

Week ending 18 March 2005

Issue Number 644

Et alia...

What's that? "This notion that the United States is getting ready to attack Iran is simply ridiculous. And having said that, all options are on the table."
— George Bush, 03.11.05.

Quelling dissent: "Always appeal to a higher authority, God or the pope, as justification for your demands as if they come not from you but from incontrovertible authority. Under no circumstances should the words 'Second Vatican Council' ever be spoken in public."
— Editorial, *Online Catholics*, 03.06.05.

Today's Zen: "Life is an adventure in forgiveness."
— Norman Cousins



Chapter 2005: A review and a preview

Not much has been published about the 42nd provincial chapter to be held this coming June, primarily because the Chapter Steering Committee has been very busy behind the scenes consulting and planning, trying to make sure that the friars of the province will have the experience they are asking for. At the most recent committee meeting, the chapter began taking a definite shape. So here's a bit of a review and a preview of what the committee has planned and hopes will happen during that first week of June.

The Steering Committee began its work two years ago by carefully looking at the evaluations of the 41st chapter held in June 2002. Overwhelmingly, the friars expressed a desire for a chapter which would be more "fraternal" and prayerful. This sentiment was repeated through some letters to *Inforum* which called for a "spiritual renewal" as a major theme of the next provincial chapter.

Last September, friars gathered in regional meetings to share their ideas and suggestions for the 2005 chapter. The participation in these gatherings was edifying, and greatly assisted the Chapter Steering Committee in its task of creating a proposed scenario and agenda.

In November, another round of gatherings was held. This time, friars were presented with a videotape of the five members of the current administration sharing their experiences of being on the leadership team during the current triennium. Friars were then asked to consider the types of characteristics and competencies that ought to be considered when electing the next provincial administration. Additionally, friars were asked to come to some consensus on a few suggested agenda items from a rather long list that had been generated in the previous regional gatherings.

From the evaluations of the 2002 chapter, augmented by feedback from subsequent prechapter gatherings, it was clear that the chapter capitulars were asking for scheduled time during the chapter to

react to the general minister's keynote address. The Steering Committee contacted John Corriveau and was informed that the 2005 chapter address would focus on the recent plenary council of the order, specifically on the theme of *minority*.

Because there was a very strong sense from the friars that there be a minimum of "input" (formal presentations) during the chapter week, the Steering Committee made the decision to restrict the number of addresses during the chapter to the general minister and the current provincial minister. Consequently, the committee also made the decision to conclude the chapter with an installation liturgy on Thursday evening, shortening the chapter by a half day.



John Corriveau

Friars were then asked to vote for one or two agenda items from a list generated from the November gatherings. Of the votes submitted, "spiritual renewal" carried the most weight, and many friars related that agenda item to others on the list, e.g., our provincial identity and our prophetic role as religious. Agenda items receiving *very little support* included collaboration, the multi-cultural dimensions of our province, relinquishing ministries, and options for future chapters.

At the start of Lent this year, friars were once again asked to gather in local chapters and begin the process of raising specific names of candidates for elections. The scenario planned by the committee included a "discernment retreat" for those friars who received significant affirmation for elections. The participation in this specific aspect of discernment, however, was minimal, and the scheduled discernment retreat was canceled. Those "affirmations" that were submitted, however, were forwarded to the specific friars, hopefully adding to their personal discernment in preparation for the chapter elections. Discernment for elections will continue during the chapter week.

The Steering Committee believes that the friars' choice of "spiritual renewal" will blend well with the general minister's theme of "minority," and friars are encouraged to re-read the last three circular letters by John Corriveau which address that theme. The general minister has assured us that much of his chapter address will be culled from those documents.

The Steering Committee has also asked Bill Cieslak to prepare material on the theological underpinnings of the theme of minority. Bill Hugo has also been asked to take a leading role in preparing materials around this theme to be used by the friars during their chapter deliberations.

The Steering Committee is now shaping the final plans to use the theme of "minority" as a way of integrating and stimulating the desires of the friars to address our Capuchin spirituality, and in extension, our identity and prophetic role. It is the fervent hope of the committee that our chapter will be a time to evoke a *movement of the heart and a call from the Spirit*.

How to prepare for chapter... Read the last three circular letters of the general minister (posted at <http://www.capcomm.org/id25.html>). The Chapter Steering Committee will be sending out other preparatory materials in the near future.

A quarter of a century!

A remembrance by Brian Pierce, OP



Twenty-five years have gone by since Oscar Romero was gunned down while celebrating the Eucharist in the small chapel of the Divine Providence Hospital in San Salvador, El Salvador (24 March 1980). He is remembered as a shepherd who knew his sheep, especially the most abandoned and forgotten. He is celebrated as a martyr for the cause of the poor and oppressed — one who laid down his life for his flock. But perhaps more than anything else, Romero is remembered as a preacher of the Word of God. Monseñor, as the people of El Salvador and the rest of Central America affectionately call him, dedicated a large part of his pastoral work to the ministry of the Word.

To this day, many Salvadorans remember Monseñor Romero's weekly Sunday homilies. As one person commented, "In those days you could walk down the street of the town and not miss a single word of Monseñor's homily, because it sounded forth from every house." It was precisely his preaching that made such an impact on his contemporaries — a preaching which continues to echo throughout the world today.

Romero knew that for one to truly hear the Good News "one must become poor." He humbly included himself in that category, as reflected in his Epiphany homily of 1979: "Each Sunday when I speak, I am only a poor adorer of the Lord, telling him, 'Lord, I bring you what the people produce...rich and poor, rulers and ruled.'" Hearing these words one almost gets the image of someone in a busy open market selling the many fruits and vegetables produced by peasant farmers. Romero never pretended to be the source of God's Word; he was simply the mouthpiece, calling out to all who would listen, "Come, all who are hungry! Come and eat."

Not only were Romero's Sunday homilies the weekly highpoint for the majority of Salvadorans who lived in the shadow of the country's ominous military stranglehold, but he also wove into his homilies the basic framework for a theology of preaching — a preaching rooted in God's liberating presence in history. For Romero, the "signs of the times" — a theme central to Vatican II — are the privileged context in which persons of faith are invited to contemplate God's action in the world today.

During the three short years that Romero served as archbishop of San Salvador (1977-1980) Sundays were truly holy days for the country's poor, because the Word of God which sounded forth from the cathedral in San Salvador touched the hearts of people of faith throughout the country. Men, women and children in every village, barrio, and cornfield of the nation people tuned their transistor radios to listen to Monseñor's Sunday preaching.

This prophetic preaching, enfolded in the lived reality of the poor and oppressed, only highlighted the already strained relationship which Romero had with the country's other bishops, who often complained that "their faithful" were being seduced into listening to the "subversive" radio preaching of the archbishop, instead of their own more orthodox presentation of the gospel. Though the episcopal tensions were always a source of pain for Romero, he never let them sway him from the mission God had called him to fulfill.

*Remember
those who
have died*



Marcella Bauer, mother of Kent Bauer, died on 13 March at the age of 80. She was preceded in death by her husband.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Huntington IN.

Friars are asked to set aside a day on which Marcella Bauer will be remembered in their community prayers.

Kent Bauer, Capuchin
936 N. 6th St.
Saginaw MI 48601

Kay Bauer (daughter)
PO Box 541
Swayzee IN 46986

*Please
pray
for...*



Mary Werkmeister, sister of Ralph Fellenz, successfully underwent a hysterectomy (cancerous). She is resting comfortably at home and will appreciate prayers for a full recovery.

Mary Werkmeister
Box 607
Armour SD 57313

Ralph Fellenz, Capuchin
Parroquia S. Cristobal
Chepo 17, Republic of Panama

March

22 Tue . Congress approves Equal Rights-
Amendment, 1972 (NB: The amendment
failed to obtain ratification)

23 . . . "Give me liberty or give me death," -
said Patrick Henry, 1775

24 Thu Triduum Begins
Oscar Romero assassinated, 1980

25 Fri **Dismas Seward (N)**
Full Moon

26 . . Putin elected Russian president, 2000

27 Sun Easter

28 Mon . . Three Mile Island accident, 1979

29 Tue **Sarah Joseph [AF] (B)**
Julius and Ethel Rosenberg-
sentenced to death, 1951

30 Wed Ronald Reagan shot, 1981

31 Thu Eiffel Tower opens, 1889

April

1 . . Nazi persecution of Jews begins, 1933
Cigarette ads banned from-
TV and radio, 1970

2 . . . Ponce de Leon lands in Florida, 1513

3 Sun . Pony Express service begins, 1860

4 Mon . . Martin L. King assassinated, 1968

5 . . . Pocahontas marries John Rolfe, 1614

The next issue of *Weekly re:Cap* will be
published on 31 March.

A Blessed Easter!