

OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

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Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,

It's not often that I read something business-related that I immediately recognize as relevant to our Franciscan life, but it happened this past week. I was reading about managing relationships with other people, especially when trying to make change happen. The steps advised (such as helping and listening) were certainly good, but what really got my attention was the concluding observation that all of these actions needed to be taken in a "one down" position, and that one needed to let go of the need to be right. Wow! When Francis called his brothers "Friars Minor," that meant that they were to always be "one down". Who'd expect a business article to recommend humility – minority, in Francis' world?


So, even in the business world, treating others as more important than ourselves is good for relationship building. How about that second part about not needing to be right? I don't know about you, but that really hits home for me. Far too often, I hear myself saying something that doesn't really need to be said, just because I need it to be clear that I'm right. When I'm with someone else who also needs to be right, and we disagree...that can get messy. It's even worse when it's family. Sadly, that's true in our Franciscan families as well – the polarization that's commonplace in our society doesn't stop at church or fraternity doors.

So...we (or at least I) have yet another opportunity for daily conversion. Francis wisely recognized that the possessions we have the hardest time giving up aren't material possessions, but attachments to our egos. If I am unable to let go of my need to be right, how am I going to truly listen to my brothers and sisters and humbly learn from them?

How often do I close the doors of my mind and heart to someone because I have judged what they have to say before they even say it?

As usual with these sorts of musings, I don't pretend I have the answers – all I can do is recognize the challenge. What do we have to work with?

First, self knowledge – the fact that I (sometimes) realize what I'm saying and doing (even as I go right ahead and do it again) is a start. Recognizing the problem is necessary before anything can be done about it. Then, of course, we have all the usual helps to improvement – prayer, sacraments, sharing our struggles with each other, etc. Maybe this would be something that a trusted brother or sister in fraternity could (gently) point out when it happens. Fraternal correction is never easy, but if you ASK for it yourself, it's a good way to get started! I pray that we will all grow in confidence that God's love is not dependent on our being right. I pray that our fraternities will grow in mutual love and humbly listen to and care for one another. As St. Paul says in the letter to the Philippians (2:3-4), "humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others." May the Holy Spirit give us understanding hearts, both for our brothers and sisters, and for ourselves.

Peace and blessings...
Vickie 

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Submission deadline is the
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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)
- 17: Brother Jacoba Community (V)

May

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

June

July

- 3-8: Quinquennial Congress, Chicago, IL
- 14: Council Meeting 9:30 a.m.

August

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

September

- 08: Junipero Serra Fraternity (E)
- 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)
- 11: 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

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Brother and Sister of Penance,

I really love October; I always have. Down in the Deep South where I come from October is the time when the long hot summer finally breaks. Of course this is harvest time which excites me greatly. I know that soon the Texas Ruby Red Grapefruit are about ready for picking and down in Plaquemines Parish Louisiana the red fish are coming up into the bayous, and up here there are wonderful varieties of apples. October is in many places the time for State and County Fairs. I love Fairs. For most of the years of my childhood and adolescence my father would come and get my brother and me out of school to go to the Great State Fair of Texas. Getting out of school and going to the fair was one of the ultimate happy times of my life. And now even that has been surpassed, for now and forever early October will be a celebration of St. Francis, the Franciscan spirit and our lives as Franciscans. I really love being Franciscan...don't you?

I hope all of you will be able to celebrate Francis in a community with some festive solemnity this year. If you are able and interested, we here at St. Peter's in the Loop will be pulling out all the stops. We will even have a blessing of the animals at 4:00pm on Sunday, September 30th so bring your dog or goat or monkey by to receive a Franciscan blessing. Then on Tuesday, October 2nd Fr. Robert Pawell, ofm will present a program called "The Key Elements of Franciscan Spirituality" at 12:10pm here in the St. Clare Auditorium. On Wednesday, October 3rd we will have a Communal Penance Service at 12:15pm then later at 7:00pm we will host a solemn Transitus celebration. The next day Thursday, October 4th on the feast, there will be a solemn Mass at 11:40 a.m. followed by a reception

in the St. Clare Auditorium. Later on that same day at 5:40 p.m., there will be solemn Vespers in the Church. Finishing out Franciscan Week at St. Peter's will be a presentation by Fr. Bob Hutmacher, ofm entitled "The Passion of Christ through a Franciscan Lens". Whatever you do, wherever you go, whoever you're with, just remember that as Franciscans you are not alone especially in early October. Don't you love being Franciscan in October? I do.

One more reminder to all the spiritual assistants in the Mother Cabrini Region that you are invited to come together for an annual meeting with your brother and sister Spiritual Assistants. I would request that as many of you as can join me here at St Peter's Church in the Loop on Tuesday, October 9th at 10:30am. We will begin with prayer then a "check in" exercise followed by a detailed presentation on a new secular spiritual assistant initiative for our region. Then of course, in the fullness of time, we will adjourn to a nearby restaurant for a festive lunch together. For those of you who need to be reminded, St. Peter's Church is found at 110 W. Madison St. between Clark and LaSalle where parking is always problematic and expensive. So, I always recommend Chicago's most efficient public transportation when coming into the Loop.

Peace and all good to you at this special time of the year,

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 

Prayer for Feast of St. Francis

Good and gracious God, you helped Saint Francis reflect the image of Christ through a life of poverty and humility. May we follow your Son by walking in the footsteps of Francis and by imitating his joyful love and compassion. Amen.

In-Formation

By Sandra Kisel, OSF
Regional Formation Commission

“Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, ‘til all the world adore His Sacred Name...”

Since August 1st I’ve been slightly physically challenged, preventing me from attending our August OFS Fraternity meeting; the Portiuncula feast day and other events.

Returning to September’s Fraternity Meeting however; I couldn’t help but be amused at how many of my brothers and sisters had been newly outfitted; there wore new shoes for broken toes; braces for messed-up cartilages; sleeves for broken arms and crutches for nerve damage and broken ankle bones! Hope I haven’t overlooked anything or anyone. I recall commenting it appeared God really has a sense of humor that instead of “Order of Franciscan Seculars” we should be called: “Order of Franciscan Cripps!” Additionally, there have been losses of loved ones and serious health issues, persons on their death beds, out of work/ or concerned about losing their employment; their future and many other things.

All these are an integral part of the roller coaster of life we’ve embraced at Baptism and at our Profession, and we were all being invited to share these together! Still, the Cross is still very much misunderstood. We all try one way or another to avoid it; many even find it an excuse for believing God has turned away from them. They find it difficult when times get tough and painful to see God’s goodness/gifting us while we are in the absence of consolations, without feelings of closeness; experiencing only pain, rejection, loneliness and fear.

The month of September is a wonderful month for us to focus on the mystery and wonder behind two very special feast days; the feast of the “Exultation of the Cross” and the feast of “Our Sorrowful Mother”, celebrated side-by-side as are the feasts of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

But how can we comprehend or equate “exulting” in the Cross? In the book “The Way of Divine Love” as with many saints, Josefa too shrunk from the agony and pain of the Cross and apologized many times about it. The Cross is always the Cross, even our Lord experienced the fullness of suffering. So what’s so special about the Cross that it was the chosen way God elected to draw all people to Himself? It takes a different focus, looking at Christ instead of ourselves and our miseries to help prevent us from anger, confusion, and bitterness. Once we look at Christ we see that He’s already experienced what we’ve experienced to a far greater degree without noises, grunts and complaints...all with love. In fact, as we look into the face of Jesus and identify with His sufferings we find new ways of knowing Him and

His great love for us, and as often as possible, we try to offer this new depth of identification united with Mary and through her to our Heavenly Father to obtain graces for souls and to be Christ for them. This pleases Our Lord and obtains incomprehensible graces for conversion. Throughout our lives there is always the dying and rising again to new life.

By the time this newsletter becomes available we will be celebrating the ritual of the Transitus, (the passing over of St. Francis to eternal life). It is celebrated by Franciscan’s throughout the world every year on the evening of October 3rd. It was on this same evening Francis, after bearing the imprint of the Cross on his hands and feet for two years, asked to be lowered to the ground naked as when first born into the world. He then asked the friars to read from Chapter 13 of St. John...“*Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.*” Francis passed from this world into the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father. Frank Rega in his book, *St. Francis of Assisi and the Conversion of the Muslims* recounts that on this day one of the friars, at the moment of Francis’ passing, had a vision of the soul of St. Francis ascending into Heaven borne on a white cloud; another friar from a distant town, was close to death himself and had been unable to speak...suddenly he shouted out, “Wait for me, Father! I’m coming with you! He died at the same moment; even St. Clare and her sisters received the fulfillment of Francis’ promise that they would see him again and conversions were numerous. ***St. Francis, pray for us and may the peace of Christ reign in our hearts now and forever.*** ☒

Congratulations to Newly Professed

St. Francis Fox Valley – August 25th

Ruth Doyle, OFS

Debbie Zelinski, OFS

St. Thomas More Fraternity – September 23rd

Fr.Noel Dong Hyuh Go, OFS

Sung Hee Beladetta Lee, OFS

Election Nominations Reminder:

If your fraternity has not yet responded with nominations for the upcoming Regional Council elections in December please be sure to email same to Lorna Miressi, Vice Minister, at elections@ilsfo.org

JPIC NEWS — The Santa Clara Statement, Part 3

By Stephanie Sormane, OFS, JPIC Councilor

In the last three months I summarized the JPIC Rally held in April and the Quinquennial Congress which was held in July. I then began to share with you “The Santa Clara Statement,” written at the Lay Franciscan Congress in Santa Clara, California, in 1972. The parts in August were “We Acknowledge Where We Are” and “Our Basic Thrust.” The parts in September were “The Roots of our Response,” “Stewardship, Servanthood” and “Peace – Reconciliation.” Here is the conclusion:

THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY. We call the Franciscan Family to be a new creation in the Church and the world, as community and servant.

We rejoice that young people find the Franciscan Way attractive. Together with them we are committed to creating a climate for the pursuit of a Franciscan understanding of our times;

To this end, educated programs will be developed with special emphasis on the charism of Francis, Sacred Scripture, and the social issues of today.

For Lay Franciscans, to be formed in the likeness of Jesus Christ in the fraternity, more frequent meetings are necessary along with the kind of guidance which demands a genuine response to the Franciscan Way;

In response of love for the Church, we will join in parish activities that will foster the growth of the Church as a community, involving ourselves in a special way in the liturgical renewal;

In response to the needs of the elderly members of our fraternities, we will assure ourselves that the elderly members are adequately housed, even to the extent of our sponsoring sheltered care or nursing homes;


We acknowledge the poverty of our relationship with the First and Second Orders of St. Francis and the TOR, with religious of the Third Order, and with other lay fraternities.

- We will take steps to build communities among the whole Franciscan family, sharing with each other in a variety of ways.
- Together with them we will organize for the impact which is possible for Franciscans as a broad movement of make on our world today.
- In order to build community, we shall encourage the attempt of members of some fraternities to achieve communal living wherever there is a serious desire to live this style of life.


We acknowledge that the goals of the Franciscan movement allow for great diversity in prayer forms and styles, and that the brothers and sisters should accept each other in this regard as they are called to pray to the Lord.

Thus, the goals of the Catholic charismatic movement, namely, repentance, faith, commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and openness to the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Father, are goals essential to the life of the Church and are in harmony with the personal and communal vocation of Franciscans.

* * *

Please remember that this document was written in 1972, but I believe there’s plenty here for us to consider. I hope all fraternities are present at the Leadership Workshop at Mayslake on September 29. 

News from Franciscan Outreach and Request for Assistance

Fall Dinner on Wednesday, November 7 at Maggiano’s in Oak Brook. Diana Faust has requested that three or four people volunteer to help organize this event. It would not require much time and there is an organized process in place to expedite this project. Please call Diana at Franciscan Outreach at 773-742-5056. Details can be found at <http://www.franoutreach.org/> 

In Memoriam

Four more of our OFS Sisters have gone to their eternal reward during the month of September. Let us pray for them and the ones they leave behind.

Dolores Karnia, OFS St. Anthony Oak Lawn, Sept. 11

Joan Mader, OFS St. Bernardine Siena, Sept. 15

Shirley Erd, OFS of Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine) September 15

Gertrude O'Brien, OFS of Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine) September 26

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death, from whom no-one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Blessed are they She finds doing Your Will. No second death can do them harm. (*Canticle of the Sun*)