

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear brothers and sisters,

As I write this, we are 2 weeks away from the Quinquennial Congress. I hope all of you who plan to attend are looking forward to this very special event as much as I am! I plan to journal some of my thoughts each day of the Q for my own reflection, and to share with those who cannot attend. I will post these thoughts on my blog, <http://gospeltolife.blogspot.com>, so if you're interested, you can share the Q with me day by day. Please continue your prayers for the success of the Q and for safe travel of all those attending, and also in thanksgiving for the work of the planners, the speakers, and our local teams who are providing a welcoming, hospitable Franciscan presence to all in attendance.

The Q provides a great opportunity to do something we ALL need to do on an ongoing basis: 1) to grow in our understanding of what it means to be Secular Franciscans and 2) that each of us grasps more fully what is mine/yours to do. While ongoing formation helps us understand our vocation, what we do in a fraternal settings needs to be complemented by our own study and reflection.

This summer, consider some personal study of materials by Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, or Br. William Short, OFM, both speakers at the Q. Books by Sr. Ilia include *Franciscan Prayer*, *Clare of Assisi: A Heart Full of Love, Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St. Francis*, and *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth*. I enjoyed Br. Bill's book *Poverty and Joy: The Franciscan Tradition*, but he is better known for his excellent audio series on St. Francis and other Franciscan topics available from Now You Know Media (www.nowyouknowmedia.com).

I encourage you to select one or more of these resources as part of your summer reading/listening list. Sr. Ilia's books are extremely thought provoking; plan to take your time and stop frequently to reflect on what you have read. Br. Bill's audio series can be good for a road trip - and might give you something new to discuss with your travel companions.

We always need to consider what it means for us to be Franciscans in the world. First, we need to understand our role in the Church, which for most of us is the role of the laity. A good list of some relevant documents is available at <http://www.johnpaul2center.org/LayMinistry/ChurchDocuments.htm>.

One of my favorite references for our Secular Franciscan calling is Blessed Pope John Paul II's message to the 10th General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order. It appears at the start of the book *Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order*, available for ordering from the back of the TAU-USA. It is also available at www.vatican.va/ (Vatican website) and from www.ciofs.org/per/2003/lca3en02.htm (CIOFS website). I love this message from the Holy Father because it tells us the work that is expected of us by the Church!

Lastly, I hope you will spend a little time reflecting on our Rule and Constitutions. You've heard me say before: the Constitutions are not just dry by-laws (though some of those procedural matters are necessarily part of it); they specify how we are to live the Rule! We all need to know the Constitutions well. I recommend starting with Chapter II of the Constitutions, which corresponds to Chapter II of the Rule.

I know it is summer and we have vacation plans and many other things to do, so this article is advice to me as well as to all of you. Find just a little time to plant the seeds and then they will germinate when the time is right - maybe while you are out hiking in the woods, or sitting by a lake, or just relaxing with a glass of lemonade. As in Christ's parables, God will provide for the growth, we only have to plant the seed.

May your summer be a time of relaxation, restoration, and growth.

Blessings, 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

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 have returned from the Holy Land safe and sound and, as promised, have lots of stories to tell. The story begins with the actual travel event which in this case commences at the airport in Newark, New Jersey when a group of 32 pilgrims and strangers converge and then quickly begin to form a community as we board a big airplane to fly together for 12 hours into another culture half way round the world. Israel in the Middle East has a certain resemblance to the American life such as billboard advertising, CocaCola, and Mc Donald's everywhere but otherwise it's another world.

One of the things that I found most remarkable is the larger world presence of God's people. We are accustomed in our culture to think of Roman Catholic Christians as the home of The Church but in the Holy Land there is a much more complex reality. The Roman Catholic Church is present there primarily within the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, but the Greek Orthodox Church has been predominately present since ancient times as well as the Russian Orthodox and Coptic Sects.

The Christian sites there are many holy places that were built upon by the Crusaders that are still in use. Of course the Christians share out of necessity the Holy Land with the worldwide variety of Jewish sects whose history overlaps with the Palestinians who are predominately Muslim people, all of them our ancestors in spirit and faith. It is a place where history and events took place, but more importantly, I believe is tenaciously and simultaneously remembered from a complex historical viewpoint. We would do well to be aware of what goes on

there and to pray for peace in the Holy Land as regularly and faithfully as we pray with the Sacred Scriptures which for the most part comes from this place. I'll share many pilgrimage stories and highlights with you when we gather for the Portiuncula celebration in August.

The great prize of this experience of the Holy Land - The Fifth Gospel - is that from now on my reading of Sacred Scriptures will have a fuller context for I have been to those places. Here is one minor example. We went to visit Caesarea Philippi up in the Golan Heights. It was there that Jesus went away with the disciples and entered into that famous discourse whereby he asks Peter, 'Who do they say that I am / who do you say that I am' which is found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This place is in a cool, green, hilly location. It is located at one of the tributaries that flow into what becomes the Jordan River before it flows into the Sea of Galilee and beyond. In Jesus' time there were caves and pagan shrines there. In this context the pronouncement by Peter that Jesus was the Messiah was even more profound to me. I will always remember that beautiful morning in The Holy Land.

I extend my pilgrim's blessing to you with my hope for a good summer.

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 

In Memoriam

St. Clare Oak Brook lost two sisters recently. Mary Seymour, fraternity Secretary, died on May 25th and Cathy Vosicky died on June 13th. Mary was professed in 1981 and Cathy in 1984.

May God grant eternal rest, happiness and peace to Mary, Cathy and all of our dearly departed family and friends. Amen.

In-Formation

By Sandra Kisel, OSF
Regional Formation Member

“FRANCIS, BUILD UP MY CHURCH

“Let us begin to do good for up to now we have done nothing” (St. Francis)! Only recently have I really come face-to-face with these words. In May I turned over another year and suddenly and I asked myself; ‘How have I made a difference in the world?’ Is the world any better because I live in it? Has my belief and what I have done only been a delusion? Have I truly been serving God or only myself? Have I lived so long without accomplishing anything of Your holy and true Will Lord?

During the month of June we celebrated the Feasts of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the Body and Blood of Christ, and traditionally the month of July has been dedicated to the Precious Blood of Jesus. And “yes!” I’m still reading and pondering the little book, “The Way of Divine Love” by Sr. Josefa Menendez, which I highly recommend!

I recall how St. Francis used to cry out loud in prayers to God, bemoaning his sins...and in contrast would dance in the fields and sing in the joy and the love of the Lord because of His great goodness and merciful love!

In one passage of Sister Josefa’s book she is begging Jesus to keep her faithful, as He knows what harm she was capable of on her own. Who can comprehend God’s love for us? Jesus responded to Josefa saying, “You say you do not know what My work is? ...It is one of love. I want to use you who are of so little account to disclose to the world the mercy and the love of My Heart. That’s why I’m glorified when left free to do with you and in you what I choose. Jesus spoke again of His Precious Blood... “I have many hidden souls who in their humble labors are very useful workers in My vineyard, for they are moved by love, and they know how to cover their deeds with supernatural gold by bathing them in My Blood. My love goes so far that My souls can draw great treasure out of mere nothing. When as soon as they wake they unite themselves to Me and offer their whole day with a burning desire that My Heart may use it for the profit of souls...when with love they perform their duties, hour by hour and moment by moment...how great is the treasure they amass in one day!!!!!!”

Jesus continued and said: “*Speak to chosen and consecrated souls saying they must know Me, so as to be able to teach those I shall confide to their care all the kindness and tenderness of My Heart.*” Has our Secular Franciscan fervor cooled since Profession? Are we faithful spending time with our Lord and meditating/pondering His Words in our hearts as Mary did? Do we spend time reading up on our faith, and Church documents, reading the lives of Francis and Clare and other Franciscan saints, or our Rule of Life & Holy Scripture???

Jesus commissioned Francis to build up His Church and through Francis and Clare He has commissioned each of us to be His instruments to do the same. To be His true and faithful instruments we need to learn how to rest on His Heart and listen for Him in the stillness. We need to be strong in our relationship with Him and our Dear Mother. We need to know and pray to understand His Words (Holy Scripture), and Church teaching, and of course our Rule of Life.

You know I truly believe we Secular Franciscan’s have something special we bring to the world if we truly strive to live our vocations daily in union with Christ and the Gospels. Look around us. People have forgotten God and they’ve forgotten how to love and be loved! Franciscans love to hug and embrace one another; we look at each other without making distinction between race, color of skin, economic status...we are all God’s children. We look at each other in a way as to really say: I love you, you’re important to me! We support each other in prayer and celebrate the good things that happen to our brothers and sisters and grieve deeply with them when they suffer loss. Francis called us brothers and sisters! We’re a family!

Recently I re-read a prayer which Anne Mulqueen, OFS was inspired to write for the Turning Up of the Flames-All Commission Conference in 2004 and I’d like to borrow a few lines of it in closing.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Eternal Father, source of all good, hear our one desire, that you set a blaze upon the earth that will not be contained until it accomplishes Your Holy and true Will.

Saint Francis, pray for us that we will be instruments of peace & justice in our world. Help us so that we will regard others as you did the Sultan and seek ways of unity, harmony & respect for one another regardless of nationality and creed.

May God bless us all that we may be His instruments as we labor to give birth to a more fraternal world where the lamb can lie down safely with the lion.

Holy St. Clare, pray for us that we who gaze upon the face of Christ will be formed and transformed by His image into His likeness. May God bless us all as we seek to embody and impart the Good News in our daily lives. May God bless us all as we seek to share in God’s creation and redemption through the work of our hands.

St. Bonaventure, pray that all of us who behold the imprint of God in creation will remember that all creation is interdependent and must be protected. May God bless us as we respect and care for the work of His hands.

Almighty Father, enable us to reflect your light in a dark world and your warmth in a cold world. Mold us into the image of your Son Jesus Christ so that the world will know it is You who have sent us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the peace of Christ be with us all! Hope to see many of you at the Quinquennial!! **T**

JPIC NEWS – One-on Ones

By Stephanie Sormane, OFS, JPIC Councilor

The last two months I've described to you the JPIC Rally, which was held at Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, IL on April 12-15, 2012. An important part of the Rally was introducing us to "one-on-ones," a tool to build relationships. The one-on-ones can be used both as a means of building strong relationships within an organization (i.e., within our local fraternities, within our Region and within the Franciscan Family, as well as with other organizations who might join us in bringing about the Kingdom of God.

So, what is a one-on one? Basically, it's a relational meeting between 2 people for the purpose of:

- Building relationships; when people are in relationship they can share, plan, dream, create and accomplish goals. People are more likely to respond positively to work on a common project with someone they know.
- Uncover Self-Interests; people are most likely to engage in action related to self-interests.
- Develop clarity of ideas and issues.
- Gather information about the person, community, neighborhood.

For beginning purposes, I believe it would be helpful for fraternities to practice one-on-ones in their own community. How well do we really know one another? We may very well find that many of our brothers and sisters feel very strongly about certain issues, but have never really had the opportunity to discuss their feelings or how they, or we, might address issues that are mutually important to us.

One-on-ones would not have to be held during fraternity meetings. They could take place outside the monthly gathering, set up ahead of time, probably by phone. A good one-on-one takes about 45 minutes.

Preparation for the meeting is important. Think about what you know about the person you are meeting with and what his/her interests might be. What questions do you want to be sure to ask, and how will you express your reason for the one-on-one.

There is no formula for a good one-on-one. After introducing yourself, have a few simple warm-up questions or comments to develop a little relaxed conversation. Listen intently, especially for "lead-ins" to stories. Speak in order to draw out the other. A successful visit means the person visited is speaking most of the time; most people appreciate when you show an interest in them. Stories tell the most and are usually more enjoyable than abstractions. Probe for specifics about their experiences and their true feelings about things.

Some areas that can be explored are anger, ambitions/dreams, reading, personal history, organizations, politics, religion, employment, hobbies, education, values, community, family. Ask about the larger community - what are its strengths, what could make it stronger, what are the hopes and fears of and for the community.

A one-on-one should always conclude with a "next step," how we will use the information gained from the one-on-one for the betterment of the community. This activity will be reviewed during the Quinquennial Congress next month, and we'll summarize the Rally and the Q in August. 

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Reminder that our **Regional Gathering** will take place on Saturday, **August 4th** beginning with Mass at **9:00AM** at Mayslake. Br. Joe Middleton, OFM will be guest speaker and will share stories about his recent travels to the Holy Land.

Congratulations to **Fr. Donald Blaeser, OFM** former Regional Spiritual Assistant, who celebrated 50 years professed as a Friar in June 2012.

Also, congratulations to **Marisa Alcorn, OSF** newly professed member of St. Francis/St. Louis Fraternity. Marisa was professed on May 13, 2012.