

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,

By the time most of you receive the July issue of the *OFS News*, the Quinquennial will be a memory. So, this is my last opportunity to ask each of you to do something during the time of the Q, whether or not you are able to attend.

If you will be with us in spirit, then I ask for your prayers for all those in attendance; first, for safe travel to and from the event (daily for those in our Region who are commuting); also, for the inspiration to live our Secular Franciscan life more deeply as a result of participating in the Q. It really doesn't matter whether one or more of the speakers touches a person's heart, or if he or she is moved instead by a chance interaction with another participant. It's all the work of the Holy Spirit!

If you are one of those who will be at the Q, whether for a day or two or the entire event, I have several suggestions for you.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for the ability to share this experience with your brothers and sisters. Maybe you can keep a journal during the week and share your impressions in your fraternity newsletter, or as a presentation or discussion at a fraternity meeting. Share your photos, a new idea you got for a fraternity meeting - whatever makes an impression on you.
2. Many of you will be spending extra time with someone else from your own fraternity, whether you are sharing a room or commuting together. Take advantage of the opportunity to get to know one another better.
3. Get to know someone new! You will have opportunities to meet other Secular Franciscans from around the United States and beyond. For me, a major part of the Q experience is being with brothers and sisters from all over. Make a new friend and stay in touch.

4. Perhaps the most important thing I ask of you is that you stay open to the promptings of the Spirit. What new possibilities does God have in mind for you? How does God want to bring you closer? Don't be afraid to let the Spirit lead you.

As I write this, we are approaching the feast of Pentecost. I pray that we may all have a Pentecost experience as a result of the Quinquennial! Let us pray the Quinquennial Prayer as we look forward to this graced time, and pray for all those who have been planning this event for the past five years that their efforts will bear great fruit.

Peace and blessings, Vickie

Prayer for Quinquennial 2012

Dear and gracious, loving Lord and Father,
We bring to you the upcoming Quinquennial.
We thank you for the gift of our vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order,
and for our brothers and sisters
whom you have also called.

Thank you for the example and
inspiration of Francis and Clare,
And grant us a new understanding
and vision of their calling, and ours
Prepare our hearts to hear your call anew,
and enkindle in us a new spirit of
conversion and dedication.

Bless those who will share with us,
Bless those who will attend in person,
Bless those who will attend in spirit.
Let your Holy Spirit be poured out on our
entire National Fraternity,
That through this Congress we may together
discern your heart, and become all that you
want us to be,

In order "to bring about a more fraternal and
evangelical world," bringing to life more
fully the Kingdom of God.

We pray in the Holy and Blessed Name of
Jesus, Your Son. Amen. **T**

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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

July

- 3-8: Quinquennial Congress, Chicago, IL

August

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

September

- 08: Wellspring Community (E)
- 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)

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am hurriedly writing to you before my imminent departure for Israel. I will wait until next month to say anything further about my pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will report on my experience of "the 5th Gospel" then. This hurried writing comes fresh on the heels of our Region's Chapter of Ministers which was held May 19th at Mayslake Village. I will say that the Chapter of Ministers went well and ran smoothly. Most of the Regional Executive Council were present and ministers or their delegates from all but two or three of our fraternities so that we were able to conduct the Region's business very efficiently.

There was a nice bit of time spent on the discussion and planning of the many activities, special events and particular celebrations of the Region. I'm sure you'll hear more about all of that in your local fraternity meetings. We also had time for some Secular Franciscan formation input.

In my presentation in the afternoon we examined the notion of being suitable and well prepared which is a phrase borrowed from the spiritual assistant's handbook that states that a spiritual assistant should be first suitable and well prepared. I dipped a broad brush into that expected standard of excellence and applied it generally and liberally to all of those who hold positions of (servant) leadership in the Secular Franciscan Order, as well as to those who seek a life within the body of the Church. I guess that includes all of us. Beyond all of that, we were able to enjoy the good company of our brothers and sisters.

While we were able to focus on the job at hand, we were also able to spend time getting to know each other better by sharing ourselves and our experiences. On that subject, just imagine how sweet and rich the experience will be when the Secular Franciscan nation gathers here in our home region this summer. Don't miss it; 'don't even be late' as the old Texas State Fair song goes.

Please do all that you can to enjoy the coming weeks of summer and wherever possible, share the warmth of summer and the warmth of your Franciscan heart with each other. Rest assured that you all will be warmly remembered in all the sacred spaces I visit in the Holy Land.

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 

Congratulations to Newly Professed

Recently we have been blessed with a number of new professions. San Damiano Fraternity has 4 and St. Maximillian Kolbe has 6 newly professed members. We congratulate both fraternities and these newly professed members, and give thanks to God for the gifts each person brings to our Region. The names of the newly professed are:

San Damiano - April 25, 2012

- Robert P. Mitchell, OFS
- Dustin Spence, OFS
- Maryann Spiller, OFS
- Matthew Zenner, OFS

St. Maximillian Kolbe - May 6, 2012

- Roger Mary Gaura, OFS
- Gloria Anthony Mary Gray, OFS
- Wendy Terese Odila Blaize Jacobson OSF
- Karen Augustin Mary Clare Ouimet, OFS
- Karen Catherine Clare Cure d'Ars Verr, OFS
- Steven Jeanne d'Arc Verr, OFS 

In-Formation

By J. Patrick Mendés, OSF
Regional Formation Director

It is always a special privilege for me to write the June ongoing formation column because this is traditionally the month of the Sacred Heart. The highlight of the month for me is June 15th; the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart.

As I am presently reading the book *Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St. Francis* by the respected Franciscan author, Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, who will also be the keynote speaker for our Quinquennial Congress this year, I would like to share some thoughts on the virtue of compassion and the compassionate heart of Jesus.

In her book, Sister Ilia tells us “Compassion is a way of being in a relationship with another that accepts the other in his or her weakness and responds to the needs of the person with mercy.”

The “weakness” Sister Ilia talks about can also be seen as a need. Maybe just a need to have someone listen...just being “there” for someone is an act of compassion; of mercy.

Sometimes the need calls for a different action e.g., shopping for a shut in; helping someone carry their packages into the house; sharing a meal that we have prepared with someone who is lonely. Many of us volunteer our time and talents in parish ministries or at Franciscan Outreach or The Port. Ministers of Care and Bereavement bring compassion at a very personal level to people who are hurting, which gives us the gift of seeing in those we serve, the reflection of Christ and Him poor and crucified.

In the oft quoted words the Sacred Heart of Jesus spoke to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, “Behold the heart that has so loved people,” we are inspired to be His love made present. The love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor. In our busy lives, we need to take time to reflect on God’s compassion, His love for us and how He has shown us what we need to do to go “from Gospel to life and life to Gospel.” Give yourself some quiet time to read and reflect on the Gospel account of the Good Samaritan.

Maybe we can, each day, make at least a small compassionate gesture - how about beginning with a smile for the clerk in the supermarket!

I pray you have a loving month of the Sacred Heart and that He may fill your lives with his abundant blessings. Happy Feast Day!!! 📖

Farewell Message from Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Fraternity

Dear sisters and brothers in St. Francis,

The Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Fraternity sadly announces that we have disbanded. This decision comes after many months of prayer as we discerned our ability to remain vibrant in maintaining our Franciscan life in fraternity and mission. We have been struggling for the past few years with all the warning signs of a disintegrating Fraternity.

We leave behind our Fraternity family of 52 years, and however sad, none of us leave empty handed. God has blessed each and every one of us past and present members abundantly with a Franciscan spirituality and fraternal love. I’m proud of all my sisters and brothers and count it as a great blessing that we have shared our lives together through many joys and sorrows. Our Franciscan life does not end here; we continue on the path as we join with other existing fraternities in our Region to continue on as sisters and brothers of St. Francis.

All of the members of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Fraternity wish to extend our gratitude to our Regional Council, especially Brother Joe Middleton, for all their support these past years in our struggle to maintain NSG as a vibrant Fraternity. May Our Lady of Guadalupe forever guide us and intercede on our behalf before her Son our Lord.

¡Paz y bien!

Deacon Juan Ponce de León, OFS
Minister
Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe
Fraternity 📖

LAST REMINDER

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/>

JPIC NEWS - REPORT ON JPIC RALLY

By Stephanie Sormane, OFS, JPIC Councilor

Last month I covered about the first third of the Rally - general introductions, telling our stories, reviewing the transition from Apostolic Commissions to JPIC Commission (mainly to use the same terminology as the rest of the Franciscan Family, since one of our goals is to work together in "vital reciprocity"), and the importance of networking.

One thing which I forgot was to bring copies of the Santa Clara Statement of 1972 to our Regional Chapter in May. I will reprint the better part of it in subsequent newsletters because it is valuable. Such wisdom, 40 years old, even older than our current Rule!

We started to talk about one-on-ones which, as briefly explained last month, is an important networking tool. One-on-ones build relationships. We discover what's really important to us, and then together we work for the common good. Several one-on-ones were presented as examples, and then we broke into pairs and did several one-on-ones ourselves. It was suggested that we do one-on-ones in our fraternities. How well do we really know one another, how well do we understand and respect what is most important to our brothers and sisters? I can see where doing one-on-ones in our fraternities can enrich our fraternal life. We will not all feel the same way about every subject - and that's OK - but to know how we each feel, listening to each others' ideas and learning to respect them, will help us deal in a positive way with others who we don't know quite so well. That is the beginning of dialog and dialog leads to reconciliation and understanding..

Fr. Pio Jackson, OFM, who was for some years the JPIC Animator for Sacred Heart Province, spoke of the connection between JPIC and being Franciscan. Justice, peace and integrity of creation are the essence of who we are as Franciscans. We live the Gospel and our witness draws others to do the same. We are to help others find peace and reconciliation by listening to each other and dialoging with each other to find where we agree and where we can compromise.

We discussed how to attract more young people to the Secular Franciscans. Personal invitation, one-on-one conversations - showing young people how the Franciscan lifestyle might appeal to them. A group called Franciscan Action Milwaukee is being formed on Cardinal Stritch University campus. We might investigate similar opportunities on Franciscan college campuses in our area, too.

Kent Ferris discussed how we can use the new formation materials and Catholic Social Teaching from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to help illustrate to our brothers and sisters how our Rule and Catholic Social Teaching are so closely intertwined.

He then discussed responsibilities of the JPIC Regional Point Person, requiring equal parts of information and animation. This goes both ways - to the membership of the fraternities, and to the NAFRA JPIC Commission, especially if there is "push-back" in certain areas. He felt a "pray, learn, act and give" approach was a good way to start, and knowing what issues are specific to one's locale and making connections with others who share our concerns. JPIC issues should be discussed at fraternity gatherings so the brothers and sisters are aware and can talk about these matters intelligently. NEXT MONTH: HOW TO DO A ONE-ON-ONE. ☒

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

*Breathe into me, Holy Spirit,
that my thoughts may all be holy.
Move in me, Holy Spirit,
that my work, too, may be holy.
Attract my heart, Holy Spirit,
that I may love only what is holy.
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit,
that I may defend all that is holy.
Protect me, Holy Spirit,
that I may always be holy.*

St. Augustine