for taking care of the books over the past years. Edith's good accounting and wise decisions have kept me on track. God bless!

## Atlantic Area Vice-Minister's Report by Leonarda MacNeil



**1. Tentative - Area Retreat:** is booked June 10-12th, 2011 at Belcourt Center. Claudia Batchilder will be the Retreat Director. The theme will be Praying & Meditating the Liturgy of the Hours. Application deadline May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**2. Condolences:** To George & Sherrill Guimond on the death of George's mother on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**3. Fraternity News:** John XXXIII Fraternity in Fredericton happily celebrated the permanent profession of Dorothy Hughes on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. Congratulations Dorothy. The Fraternity Council held a day long annual planning meeting in March. Their focus for the next year will be "Franciscan Spirituality", in order to better understand our Franciscan charism and to have a greater emphasis on prayer. Sherrill Guimond and Ray Cormier are well along in the Spiritual Assistant training. There will be a joint "Day of Reflection" with St. Bernard's Fraternity, Moncton on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 on the theme "Profession in the SFO: Gift and Commitment." It will be hosted by John XXIII Fraternity at St. Anthony's Church, Fredericton. St. Bonaventure Fraternity, Halifax are holding their annual Mini Retreat May 13 & 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at St. Catherine of Sienna Church. The theme is Living out Franciscan Spirituality. Fr. Roberto Donato will be the Retreat Keynote Speaker. Brother Leo Fraternity are hosting a Twilight Retreat in St. Anne's Parish, Montague PEI May 27<sup>th</sup>.

The formation team from St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Cornwall offered to do presentations on the SFO to Pastors and Pastoral Associates in various zones across the province. So far two have been done, one in the Queen's Zone (Gerry & Martha Gabriel) and one in the East Prince Zone (Doug & Mary Hagen). Gerry Gabriel, Spiritual Assistant organized a weekend in March at the Trappist Monastery in Rogersville, NB for the men of their fraternity and Brother Leo Fraternity. (continued on page 2)