

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,

I had the opportunity to reflect on "Lay Spirituality" with those who attended our Candidates' Retreat in mid-April. Because this is so fundamental to our way of life, I'd like to share some of those thoughts.

While our order is "Secular" (not taking religious vows) rather than "Lay" (non-ordained), the vast majority of Secular Franciscans are in fact lay people. Vatican II helped us better understand the unique and important role of the laity in fulfilling the mission of the Church. Our role, in essence, is to transform the world from within, as yeast mixed into flour causes the dough to rise.


As a result of our Baptism (and strengthened by our Profession), we have a share in Christ's roles of priest, prophet, and king. We offer both our work and our sufferings as sacrifices (priest). We witness to God's work in our lives by our actions and, when needed, with our words (prophet). (The Church advises that we must keep learning about our faith in order to be effective prophets.) Finally, we share in Christ's kingship primarily through service. This becomes clearer when we consider what Christ did and said at the Last Supper. After He washed the disciples' feet he said, "If I, therefore, the master and teacher have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." (John 13:14-15)

The understanding of the role of the laity from Vatican II was an essential part of developing the Secular Franciscan Rule of 1978. If we look at Chapter II of the Rule, it starts with six articles about how we relate to God and the Church, and then continues with another ten articles about how we live in the world. I think it is reasonable to describe Article 4 as giving us the pattern for joining these two halves, if you like, of our Way of Life. We start with prayer and the sacraments and take that into the world (Gospel to life) and then we take our relationships, our work, and our experiences

(especially those that challenge us) back to prayer (life to Gospel). We cannot be effective Secular Franciscans without doing both! It would be like trying to breathe by inhaling only and never exhaling – it doesn't work.

If you look at our way of life in this way, it strongly suggests that our time spent dealing with the demands of living in the world is just as important to God's plan for our lives as is our prayer time. Article 10 says it very clearly: "let them faithfully fulfill the duties proper to their various circumstances of life." To further emphasize the point, Article 14 says, "let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service." This means that making dinner, and doing the dishes, and taking out the trash are all part of living the Rule. The challenge, for me at least, is to take that intellectual knowledge and accept it in my heart. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that my religious activities (church, prayer, OFS meetings, etc.) are all that counts when I'm looking at how my spiritual life is going. That's important, but it's only part of the story.

This is all summed up better than my own words by what Pope John Paul II said in his address to the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order in 2002: "Secular Franciscans, you live, by vocation, your belonging to the Church and to society as inseparable realities. For this reason, you are asked first of all to bear a personal witness in the place where you live: "before all: in [your] family life; in [your] work; in [your] joys and sufferings; in [your] associations with all men and women, brothers and sisters of the same Father; in [your] presence and participation in the life of society; in [your] fraternal relationship with all creatures" (SFO, *General Constitutions*, art. 12.1)." We have a challenging vocation; may God give us the strength to live it effectively and transform the world!

Peace and blessings, Vickie 

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The *OFS 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. Anthony 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

Spiritual Assistant’s Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am writing to you on the heels of our annual Candidates’ Retreat which was held where we do most of our regional activities out at Mayslake Village. This event was designed by our regional formation team for those who are in initial formation and for their formators. For those who were there you know how well done it was and for the rest of you, ask those in formation in your fraternity what they learned, ask them why not. I simply want to reinforce the priority of formation in the Order today. And to state with great enthusiasm that I find the direction and models of Secular Franciscan initial and ongoing formation some of the most exciting elements found in the Franciscan world today. You have every reason to be proud of the work done by and for the Secular Franciscan Order and to waste no time in applying the process to your Franciscan life.

I also encourage you to look out for each other in new and greater ways. In my travels around the Mother Cabrini Region I happily encounter great numbers of Franciscan hearted people who bring good life to their fraternities which makes for potentially strong communities. Some fraternities are thriving and strong with growth and new life and bright futures. And there are many more that are faithful and stable growing more slowly. Then there are some fraternities that have had a long, full life but now they are declining it seems. In some cases these fraternities are deeply concerned for their future and they worry and feel hopeless.

In all cases remember that we are a part of a region of fraternities with great opportunities and within the region there are clusters of fraternities that can help us find connection and make us stronger. These three general types of fraternities are mirrored in life’s stages. And every stage is proper and potentially good. For those

who lament that they don’t seem to be growing; with no one in formation I want to say do not be afraid. Think of yourselves as a grandmother or grandfather fraternity and share yourselves by nurturing and encouraging other younger groups like a grandparent would. Give them your wisdom and experience and allow their life and energy to rub off on you. Then another way you could be of benefit is to share your fraternity’s story with the others and thereby preserve the treasure that you are within the order; your Franciscan history, our big picture.

These are this old brother’s thoughts this month. I wish you well and invite you to get out and see the budding spring that is popping out everywhere.

Your Brother Joe, ofm 

*Integrating Franciscan Values and Work
May 31 - June 1, 2013*

**Offered by the
Franciscan Action Network for Justice**

Hosted by the
Wheaton Franciscan
Office of Justice Peace
and Integrity of Creation
and Tau Center

9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day
Saturday concludes with liturgy at
4 p.m. in the Community Chapel

The fee for this event is on a sliding scale:
For 2 days: \$40 to \$120
For 1 day: \$25 to \$75

The fee includes lunch, Coffee breaks, and all materials. Offer whatever is within your means.

To register, call: 630-909-6805
email: taucenter@wheatonfranciscan.org
or download a registration form
from our website: www.taucenter.org

In-Formation

Dancing With and Around Lady Poverty

By Sandy Kisel, OFS

Regional Formation Commission

Dancing with and around Lady Poverty was the final topic of a great Candidates' Retreat this year. After the presenters gave their take on this topic, it was opened up to the floor. The title stirred my thoughts of our brother Francis who more than anything, wanted to BE in the same relationship with the Father as Christ. Our Heavenly Father is a God of overflowing, unlimited love! He gives everything in order to complete His desire to love each of us. **"Francis seeing Jesus in the light of His Father, poor and humble and totally loved wants to become the beloved Son of the Father..." Chapt. 15 FUN MANUAL**

Fr. Felice Cangelosi's wrote of the sacramental dimension of self-giving at Profession, saying: *"...by promising to live the Gospel life...we make ourselves entirely available to God and place our bodies (persons) on the altar of Christ's sacrifice as a holy victim pleasing to God."* Fr. Richard Trezza said that what this means is that *"Day in and day out, convenient and inconvenient, in good times and bad – the Professed Secular Franciscan is to place him/herself at God's disposal."* Now, there's no dancing around Lady Poverty with that statement!

This totally changes a view of Poverty from the view of material or monetary emptying of self. Our calling is to live the Gospel. Although it doesn't call us to live in rags or to live in abject poverty, it does call us to live the Gospel where we are in the world in a way of "simple living" trusting that as we give ourselves totally to God, He will make use of us in our daily lives for others wherever we are and no matter what our circumstances of life. I like the words: *"entirely available to God"* because this helps us realize that at any moment God could present Himself to us in innumerable ways to be a brother/sister to Christ as indicated already in the Gospels. We don't have to run out and plan how we will do this, we simply need to recognize Christ in our brothers and sisters around us and be available to them in their needs. With our eyes and hearts open, who do we see in need and what is our response to them?

Loving one another as Christ loves us, in ways pleasing to God, is a challenge today in the world around us, where God and morality are diminishing. Poverty of spirit is not an option when it causes us to decide to live according to what Gospel values teach us and against what the world teaches and accepts as a norm today. How necessary it is, more than ever, to make our loving God known and be examples of the love we know.

We are called to live out poverty according to the Gospels: Where there are sick, we care for them; where there is suffering, we alleviate it; where there is poverty, we help ease the want according to our means.

St. Paul let us know he struggled against his will...what he wanted to do, he didn't always do. There are times we've said things we wish we hadn't... times we had to have the last word or be right. There are times we're ready to do something, someone calls us and needs us right now! When we see someone needs help, do we wait until they ask? Do we know persons ill/in nursing homes/ dying, have we time to just sit and be available to them? About Prayer: when it is time for prayer, do we always want to do something else? So a question we might ask ourselves: How much of our day is spent for God and others in our lives to make them happy or comfort them? *God is all about the other, always overflowing to another...not self! It's all about love and hearts overflowing with Trinitarian Love.*

Poverty is our approach to God from a place of littleness and emptiness...not necessarily a poverty of want or need...but a poverty of fully embracing our humanity and recognizing our complete and total dependence on God.

Bring flowers of the fairest, bring flowers of the rarest...This is the month of our Heavenly Mother whose embrace of God was totally self-emptying. Let us imitate her fiat – Behold, I am the Handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to Your word". *Let's crown her with many rosaries this month as She's asked, for her Son and for souls.* 📖

Womens' Voice for Justice..Women – Unite Here!!

***Submitted by Stephen Lanterman, JPIC Councilor
Mother Cabrini Region***

On October 9, 2012, Pakistani Malala Yousafzai, aged 15 was shot in the head and neck by a Taliban gunman while returning home from school. According to Dylan Stableford, reporting Feb. 4, 2013 on an internet news source, she was hospitalized in critical condition and eventually transferred out of the country to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham central England, where several surgeries later, her skull was reconstructed. Returning to Pakistan, it is reported, the Taliban continue to threaten her with death. According to the Associated Press, it was reported that the Taliban said they targeted her because she promoted “Western thinking.” by openly advocating for young Pakistani girls having the right to go to school.



Last November Time Magazine nominated Yousfzai as one of its 2012 “Person of the Year” candidates. Time said she “had become an inspiration not only in her native Pakistan—where the culture wars over women’s rights and religious diversity have taken many violent turns—but all around the globe.” Early in 2013 Malala was nominated for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. Now Malala, herself, is up and about—and speaking up again on her own blog! “Today you can see that I’m alive...I can speak. I can see you. I can see everyone...I’m getting better day by day. It’s just because the prayers of people, because all the people—men, women, children, all of them—have prayed for me. And because of these prayers God has given me this new life. And this is a second life. This is a new life. I want to serve the people. And I want every girl, every child, to be educated,” she said, wearing a traditional headscarf that hid any scars from the bullet.

Closer to home, we have witnessed the gun shooting death of an innocent female bystander on a school playground in Chicago—Hadiya Pendleton—a high school honor student and a drum majorette for the inaugural parade of President Barak Obama. Rather than being specifically targeted, it appears she was innocently caught in gang crossfire. The bullets that ended her life were random. The Chicago Tribune has reported on a new study focusing on 17,230 guns recovered by Chicago Police. They were traced back to illegal straw purchases made in suburban gun shops. In a period covering 2008 until the end of March, 2013, some 29% of the guns recovered on Chicago streets were bought in the south suburbs of Cook and Will counties, and DuPage, Kane, and Lake counties. A straw purchase occurs when the actual buyer of a firearm is unable to pass the required federal background check, and has someone else who can purchase the firearm for him. This provides a major conduit from suburbs to city, thus sabotaging the “toughest gun laws in the nation” of the City of Chicago.



The measure of a society and the moral caliber of its people reside in how women and children are treated. It is interesting to me that an emotional highlight of our recent OFS Candidates Retreat came at the wrap-up panel session led by Nick Noe, Sister Marilyn, and Brother Joe on the topic of “Dancing with Lady Poverty.” It triggered a powerful reaction from the women in the retreat audience. Without singling out any one person or their point of view, it was unmistakable that women were saying: “We are here! We speak for ourselves and our children and families at home! We will be heard!”

I invite women throughout the Mother Cabrini OFS Region to send me your comments; and let this column for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation become a rallying point for your own conscience about the needs and concerns of women and children in the OFS! Reach me at jplic@ilsfo.org. I am eager to feature your voice for justice.