

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 still seems very appropriate to me that Easter was late this year, since spring was late too! Now we get to celebrate Easter throughout May and into June. May the joy of Christ's Resurrection be yours throughout this season and always.

As always, May is a busy month! In addition to Mother's Day, Memorial Day, First Communions, Confirmations, and graduations, we always have our Chapter of Ministers. This year's Chapter (May 17) is also our triennial Fraternal and Pastoral Visitation from the National Fraternity. National Vice Minister Elaine Hedtke will make her second visit to us, while National Spiritual Assistant Br. Bob Brady, OFM, will be joining us for the first time. Please pray for our Regional Council (Executive Council plus all local ministers/delegates) as we meet. Spiritual Assistants are strongly encouraged to attend and will meet separately with Br. Bob, while formation directors and anyone else who would like to experience our connection to the next level of fraternity are very welcome.

I have a couple of brief meditations to share this month. The first comes from the Holy Thursday celebration that I attended at Marmion Abbey. During the washing of feet, I was able to see the abbot's face, and I was struck by the warmth of the smile he gave each person after he dried their feet. I've never thought about Jesus' expression at the Last Supper,

but knowing how much Jesus loves us, I have to think that He would have a warm and loving smile on His face as He makes us clean! As we imitate Christ in our service of others, we need to remember to share that warm, loving human contact along with the service we provide. This is one way we can share the joy of the Gospel.

Second, I have a few thoughts about one of our brand-new saints. I was still a young child when John XXIII died, but as an adult convert to Catholicism, John Paul II was "my" first Holy Father (and my only Holy Father for 23 years). Moreover, he has an important place in my conversion story. In 1979, my future husband and I cut classes to go to John Paul II's Mass in Grant Park. I had no intention of becoming Catholic at the time, but the prospect of seeing this young, energetic, charismatic Pope was a powerful attraction. Afterwards, I wrote a letter to my good Methodist grandmother about the experience. Her response, citing the many good things about the Methodist Church, made me realize that I sounded like a future Catholic. I wrote it off at the time, but subsequent events proved she was onto something! While I count my husband as the most immediate human instigator of my conversion, I am grateful to John Paul II for his part in my faith journey, and somewhat amazed to think that I – and millions of others living today – have seen a canonized saint in the flesh. Saints John Paul II and John XXIII, pray for us! 

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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.

7 CALENDAR

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

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

November 2013

- 3: Living Water Korean Fraternity (E)

- 17: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration

December 2013

- 14: Wellspring Community (V)

January 2014

- 18: Regional Executive Council Meeting

March 2014

- 1: Per Capita/Census/Fraternity Annual Reports Due

- 15: Regional Executive Council Meeting

April 2014

- 20: Easter
- 26-27: Candidates Retreat (no overnight)

May 2014

- 16: REC meeting w/National Visitors (late afternoon/evening)
- 17: Chapter of Ministers – Fraternal and Pastoral Visitation

July 2014

- 10-13: Summer Seminar – Spiritual Assistance
- 17-20: Korean OFS Meeting – St Mary of the Lake, Mundelein

- 19: Regional Executive Council Meeting

August 2014

- 2: Regional Gathering – Feast of the Portiuncula

September 2014

- 27: Study Day / Leadership Workshop

October 2014

- 11: Regional Executive Council Meeting
- 21-26: NAFRA Chapter, Lake Dallas, TX

November 2014

- 16: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration and 20th anniversary of establishment of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity – Location TBD

Spiritual Assistant’s Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I remember that the last time I wrote to you on the Feast of the Annunciation for the April News there was snow on the ground and today in late April there is snow on the ground again. Sorry but for this snow lover I must declare, enough! I hope my musings for June will not include any snow references.

This month I wish to begin with promoting our regions annual Candidates Retreat. These very special events are scheduled for April 26th and 27th at Mayslake Village where most of our regional events are held. These days are designed for those in formation and for their formators but I will also encourage the local ministers to attend as well. As always we need to know (rsvp) how many will attend so we can plan for food and such. The cost is \$40 dollars for both days. This important gathering is sponsored by your regional formation council and will be using and referring to Pope Francis’s Apostolic Exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium” The Joy of the Gospel as well as some of the Secular Franciscan formation materials which are abundantly available. For those who are not participants, please hold us in your hearts and prayers for those days.

Then there is another very important event coming up. On May 17th our regions annual Chapter of Ministers happens at Mays Lake but this year we will also enjoy our regions “national visitation” at the same time. Incidentally, our Regional Executive Council (REC) will meet with our visitors on Friday evening May 16th.

Our national Vice Minister, Elaine Hedtke will serve us as fraternal visitor from the National Fraternity (NAFRA) and Brother

Bob Brady, ofm will serve as pastoral visitor from the Council of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA). For chapter on the 17th the local ministers in particular are seriously encouraged to attend with as many members of their local council and formation leadership as can come. This is also an important time for the local Spiritual Assistants to attend as well as those of you who are preparing to become Spiritual Assistants. Brother Bob will probably want to meet with you. Alas, I will be unable to attend because I will be in Scotland and England at that time. My only regret will be missing our visitation; otherwise I will happily be gathering rich life experiences to share with you.

I remain, your Brother,

Joe Middleton, ofm **7**

In Memoriam

Martha Kay was professed as a Secular Franciscan on May 19, 1980 and passed away early Sunday morning, March 30, at Glenbrook Hospital. We thank Father Jim for being so faithful in visiting her after our monthly meetings and extending our love to her.

Susan Almaria was a professed member of the St. Francis - St. Louis Fraternity. Susan died, March 31st at around 10:00 a.m. Philippine time.

St. Pascal's satellite fraternity announces the death of its member Leonard Fron, OFS, on Sunday, April 6th.

Most Reverend Andrew McDonald, Bishop Emeritus of Little Rock, died 1 April at LittleSisters of the Poor/St. Joseph Home for the Elderly, Palatine, Illinois. Bishop McDonald had been a resident of St. Joseph Home for twelve years. Bishop McDonald was a great friend to the Northwest Franciscan Community of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Fraternity who meet at St. Joseph’s Home for the Elderly.

In-Formation – Regional Formation Council

THE LORD HEARS THE CRIES OF THE POOR, BLESSED BE THE LORD- by Sandra Kisel ofs/Formation Commission

Brothers and sisters, I am writing to you with a very empty head. Still I'm grateful to write to you because we are family. Today we are celebrating Passion Sunday and I've just completed the Liturgy for morning hours and will shortly attend Holy Mass. By the time you receive this the Candidates retreat will be past and I hope all will have received great blessings and bread on which to dwell in preparation for Holy Profession.

I've wondered what to write because this month we are totally focused on the outpouring of God's love in sending His Beloved Son to us, to take up our flesh and then to die on the wood of the Cross. He who had no sin has died for us and his death has born the fruit of eternal life for those who embrace Him and His way of Life; those who would repent for their sins and be converted or changed into new being/new life, life in Him. There is so much misery in this world, so much unhappiness! But how can we be happy unless we know Him who truly loves us, embraces us and has laid down His life to give life to us? There is no happiness aside from this love!

I'm thinking also of our Mother, Mary who stood by her Son from His birth to the Cross and saw Him ascend into Heaven! May is the month dedicated to our Holy Mother, to give her homage, she who Francis couldn't praise enough in his Salutation! It is she that our Lord has entrusted the Church and our Order of Penitents. It is she who helps us each day to overcome our weaknesses and draws us closer and closer to her Son, into the Trinity. She, daughter of our Heavenly Father, Mother of Christ the Son and Spouse of the Holy Spirit is given to us to be our Mother who cries for us and reminds Him, "*they have no more wine;*" how needy we are, (she intercedes for us), and obtains what she asks. Thanks to our Triune God for all the gifts which He has mercifully blessed us with and for the grace to be called children. Glory and Praise to You O Lord, now and forever!

In the spirit of the Beatitudes, I am now thinking of Christ, St. Francis and St. Maximilian Kolbe, they were all imprisoned and I'm pondering a ministry that is very close to my heart; **MI/Knights At the Foot of the Cross Prison**

Ministry. Until a short time ago I believed as most do that the incarcerated were in prison to serve out their term of justice; I forgot about mercy. I've come to know that God and the Immaculata come to us wherever we are if only we will open the door for them. We serve over 200 prisons, promoting consecrations to the Immaculata, dispensing bibles, Catechisms, rosaries, holy cards, books on the lives of the saints and many other spiritual items and we correspond with inmates. The results have been overwhelming! The story of Francis with the lepers comes to mind as I ponder how once I was fearful of them and now these same ones are pleading/writing they have found God; some even asking, how can God ever forgive me for my crimes? How can my family and friends and those I've wounded ever forgive me? Some (lifers), who have repented and found God, have asked whether it is possible to be ordained so that they can minister to those around them and in some way make restitution to God for their sins. For an incredible number, their remorse is true and their love is very great!

Through their consecrations, many are praying the Divine Office and the rosary daily. They have much time to dwell on Holy Scripture and when they write they share their new found faith. Some have had their faith re-awakened in them and are now on fire that others may grow in God. They pray for all of us and love knowing that their sufferings, their crosses of incarceration are able to bear much fruit. And with all this I have even learned we have Franciscan brothers and sisters, (fraternities of Professed OFS) in various states and I am able to write them! The Immaculata directs and obtains everything for her poor; these too are her children for whom she cries. Let us pray for them and thank God for all of His blessings now and forever. Hail Mary full of grace! The Lord is with Thee...Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. Remember, (*rosaries*) to our Mother for Mother's Day! 

St. Pascal's satellite fraternity announces sadly that they are becoming deactivated in June 2014, after 76 years of doing a lot of apostolates. Fr. John Sullivan will make the deactivation effective June 30, 2014. 

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

“At the Periphery”

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Councilor

In “The Cardinal’s Column” of the *Catholic New World*, (March 23-April 5, 2014) Francis Cardinal George shared information about five ministries within the Archdiocese of Chicago that provide services to the poor and marginalized. The column was entitled “Lent 2014: Going to the Margins of the Archdiocese” in response to Pope Francis’ call to “look at things from the perspective of the ‘margins’, so that no one is overlooked or ignored.”

Cardinal George highlights Kolbe House, a ministry to the imprisoned, located at Assumption Parish, down the street from Cook County Jail. I have been participating this year in the Kolbe House email Lenten Retreat that shares personal reflections on The Way of the Cross. The writers include staff members of the Precious Blood Reconciliation Center (PBRC) and Kolbe House chaplains at the Cook County Temporary Juvenile Detention Center, a young man who lives in the Back of the Yards neighborhood, a mother of an incarcerated individual, and a young man in prison who was sentenced as a juvenile to serving life without the possibility of parole. These reflections have opened my eyes to seeing things from another perspective.

Another ministry mentioned in the column is Kateri Center, one of the very few ministries to urban American Indian Catholics in this country. I can respect their struggles with urban life as a people whose relationship to God is connected to their relationship to the land. Also mentioned is Amate House, where young adult volunteers devote a year of their lives to serving the needy in Chicago. St. Leo Campus for Veterans, a ministry of Catholic Charities of the archdiocese, and Zacchaeus House, a ministry of the deacons of the archdiocese, both provide a safe, supportive and spiritual home for the often marginalized veterans and homeless.

In my role as JPIC Councilor, my perspective is slowly changing on issues related to justice, peace and the care of God’s creation. Gradually, I am pulling my head out of the sand and becoming more aware. I’m encouraged by Cardinal George’s invitation to spiritually visit these places during Lent.

“which is a liturgical season given to us to change our perspective and get back to basics.

Basics are often best discovered at the periphery, on the margins, as the pope continually reminds us.” He goes on to say that “Jesus was safer in the desert than in Jerusalem, as things turned out. But he could not have made the journey up to Jerusalem and his death and resurrection without the time he spent in the desert, at the periphery.”

One way to gain another’s perspective is through their stories. Books, films and theatrical performances can provide a window into the lives of those who live outside our daily concerns. Sharing this experience with others is a wonderful way to start a dialogue about issues that touch your heart. Once we become aware of these issues, we are more likely to act on them.

I would like to propose adding to our JPIC resources a reference list of books and videos that address issues of peace and justice in a unique way. This resource would be useful for those who wish to start a book discussion group within your fraternity or with other Franciscans in your area. My former fraternity used a video sharing Immaculee Ilibagiza’s story about genocide to increase awareness of this human rights tragedy. This video sparked further interest in her book, *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust.* Through books and film, we can view issues from the margins and gradually make our way to the center of these concerns with our actions.

I welcome your input for this endeavor. As a librarian, I am pleased to compile this list of resources for your use. If you haven’t already done so, I encourage you to return your survey responses so we can begin to share the many ways we already promote justice and cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for life.



“Let us love deeply the earth which gives us air to breathe, water to drink, and food to sustain us. May we remember that life is begotten from stardust, radiant in light and heat. We are all one-all of creation, all that now live, all that have ever lived” - author unnamed