

A Letter from the President

It was just several years ago that a group of us studying confraternities met as usual in early May at the Kalamazoo conference around a table in the crowded cafeteria and discussed how we needed to get ourselves organized. Then came the 1989 meeting in Toronto, the founding of the Society for Confraternity Studies, and the publishing of our bulletin.

We were recently at Kalamazoo again, participating in our first special sessions devoted to confraternities (see below, p. 13). We were pleased to find there was also a third session, organized by three German scholars, Jan Gerchow, Bernhard Jussen, and Thomas Frank. We welcome them warmly and hope to see them again.

The two sessions sponsored by the Society were on Saturday afternoon, one following the other. At the end the discussion became very animated and prolonged, to the extent that Cyrilla Barr, who was chairing, had to remind us that we had gone twenty minutes overtime, right into the wine hour! Many topics came up: politics, learning, and spirituality; patterns of control within and without the group, and their complex interplay; gender considerations, and the concepts of "sisterhood" and "brotherhood" among unrelated members of the laity; various aspects of secrecy and personal life; the editing and interpretation of primary materials such as statutes and archival records. We clearly need to keep in communication with each other!

We have submitted a proposal for three special sessions for next year's Kalamazoo Congress (see below, pp. 13-14). Since the next issue of *Confraternitas* will appear after the deadline for submission of abstracts to Kalamazoo (15 September 1991), we encourage you to write to the organizers at Kalamazoo directly asking them for their "Call for Papers." There you will find our Society listed under "Sponsored Sessions" as well as all the pertinent information for abstract submission. Their address is:

27th International Congress on Medieval Studies

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Best wishes for a productive and relaxing summer!

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