

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,

This year, the entire month of April is Easter! May the risen Christ enlighten the dark, sad corners of our hearts and minds and make us rejoice in His love.

Lent and Easter both address aspects of our perpetual need for renewal. Conversion must happen daily, but there are other aspects of our lives that need updating periodically. Lent helps us make new, better habits and start thinking about what's important and what our priorities should be. I think Easter is a good time to apply our renewed sense of priorities to assess the *good* things we are doing and see how well they're working. Have we lost enthusiasm for something that we used to look forward to? That may mean it's time to move to something else, but it also may mean we need to find a way to rekindle our excitement. It may be helpful to discuss such things with your spiritual director or a brother or sister in your fraternity.


Obviously, some commitments are not to be abandoned just because the newness has worn off. The desire to move on to something new is a temptation when it occurs in the context of marriage. It's also a temptation when we tire of our commitment to monthly fraternity meetings and other aspects of our Secular Franciscan life. How can we renew the enthusiasm that led us through formation and into the Order? I have a few suggestions, none of which should be viewed as hard and fast rules (there are exceptions to everything) but should be strongly considered.

1. Look at your priorities, especially your "church" ones. After your weekly Mass obligation, your highest church priority should be your fraternity meeting. An optional activity such as a prayer meeting, which good in itself, should not take

take precedence over attending your fraternity meeting. If necessary, cut back on nonessentials to leave more time and energy for those lifetime commitments you've made.

2. Our initial formation was an exciting time because it was all new and we were building up to profession. Ongoing formation can be just as exciting because now we can better understand how to live our Secular Franciscan life. What are you reading or doing to keep learning, outside of fraternity meetings? Learn something new and then share it with your brothers and sisters!
3. What are you bringing to the meeting? (And no, I don't mean the donuts.) If there is material to study and reflect on before the meeting, are you preparing? If not, are you at least prepared to share yourself and what's gone on in the past month? Fr. Lester Bach describes a good fraternity meeting in terms of family sharing around a dinner table. Be ready to share and ready to listen.
4. In a similar vein, what could you do to make the meetings more meaningful? If you have ideas, talk to your fraternity council about them. If you don't have ideas, ask how you can help. The best antidote for boredom is being involved.
5. One last thought: You never know when you will be the messenger to bring God's love to someone else at the meeting. Similarly, you never know who will have a message for you. Your presence *matters*, whether you think so or not.

I hope this Easter season brings you much joy, regardless of life's circumstances.

Peace and blessings, Vickie 

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

Submission deadline is the
20th of each month.

CALENDAR

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

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

January

- 12: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m. (transition meeting)

February

- 03: St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (E)
- 17: St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity (E)

March

- 01: Fair Share, Census, and Annual Reports due
- 10: St. Anthony of Padua, Joliet (V)
- 16: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 17: St. Anthony of Padua, East Side (V)

April

- 7: St. Francis St. Louis Fraternity (E)

May

- 18: Chapter of Ministers, Mayslake

June

July

- 13: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 21: St. Francis Assisi Fraternity, Algonquin (E)
- 27: St. Anthony of Padua, Rockford (E)
- 28: St. Anothony of Padua, Oak Lawn (V)

August

- 03: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

September

- 14: St. Anthony of Padua, Joliet (E)
- 25: San Damiano Fraternity (E)
- 28: Study Day/Leadership Workshop

October

- 05: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 06: Living Water Korean Fraternity (E)
- 15: Brother Jacoba Community (E)
- 12-20: NAFRA Meeting – Denver, CO
- 27: St. Francis of Assisi, Steger (E)

November

- 17: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration

December

- 14: Wellspring Community (V)

Spiritual Assistant’s Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM


Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It is time to celebrate the great range of opportunities we have as God’s people, at this particular time of the year and this time in our Church’s history. We certainly can begin our celebration with the resurrection of Our Lord and the joyful events of Eastertime for the next 50 days. And for the next 50 days of Easter, and then some, we celebrate springtime and all that that means in the way of the long awaited return of April showers, warmth and new life. We also celebrate (I hope) a new Pope, Francis I, the best result of the College of Cardinals and their hard work calling upon the Holy Spirit of God for guidance while all of us around the world prayed as well. For all of this which you all already know, we lift our hearts like joyful bells and proclaim joyful *Alleluias* for the entire world to hear.

Now as I ponder further, I ask myself and I ask you, after all we’ve been through during this Lent and throughout our whole life-long formation, how are we doing, what have we learned, and how have we grown? What fruit have we produced, and what are we going to do with it? Let’s continue to take these questions to prayer. I encourage you to celebrate all the ways (great and small) that you have matured and moved forward within your Franciscan vocation at this time of the year and at this time of your life. Then beyond that, I earnestly remind you that the deepest degree of conversion only happens when you act, search, and question. Be willing to move, be open and receptive, invest the gifts that you have been given, allow the radical and extreme presence of God’s love to take root in you and to flow freely and generously from you. I want to caution you to be careful when you select

your religious and spiritual influences. Guard against people with political or cultural agendas, and please do not limit yourselves to insights delivered by television, radio, and appeal letters that come in the mail without your request. This is why it is so important to be a part of a community of Franciscan seekers who help us to be truly well integrated, informed, and inspired.

So, these are my broad brush thoughts at this time which I hope are helpful to you. Included with these are my blessings and best wishes for peace and all good.

Your Brother Joe, ofm 

In Memoriam

Marianne Brashinger, OFS, St. Anthony Fraternity, Oak Lawn, perhaps the oldest member of our Region, passed away March 20th. Marianne was 103 years old and a Secular Franciscan for 39 years.

Lillian Etska, OFS, long time member of St. Clare Oak Brook, who for so many of the Regional gatherings helped with hospitality, set up, clean up etc., passed away March 25th. She was 93 years old.

Collect for Divine Mercy Sunday

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In-Formation

By Marilyn Renninger, OSF
Regional Formation Commission

PRAISE THE LORD! What exciting history we have witnessed as our newly elected Holy Father took the name Francis! Every day from the rising of the sun to its setting the name “Francis” will be heard as Pope Francis is remembered in every Holy Mass. I pray that it will be a daily reminder, not only to every Franciscan of our call and vocation, but also to all people of their call to a simple lifestyle, and to love and care for the powerless, as well as all God’s creation.

The mission to which St. Francis was called 800 years ago was unique in the history of the Church. And it is the same mission each of us is called to today as a follower of St. Francis, to live the charism that the Holy Spirit endowed Francis with, the call to be a “son/daughter” in the hands of the Father, just like Jesus is Son. (I read but don’t remember where) that by this gift Francis was able to think with the mind of the Son, see with the eyes of the Son, love with the heart of the Son, and act with the dedication of the Son. Francis manifested this love in his joyful, caring, and trustful attitude of being in harmony with, and obedient to, God’s Will in everything. (IC, 2nd Bk. VII, 107)

Francis had the gift to perceive the depth of Jesus’ love, poverty, and simplicity and all that that means, which then became the practice of his life.

As we formally renew our commitment and fidelity to the Franciscan way of life on or near April 16, the date in 1209 when Innocent III approved the first Franciscan Rule, and the Order began, we echo the words of Francis, “This is what I want, this is what I seek, this is what I desire with all my heart.” (IC, 1st Bk. IX, 22).

Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life was Francis’ focus and only model. Because Francis desired above all to conform himself to Jesus, he became Christ-like as no other. Let us intensify our desire.

We just completed a 40 day desert journey whereby we did spring cleaning in our hearts. Despite our faults and sins God loves us and reminds us that we are written on the palm of His hand (Is 49). We in turn promise our love and faithfulness and publicly renew our Baptismal vows.

As we now celebrate for 50 days the resurrection of Jesus, may we, like Francis, keep our focus on Jesus who calls us to walk with Him: Jesus who made the Father visible and touchable. We have no higher calling than to daily walk with our God. Happy journeying! 📖

A Bit of Papal History

Pope Francis is the first non-European pope since Gregory III, who was Pope from 731-741, and is the first Jesuit to become Pope. And as we all already know, he is the first Pope from the Americas, and the first Pope to take the name of Francis in honor of St. Francis of Assisi

Which of course leads to the question of what other Popes have belonged to Religious orders?

The number of Popes who belonged to religious orders are listed as follows: Benedictines (17); Augustinians-including Canons Regular (6); Dominicans (4); Franciscans-all Branches (4); Cistercians (2); and Jesuits (1). Not included were any that were members of the secular orders.

Why do Popes change their names? This question actually took a bit of research.

It wasn't until 533 when the elected Pope took the name John II, changing it from his baptismal name which was Mercurius. He deemed it inappropriate for a pope to be named after a pagan deity. Then from the 10th century on it became customary, although even then it did vary. The last pope to use his own name was Pope Marcellus II in 1555. Since that time each pope has chosen a name other than his own baptismal name.

Why do Popes wear white?

Most will say that it was Pope St. Pius V who began the tradition of wearing the white Cassock. He belonged to the Order of preachers more commonly known as the Dominicans. Pope Pius was Pope from 1566-1572 and wished to wear his white habit. Each pope since that time has worn white. (A footnote here... some says that earlier popes have had portraits wearing white... however what we found was only the reference to Pius V)

(Excerpted from the Spokane Poor Clare Newsletter, 3/27/13)

FOCUS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE: CLIMATE SUMMIT 2013

Submitted by Stephen Lanterman, JPIC Councilor
Mother Cabrini Region



This month I would ask Secular Franciscans to join with the Franciscan Action Network at www.franciscanaction.org to support the following letter asking President Obama for an Executive Order to create a National Climate Summit. Link to “Catholic Letter” to sign and submit your personal support as a woman or man of Faith and as a Franciscan! Thank you.

National Climate Summit—A Letter from U.S. Catholics

Dear President Obama,

Catholics in the U.S. join with our brothers and sisters across diverse faith traditions to call for greater care for God’s creation and to show love and concern for our neighbors. We stand with Pope Benedict in his 2007 statement: “Our Earth is talking to us and we must listen to it and decipher its message if we want to survive.” The earth’s message is clear. Extreme weather events such as super-storm Sandy have wreaked havoc on many communities in our country *and across the world*. *More intense droughts across the world* have harmed crop production, increased food prices, caused massive wildfires, and led to famine conditions for millions. Rising sea levels and more severe storms threaten coastal cities and island nations

around the world in unprecedented ways...We need national and global leadership...We urge you to host a solutions-focused national summit on climate change. With your leadership, a summit with representatives from diverse sectors will advance bold and collaborative solutions necessary to move the nation and world towards a sustainable future...The following Catholics ask for your leadership for a climate summit: The Lord is calling me to “scale the mountain,” to dedicate myself still more to prayer and to meditation. But this does not mean abandoning the Church — on the contrary, if God asks this of me, it is to serve the Church with the same dedication and the same love with which I have tried to do so hitherto, but in a way that is more adapted to my age and my strength. Let us invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary: may she help us always to follow the dedication and the same love with which I have tried to do so hitherto, but in a way that is more adapted to my age and my strength. Let us invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary: may she help us always to follow the Lord Jesus in prayer and in active charity. **¶**

Franciscan Outreach Needs our Help

Franciscan Outreach day program needs a donation of coffee, powdered creamer, sugar, and 8 oz. paper cups and napkins. Please contact: Nick Benedetto, Director of Case Management Services at (773) 278-6724.

The Marquard Center soup kitchen needs food credits from the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Go to www.chicagosfoodbank.org click make a difference and then click volunteer. Scroll through calendar to select an open date. Each volunteer hour is worth \$5 in food credits. When filling in the volunteer form, add A00247 to the section asking for agency ID number. The larger the group the greater the credit.

And, if you live in Chicago, they could use help getting water exemption reinstated. Follow the link (<http://www.franoutreach.org/waterbill.htm>) to see how you can help. Thank you.