

OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

www.ilSFO.org

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Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear brothers and sisters,

My article this month is adapted from an email letter I sent to all the local fraternity ministers (or a fraternity contact with email) back in February. While I know that many or most of you have heard about this change, I have received some clarification and correction since then, so this article shares my updated understanding with all of you.

As some of you are aware, the Secular Franciscan Order holds its Chapter at the International level every three years (every other time, or every six years, is an elective chapter). The International Chapter in 2011 was at the same time as our National Chapter. One of the items that came out of that chapter is a directive from our Minister General, Encarnacion del Pozo, regarding the use of the acronym or abbreviation for Secular Franciscan Order. As part of our Presidency's effort to develop a common sense of identity for Secular Franciscans worldwide, we are now to use the acronym OFS, from the Latin *Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis*, whenever we abbreviate the name of the order. This is most noticeable in the change of order of the three letters we use after our names, but applies anywhere we use the acronym. (My previous understanding was that the "OFS" after our names was the only change we needed to make; it is still the most important and immediate change required.)

Please note that the name of the Order does *not* change - English is one of the four official languages, and "Secular Franciscan Order" continues to be our name in English. So, we are in the awkward position of telling people that "OFS" is short for "Secular Franciscan Order." (The other official languages of the Order, Italian, Spanish, and French, don't have the same as English with rearranging the word order.)

As time goes on, we will change more occurrences of SFO to OFS. This month, you have probably noticed that our regional newsletter has been renamed the *OFS News*. This seemed like an important, visible place to make the change. On the other hand, our regional and national websites will continue to have "sfo" in their names for quite some time, until we can make the transition without undue expense and confusion. Don't worry about changing your email address if it has "SFO" in it either! Our National Minister hasn't, and I trust his judgment on how to approach this change.

Fr. Benet Fonck expressed a hope that one result of this change would be an end to using the term "SFOs" to refer to Secular Franciscans. While the same sort of shorthand is sometimes used to refer to members of other orders, I think Fr. Benet has a good point. We are not "Secular Franciscan Orders"!

As you continue to practice using OFS instead of SFO, please remember that this is intended to promote unity and a common sense of identity within the Secular Franciscan Order. These are both VERY good things and very important for our future. I've been pleased by how quickly you have adapted to our new initials.

Above all, as our National Minister, Tom Bello, said to us when communicating this change, "...I am absolutely certain that OFS or SFO does not make me or you ... any more or less Franciscan. We are still permanently professed. Our Order is still, in English, the Secular Franciscan Order." Let us be grateful for our vocation to this wonderful, worldwide Order.

May the risen Christ continue to bless us all as we journey to Pentecost,

Vickie ☑

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The *SFO News* is the official publication of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order.

CALENDAR

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are at Mayslake Village (Oak Brook).

- *Election & Visitation dates subject to change. (E=Election/V=Visitation)*

January

- 14: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 15: St. Francis, Crystal Lake Fraternity (V)
- 22: St. Anthony, Oak Lawn Fraternity (E)

February

- 18: Apostolates Workshop
- 26: St. Anthony, Rockford Fraternity (V)

March

- 01: Fair Share, Census, and Annual Reports due
- 10: St. Anthony, Joliet Fraternity (V)
- 17: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 25: St. Francis, Steger Fraternity (V)
- 28: San Damiano Fraternity (V)
- 31: Candidates' Retreat, Day 1

April

- 1: Living Waters Fraternity (V)
- 15: Nuestra Sra. De Guadalupe (E)
- 17: Brother Jacoba Community (V)

May

- 05: Candidates' Retreat, Day 2
- 19: Chapter of Ministers

June

- 09: Wellspring Community (E)

July

- 3-8: Quinquennial Congress, Chicago, IL

August

- 04: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula
- 20: Junipero Serra Fraternity (E)

September

- 10: NW Franciscan Community (E)
- 29: Leadership Workshop

October

- 06: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 16-21: NAFRA Meeting – Denver, CO
- 28: St. Thomas More Fraternity (V)

November

- 04: St. Elizabeth Hungary Fraternity (E)
- 14: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration
- 17: St. Francis, Fox Valley Fraternity (E)
- 18: St. Juliana Fraternity (E)

December

- 04: St. Clare Fraternity – Oak Brook (E)
- 08: Regional Chapter of Elections
- 16: St. Anthony East Side Fraternity (V)
- 29: St. Clare Kankakee Fraternity (V)

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope that you are enjoying some kind of beautiful Easter Time this year. That beauty could be the result of a re-enlivenment and re-energizing of our faith and love for the Church because of the annual retelling and remembering of the history of our ancestors in faith, the fulfillment and gift of Jesus and all that he said and did for us, as well as the impact of all of this on our own lives and happy memories. Easter time is also beautiful because of the movement of the seasons. From the withdrawal and containment of winter's cold to the breezy warming and greening invitation to go out again into a wonderful blooming world all around us.

Another element of this merry month of May for most of us mature Catholics is the happy memory of gathering flowers of the fairest to present to our Lady. This would generally be done as a part of some kind of sweet procession to the nearest Marion shrine somewhere. I know of at least one fraternity in our region which reenacts the May crowning complete with fresh flowers, special songs and prayers and a procession designed to please our Blessed Mother.

The other theme we have brought to our attention is the whole notion of being sent forth into the world to live the Gospel life that God calls us to; our vocation. To look out for and care for each other, mindful of those who are poor and broken in particular; not necessarily to fix or makeover but rather to be hospitable and encouragingly present. This theme of preparation, yes Formation, is familiar to us because it is what Jesus did. Francis consciously followed that same design with the

friars from the earliest days of the founding of the community. Remember? And in our own time we are directed to continuously prepare ourselves within our Franciscan Vocation to be attentively aware of the movement of God in our lives and in our assembly. As I move among you and visit your fraternities, witnessing your growth and development I am so encouraged by your example and that in so many ways you demonstrate the value and worth of this Gospel life of which I speak. In most cases you do all this by the example of your lives, without words, without strings attached, without vainglorious expectation. You are simply good people who come together for the inspiring warmth and hope of Easter.

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 

QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS

Why Francis? Claim the Gift!

July 3-8, 2012

Holiday Inn North Shore
Skokie, IL (near Chicago)

Registration info:

<http://www.nafra-sfo.org/>

Come to the Q!

What happens if you go?

WOW!

BE WOWED BY THE KEYNOTE
SPEAKER:

FEEL THE PASSION FOR GOD
AND FRANCIS.

Keynote

Speaker/ Author/Theologian
Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF

- Why Francis? Claim the Gift!
- Who Are You, O Lord? A Franciscan View of God
- What Am I? Franciscan Understanding of Human Person

In-Formation

By Nick Noe, OSF

Regional Formation Commission

Three Questions

Two years ago, my wife and I attended a Simbang Gabi, which is a Philippine celebration occurring a few days before Christmas. After a very spirited Mass, we attended a Philippine dinner and were seated across from a friend who noticed we were wearing Tau crosses. Mary Beth, a dedicated Catholic, asked about the crosses and this led to a discussion of the Secular Franciscan Order. In a feeble attempt to explain what the SFO was about, I said that we professed to live by a Rule and that the Rule was about how to live the Gospel life. Mary Beth then asked almost indignantly, “well then, do you live any differently than I live?” It was a good question, but unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) it was difficult to continue our discussion due to the noise and laughter in the room.

I’ve not forgotten Mary Beth’s question and it pops into my mind every so often, but in a different form. The question I ask myself is “have I significantly changed the way I live since I was professed?” I won’t answer that here, but lately a second and a third question have come to mind, each not unrelated to the first. In Michael Crosby’s new book, *Repair My House: Becoming a “Kingdom” Catholic*, he describes a study done of his own province within the Franciscan Capuchin Order. The study was done with the intention of determining what unified members of the province, including the sharing of a core value. 93% of the friars agreed that to “live the Gospel” was the core value. But there seemed to be significant differences among the friars on just what “living the Gospel” actually meant. In fact, Crosby writes that based on this experience, he reacts with a healthy cynicism when he hears someone or some group say “We live by Gospel values.” So I have to ask myself, “what does ‘living the Gospel life’ mean to me and how much does it differ from other Secular Franciscans?” Of course I can refer to our Rule and Constitution to help answer the question, but the answer must come in terms of specific choices I make as I live out my life.

The third question was triggered by an article in the National Catholic Reporter on Vatican II priests who were lamenting some changes they detect in the attitudes of newly ordained priests. The Vatican II priests have a “servant-leadership” view of their priestly role, but they feel some of the newly ordained

are more clerical-authoritarian. Although that may be, Fr. Thomas Reese S.J. in the same article had suggestions for the laity. He said that “Clericalism is two sides of the same coin. There is authoritarianism on one side. The other is laity wanting (clerics) to do everything for them.” Laity need to “step forward to take responsibility and no longer wait for Father or Sister to do it anymore.” I thought it was good advice and very Franciscan. Although Francis of Assisi was loyal to the Church and respected the clergy, he didn’t wait for a priest or bishop to tell him what to do. He knew what he had to do and how to live based on the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. And we Secular Franciscans are to follow Francis’ example.

This coming October, the Roman Catholic Church will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Vatican II. Some in the Church would like to view Vatican II as a point of historical continuity rather than a point of momentous change as reflected in its documents. One change is a view of Church that is more horizontal in structure and a communion of its members.

Another related change is a more responsible and active role for the laity. Certainly the laity have become more active within parish walls by serving as Eucharistic ministers, lectors, teachers of religious education, and promoters of social justice. But in its call to holiness for all, Vatican II reminds the laity that through Baptism they have a priestly function on the altar of the world. They cannot separate their faith from the lives they lead beyond parish walls, and they must give witness to their faith (evangelize) in their families, workplaces, marketplaces, civic and political associations, and in all their relationships. However, my experience is that this active and secular responsibility of the laity has not been forcefully voiced by the hierarchy and clergy.

But as a Secular Franciscan I cannot claim ignorance as other laity might, because it is written into our Rule. One only has to look at articles 10 through 19 to see this is the case. Therefore, a question I must ask myself is “have I been a good example to other laity on how to give witness to my faith out in the world and help build the Kingdom of God?” Do I have answers to this final question and the other two? At this point, I can only say that sometimes the questions are more important than the answers. Hopefully, the answers will come later. **T**

JPIC NEWS - REPORT ON JPIC RALLY

By Stephanie Sormane, OFS, JPIC Councilor

On April 12-15, at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois, the first NAFRA JPIC Rally took place. There were over 30 in attendance – a very good start – and our days were full, beginning at 8 a.m. and going until 9 p.m. There were 3 from the Mother Cabrini Region – Mary Lopata from St. Francis (Fox Valley), myself (St. Bernardine of Siena) and Barbara Elkins, recently returning to the Chicago area after a number of years in Ohio, who has been attending St. Juliana Fraternity.

Presenters were Kent Ferris, OFS, NAFRA JPIC Commission, and Lonnie Ellis and Christine Elliott, FAN Staff. Ken Beattie, OFS, took very thorough notes, which I am using and for which I am most grateful. Fr. Pio Jackson, OFM, also gave an excellent talk and presided at our Saturday liturgy. Jan Parker, NAFRA Secretary, played a large part in organizing the Rally, and Tom Bello, NAFRA Minister, joined us for the weekend. To provide a more comprehensive report, I am splitting the information across two articles.

On Thursday we began with introductions by the presenters. Then Kent introduced “The Santa Clara Statement of 1972.” Even though that Congress took place before the 1978 Rule was complete and approved, it reflects well both the situation in the Order at that time and our situation today. This is a wonderful document and I will have copies at our Chapter in May.

Christine Elliott then spoke about FAN, its beginnings in Baltimore in 2007, and its development thus far. FAN brings the entire Franciscan Family together to work for justice and peace, which allows us to have a greater impact on our society. Lonnie then told his story of what led him to become a person of peace and invited others to share theirs.

On Friday, Kent reviewed the efforts undertaken by the NAFRA JPIC Commission since October 2010, including its partnership with Catholic Relief Services in its campaign and webinar series called *Catholics Confront Global Poverty*, and this year’s USCCB Justice, Peace & Human Development “spotlighted” programs, among which is *Faithful Citizenship*, which has been published by the USCCB in election years. Kent noted that *Faithful Citizenship* is not well read by the Catholic faithful. He said it is not a voters' guide but speaks to the importance of developing a moral conscience reflecting the values of our faith, which in turn will shape our manner of

involvement in the political arena both at election time, and more importantly, with elected officials between elections.

Lonnie Ellis said we need to discern how we will move forward. We need to choose issues. Immigration Reform is certainly one, another is Climate Change. We need to join with other groups who are addressing the same issues. We need to build relationships with other groups and people (networking) because there is power in numbers. An important tool in this process is the “one-on-one,” which is simply a “getting to know you” process to build a relationship with another person or group and thus work together for the common good.

MORE NEXT MONTH! 

Please join us at
Spring into Service
a Benefit Dinner for
Franciscan Outreach Association
Presented by
Jeffery M. Cross, David C. Gustman, William Krucks
and their partners at
Freeborn & Peters LLP

at

CHICAGO YACHT CLUB
400 East Monroe Street
Chicago, Illinois

Thursday, May 10, 2012
Cocktails 6:00 pm – Dinner 7:00 pm
Raffle • Silent Auction • Guest Testimony

Tickets \$150 through April 30, \$175 after
Tables of 10 available for \$1,350

To RSVP, please call Carin at 773.278.6724,
visit www.franoutreach.org/dinner.htm
or return the enclosed response card

Please respond by May 4, 2012

**All proceeds help Franciscan Outreach
serve Chicago's homeless**

In Memoriam

Betty Haggerty, OFS of St. Maximilian Kolbe fraternity died on April 14. Betty was the first Regional Formation Director. Fraternity Minister Peggy Esposito shared that some of her fraternity visited and prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy with Betty during her last illness in March. What a wonderful example of caring for a sick member. May our risen Lord grant Betty eternal happiness and peace for all of her faithful service. Amen.