

# Mass Appeal

A Newsletter of St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Spring 2004

## Journeying Together in Christ Synod 2004

by Galen Unrub

What was the question that you first asked yourself when you heard the announcement that there would be a "Synod" taking place in October? Was that first question, "What is a Synod?" It certainly was for me, and I would guess for you as well. The last Synod to take place was in 1929, seventy-five years ago, so that question was a reasonable one for nearly all of us.

Synod, in the literal sense, means "gathering of church officials." That was true for the first of the Synod gatherings called in 1909. However, since the last Synod of 1929, the institutional church and the communal body of our church have undergone tremendous change. Since Vatican II and the recognition of laity as "the body of the Church," laity has taken a far more active role in leadership. For that reason, and for the first time, the laity will be represented at this Synod. Those attending the Synod gathering of October 11-13<sup>th</sup> will consist of two delegates from each of the ninety-nine (99) Parishes in the Sacramento Diocese as well as two delegates from each of our Catholic schools. With four hundred attendees, two hundred eighty will represent our laity. What does this mean? It means that we have a strong voice in affecting change that will impact the growth of our beloved Church.



Diocese of Sacramento  
Synod 2004

Kay Skonieczny and I have been blessed with the privilege of attending the Synod as delegates of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. As delegates we represent the greater collaborative body of "the Church" and are not just representatives of our Parish. It is our responsibility to listen to the wisdom of the faith community. Therefore, **it is your voice that we want to hear.** In April we will be holding "Speak Up" sessions, which we invite you to attend. The principal themes for the Synod are: "Parish Community Life: Where the Call to Holiness is Lived and Strengthened", and "Faith in Formation: Always Learners, Always Disciples". We will offer questions around these two themes and listen as you, our devoted faith community, "Speak Up" and offer your thoughts and suggestions on our Church that is always in process of renewal.

### Breaking News

## The Evolution of our Parish Leadership

### Our Council is changing. Why?

What has been known for many years as St. Francis Parish Administrative Council is now known as St. Francis Parish Council. Restructuring became necessary when the Finance Council was separated from the Administrative Council. The Church and Diocese view the functions of the two as being distinctly separate. The Administrative Council (the Parish Council) assists the pastor in determining the direction and life of the parish. The Finance Council assists the pastor with the financial running of the parish.

To accomplish this task, Fr. Anthony suspended the by-laws of the Administrative Council and asked the Administrative Council to assist him in restructuring the Council to be as collaborative, participatory, and transparent as possible. The Administrative Council responded generously and spent a great deal of time in drafting the new proposal that was presented to the parish during a Community Conversation on March 10.

### The Administrative Council broke new ground in this restructuring plan.

There are few models available to start from, so the Council was embarking on a new path and did so with open minds and hearts. As you will see in the preamble to the by-laws, the whole spirituality and philosophy driving the document is reflective of the Second Vatican Council.

### Key Components

#### Council Elections

The Council will be made up of fifteen members. All elected by registered parishioners. For us, direct election of council members will be new, but other parishes do directly elect council members. Direct election allows for every parishioner to take an active interest in the running of the parish, and prevents any notion of an "in-group" from forming. Of course, this will only work, if each and every one of us is active in the process.

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St. Francis of Assisi Parish

[www.stfrancisparish.com](http://www.stfrancisparish.com)

### St. Francis Welcomes New Parishoners

*The following is a list of new parishoners who have joined St. Francis since the Fall edition of Mass Appeal.*

Nicholas Adams and Keri Wien	Esther Hernandez
Leslie Adorno	Fernando and Kristel Herrera
William Alcalá	Katherine (Katie) Hogan
William (Geoff) Alterton	Debbie Huber
Antonio and Gabriela Alvarado	Charles "Ray" Ibe
Martha Andrade-Dousderes	Gregory Ingram and Jennifer Crutchfield
Beverly Arnold	Beverly Ireland
Elizabeth Ball	Henry Iwuh
Dawn Balzarano	Jesuit Volunteers
Brandon Barrows	Adriana Ebrahimian
Danielle Bartee	Catie Talariski
Matt Beaulieu	Matt Kleiner
Brian and Jennifer Biehle	Becky Konkle
Timothy Bomben and Jennifer Blakey	Nick Gardner
Sherry Bonekat-Huester and Bryan Huester	Daniel and Linda Jones
Joseph Borez	Nancy Juarez
Annie Breault	Lynn Ann Kerzman
Cora Calapine	Thomas Knapp
Christina Campos	Betsy Knox
Augustine Carillo and Sherry Sakamoto	Kari and Steve Koche
Michael Carlson	Kate Leary
Sergio and Sylvia Carpio	Amanda Leiker
Carolyn and Francisco Carregui	Shannon Lightfoot
Jason Chang and Mark Moriwaki	Estrella Lujan
Teresa Cheung-Smitherman and Cecil Smitherman	Eric Martin
Mark Clifford and Sarah Spring	Lydia Merdinger
Juan Comejo and Gloria Juarez	Josefina Montesino
Adam Coffing and Jennifer Hubbard	Melinda and Donald Moore
Carole Anne Crowley	Adele Moussas
Carmelito De Chavez and David Hutchins	Kathleen and Matthew Myers
Claudia Del Castillo	Susannah Nelson
Dorothy Del Castillo	Sean and Jennifer O'Connor
John Dela	Ingrid Olsen
Grant and Selene Denney	Ramana Paeca
Robert and Angela Donlan	Katie and Dan Pellegrini
John and Lori Dougherty	Kathy Perry
James Eaton	Rebekah Pipolo
Genevieve B. Eiberger	Bill Quaglia and Nancy Purtell
Elizabeth English	Rosie Ramirez
Jennifer and Matthew Engstrom	Susan Reardon
Patrick Enright	Regina Reeg
Carol Fairbairn	William Rivera and Lidia Martinez
Saul Fernandez and Sarah Santa Maria	Bob Rolke
Danny and Gerrina Flores	Charles and Josefina Rozeville
Dara D. Fout	Heather Sams and Michael Clark
David and Jeanette Garcia	Gil Sancha
Michael and Joyce Grahn	Larry Sanchez
Alexandra Greene	Diane Santos and Ken Lantagne
Darrin and Dineen Greer	Carrie and Dale Shaffer
Ronald and Elizabeth Grijalva	Roween and Jo Sharma
Emily Gromis	Norbert and JoAnne Schmelzer
Barbara Guerrero	Kim and Mike Schlieman
Martha A. Guerrero and Chris Flammer	Diane and Brian Schnabel
Francisco J. Gutierrez and Kami A. Gould	Karen Skelton and Jeffrey Barbour
Christian and Jennifer Hayes	Ken Soto and Jennifer Boquiren
	Mark Spratt and Matthew Holland
	Sean and Amy Stewart
	William and Patricia Trippet
	Christian and Akudo Unanwa
	Dale and Roberta Wahlberg
	Roxann Walsh
	Christelia (Chris) Warden
	Byron Westlund
	Jason and Irene Wong
	Carol Woolery
	Virgen Zepeda



## FOLLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS

### A FRIAR AT WORK IN RUSSIA

*One his way to Russia in the Fall of 2003, Fr. John Gibbons, O.F.M. made a stop at the friary at St. Francis while waiting for his VISA to process. Although he was only with us for a short time he had a positive impact on everyone he met as he participated in our community. At times he presided at daily noon Mass in St. Clare's Chapel and joined in the lay Communion services. One person we spoke with for this article called him "A wonderful and holy man who is deeply committed to his prayer practice." It is not hard to imagine his contagious good nature bringing the love of Jesus to so many, so far away.*

*In the March 2004 issue of St. Anthony Messenger magazine, an article called "Followers of St. Francis, Witnessing in Russia to the Good News of Jesus", made mention of a number of friars working in Russia. While not naming most of the friars, it did seem a short leap to presume that Fr. John might have been included among them. Here was a reminder that someone we actually know is witnessing to the Good News of our Lord in a country thousands of miles away. It made us wonder how Fr. John was getting along, and we thought we would let him answer for himself. The following is an excerpt of a message received by our local friars from Fr. John in March 2004.*

I've been here over 5 months now. As I expected, things got to seem normal after the first 3 months so I don't notice the peculiarities of Russian life as I first did. My Russian is coming along, to the point where I am now celebrating Mass in Russian, covering for the pastor while he is away. I am technically not supposed to be ministering as a priest, but ... it is nice to be doing something priestly again, though preaching in Russian is a loooong way down the road

In class we are starting on the 4th of the 6 cases we must learn--Russian nouns and adjectives "decline" (change) 12 different ways, 6 each for singular and plural--sort of like conjugating verbs, which is a whole 'nother ball of wax. Does this sound like a headache? Yes it is. I'm pretty good at English grammar, so I can eventually make sense of it, but then you are supposed to SPEAK it! I think I will be able to read basic Russian after maybe a year, but I'm guessing it will take years to speak it with any sense of fluency.

Thank you for all the letters and news, both snail-mail and e-mail. Please forgive me if I do not respond right away, or if I do not write as much as you. I'm simply overwhelmed, both by the mental strain of a new difficult language and the cultural immersion, and by the number of letters I receive.

Last month my tutor's Mom treated me to little fried patties of blood and buckwheat--an acquired taste I think, but as usual I'll try anything. Another time we feasted on blini, the paper-thin pancakes, with a bit of sour cream and jam. I continue to enjoy life in the dorm though I can rarely understand the students when they chatter away in rapid slang. Some know English, though, so we make do. It is very much a family atmosphere even with the mix of Russians, Chinese, Koreans and the one American, and ages ranging from 16-61.

*continued on the back page*

## Mass Appeal

### Publisher

Fr. Anthony M. Garibaldi, O.F.M.  
Parochial Administrator

### Editorial Advisory Team

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Dan McCanta  
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Bob Reid  
Judy Wegener

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## Parish Leadership (continued from page 1)

### Standing Committees

The Council will have permanent standing committees that will be represented by both a council member and a member of the parish staff. The reason behind such a structure is twofold: it will increase communications between the staff and the Council, and it will prevent either the staff or the Council from venturing off into plans, policies, or projects that are not what parishioners want or what is practically feasible.

Another feature of these standing committees will be that any registered parishioner can serve on them. There could be forty parishioners on one committee and seven on another. Every parishioner who has an interest in any of the standing committees can serve on them. Again this will encourage participation and prevent frustration for those parishioners who want to help and volunteer in the parish but do not know where to plug in to parochial activities.

### Leadership Team

The Council will have an executive committee that will be made up of the parochial administrator, the parish council president, the parochial vicars, the parochial associates, and the chair of the Finance Council. Again this will improve communications.

### Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees will be established at different times to deal with various topics and projects. Once the topic or project is finished, the committee will cease to function.

### Council Meetings

The Parish Council meetings will be held in Brunsmann Hall so that any parishioner can attend. The plan envisions that the first hour will be business and the second hour will be open so parishioners can air their views and opinions about the welfare of the parish. This step will formalize the Community Conversations that we have held over the past nine months. The forum process will be incorporated into the Parish Council so that once a month parishioners can speak to their concerns.

The public business of the Council will be placed on the parish website for all to see. This will include the minutes of the Council as well as the reports of the various committees.

### Purpose: Transparency and Collaboration

All of this is for the following purposes: to encourage full participation in the life of the parish and to be as transparent and collaborative as possible. Fr. Anthony and the Parish Council firmly believe this is a credible path to take into the future. Full participation is part of our culture and a charism this culture can give to the Church both locally and universally. It is as an act of HEALING.

Find out more  
information about your  
parish community at  
[www.stfrancisparish.com](http://www.stfrancisparish.com)



Director of  
Outreach Ministries

## Introducing Kay Skonieczny

In joining the staff at St. Francis to direct the coordination of our outreach ministries, I find myself inspired, challenged, enlivened, learning a great deal, and most of all, greatly blessed. Our outreach programs minister to those most vulnerable in our midst who suffer due to homelessness, poverty, alienation, loneliness, illness, death and loss. A couple of my neighbors who asked about my new job remarked, "that sounds like depressing work." I replied that I don't feel that way about it at all. I feel like I have the opportunity each day to touch the core of life. Suffering removes the outer trappings of our lives and leaves our souls bare. When we are invited to bear witness and bring comfort to another's pain, life becomes sacrament, full of grace.

When we allow ourselves to feel deeply, we also open our hearts to great joy, happiness, awe and wonder. I am privileged to work with colleagues who are talented, caring, dedicated, have a sense of humor and know how to have fun! Leading us, of course, is Fr. Anthony who is as full of laughter (and it is contagious) as he is tears. And then there are the inspirational volunteers who assist with parish center activities every day and the myriad volunteers who faithfully serve all of us through the parish's many ministries. They are the heart and soul of St. Francis's ability to mirror the gospel call to love, to heal and to serve.

I came to St. Francis in 1982 with my late husband, Ben, and my two daughters, Amy and Molly (who were 8 and 10 at the time). We became involved in various ministries and this community became one of the anchors for our family life. Over the years there have been many changes in pastors, staff and parishioners (bishops and regulations) but through all of these transitions remain the constants, the heart of who we are. We are the Body of Christ caring for the vulnerable and broken, welcoming all to our table, celebrating with reverence and



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*"When we are invited to bear witness and bring comfort to another's pain, life becomes sacrament, full of grace."*

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great joy. The great thing about our faith community is that it has never depended on one person whether cleric, religious or lay. It is truly a work of the one Spirit and the gifts are many and generously shared.

There are many who come to our door and many who sit in our pews who are in need. The needs may be spiritual, emotional, physical, financial and sometimes all of the above. I'd like to enlarge our circle of "angels" who are willing to come to another's aid by visiting, driving, listening, praying providing respite and light during difficult times. I want to nourish and enrich our current outreach ministries and with additional volunteers add some programs especially for the elderly. I'd like to see our vibrant parish network more with our neighbors and mid-town churches through invitations to some of our events and speakers

Participating in the varied ministries deepens our connection to the community and to one another. I have found that you can never give more than you receive and invite anyone interested in our outreach ministries to give me a call at 443-8084, ext. 111. My St. Francis experience gives me inner strength to meet what comes in life. It is blessing and grace to be able to give back in some measure of all that I have received here.



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## A LOOK AHEAD

Please check the weekly bulletin, our web site, or call the parish office at (916) 443-8084 if you would like more information about, or to become involved with, one of our ongoing ministries, or for information about any of our scheduled events. Please note that dates, times and even location(s) may be subject to change.

### Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil - 5:15pm

Sunday - 7:30, 9:30, noon

Daily Mass Monday-Friday - 12:10 pm in Chapel (Monday & Friday are Communion Services)

### Reconciliation

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays - 4:00 - 5:00pm

Bereavement Support

Breakfast Ministry

Bread Baking

Church Cleaners

Conscious Living for Men

Contemplative Prayer

Crossroads

Healing Prayer

Lector Ministry

Music Ministry

Parish Council

St. Francis 101 - Spring, Summer, Fall

Steps Ministry

Tai Chi Chih

Taize

Thomas Merton Circle

Women Sharing Faith

Woman's Prayer

Women's Wisdom Circle

Ushers and Greeters

## TIME AND TALENT

*Opportunities in other ministries or special events may be available. Be sure to call the parish office if you are interested!*

## FOLLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS continued from page 2

### A FRIAR AT WORK IN RUSSIA



I am driving now, when the police wave us over for a spot check at their little outposts they often want me to come inside--maybe this is the KGB keeping and eye on me, but I suspect they just enjoy the novelty of recording an American passport and license in their logbook.

Sometimes I feel stressed and discouraged, and just want to sleep; other times optimistic that I'm catching on. In any case I have no regrets and for the most part I enjoy the challenge of a new language and my new home.

I suppose that's enough for now. Thank you for all your notes, thoughts and prayers. God bless you until next time. Have a wonderful spring, and a blessed Lent and Easter.

Love, Fr. John

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Galen Unruh starts us on a "Journey Together in Christ" with details of the 2004 Diocesan Synod.
- Meet Kay Skonieczny in a profile of our Director of Outreach Ministries on page 3.
- Our Parish Administrative Council is changing.

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