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Minister's Message

Dear sisters and brothers,
When we talk about "formation" in our fraternities, we usually mean "formal" formation – either initial formation of new Secular Franciscans or ongoing formation programs for all. However, since the Holy Spirit, with the active participation of each individual, is the principal agent of formation, we need to look more broadly at formation. Perhaps the most important formation happens in the events of our daily lives, but we need to be able to see how that is happening and have a foundation in place for the Spirit to build on. Just as in any endeavor, if we're going to be successful we need to prepare. We need information – we need knowledge about our faith and about what it means to be a Franciscan. We also need to develop skills and habits that support our formation. Our practice of daily prayer in morning and evening is a good example of that; it helps ensure that we pray at least twice a day! Moreover, if we use the Liturgy of the Hours in some form, we are repeatedly exposed to many psalms and scripture passages that become deeply engrained over time. Practice/repetition does help, in our spiritual life as well as anywhere else. You doubtless have many other good habits according to the opportunities your life affords; daily Mass, praying the Rosary, serving the poor, etc. Lent provides a good opportunity each year to make some new good habit as well as breaking some bad one. Our Order has identified a lot that we need to know in order to have a shared understanding of what it means to be Secular Franciscans. This is good but as I said above, it's only the foundation of formation; our goal is:

TRANSFORMATION into the image and likeness of Jesus, with St. Francis as our model (and compelling evidence that this transformation is possible!). The following key characteristics of formation are summarized from the *Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order*:

ACTIVE – drawn from / directed to life's experiences

COMMUNAL – small group sharing faith, relational, fraternal life

CENTERED ON JESUS CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL – find Christ and the Gospel in each of our lives

ECCLESIAL – based in the Church/inspiring us as laity within the church

SECULAR – applied to life as we live in the world, not attempting to live as religious

FRANCISCAN – continual conversion, peacemaking, service, etc.

JOYFUL – joy/gratitude to the Lord
Spirit of SIMPLICITY – detachment from "stuff"

OPEN-ENDED – never ending, be open to new ways to follow God, learn to watch for the signs of God's direction in our lives.

At our Study Day, we used a version of Lectio Divina to meditate on an article of the Rule in a group setting. Lectio Divina is traditionally used with Scripture but can be used very effectively to slow down and really pay attention to what God is calling us to do in our Rule and other documents as well. For me personally, the few minutes we spent on Article 14 of the

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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.

REGIONAL CALENDAR 2015

All events are at Mayslake Village
unless otherwise noted

Saturday, September 19
Formation/Leadership Workshop

Saturday, October 3
Regional Executive Council
Meeting

October 13-18
*NAFRA Chapter/Chapter of Elections,
Clinton, NJ*

Sunday, November 15
Mother Cabrini Feast Day
Celebration location TBA

Saturday, December 5
Regional Chapter of Elections

REGIONAL CALENDAR 2016

All events are at Mayslake Village unless
otherwise noted

Saturday, January 16
Regional Executive Council Meeting

Monday, March 2
*Per Capita/Census/Fraternity Annual Reports
due*

Saturday, March 19
Regional Executive Council Meeting

Sunday, March 27 *Easter*

Sat./Sun., April 9-10
Candidates Retreat

Saturday, May 7
Chapter of Ministers

Thursday-Sunday, July 9-12
**Summer Seminar – Loretto, PA; topic “Servant
Leadership”**

Saturday, July 16
Regional Executive Council Meeting

Saturday, August 6
Regional Gathering –
Feast of the Portiuncula Saturday,
Saturday, September 19
Formation/Leadership Workshop


Saturday, October 1
Regional Executive Council Meeting

October 13-18
**NAFRA Chapter/Chapter of Elections, Clinton,
NJ**

Sunday, November 13
Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration –
location TBA

Ministers Message cont.

Rule resulted in my coming home
with an “action item” to live that
Article more fully. I encourage you
to try it individually. To learn more
about Lectio Divina, see
http://www.saintahttp://www.saintandrewsabbey.com/Lectio_Divina_s/35.htm

May Christ continue to give each of
us what is ours to do...and may we
DO it!
Vickie 

Spiritual Assistant’s Message

SFO/OSF Peacemaker August and
September 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I hope your summer is
going well and that you have been
able to take advantage of all the
warm weather opportunities. I’ve
only been to the beach once and
even then just for a little while for
our dear Brother Sun is clear and
bright indeed but also hot, and
hard on my poor old balding
head. However I do enjoy
prayerfully sitting in the shade as
lake breezes blow while eating
cold watermelon.

One more thing I would
like to bring to your attention. On
Thursday evening September 17th
at 5:00 till 8:00 P.M. here at St.
Peter’s Church our own Fr. Robert
Karris, ofm invites the Friars and
the Secular Franciscans to attend a
presentation of his newly revised
book on The Admonitions of St.
Francis followed by a little
Franciscan Hospitality (snacks).
This exciting event will be a great
opportunity to more deeply
understand this most important
document in our Franciscan
history. This will be also be a time
to spend with the friars and the
brothers and sisters of other

Fraternities, as well as an
opportunity to experience the
influence of our illustrious
Professor Fr. Bob Karris, ofm who
just rejoined us here at St. Peter’s
after spending many years as the
director of research for the
Franciscan Institute at St.
Bonaventure University in New
York.


Finally let me leave you
with a little passage from “The
Franciscan Story” one of my most
favorite Franciscan resource books
by a fine fellow named Maurice
Carmody. He says, “The Rule of
1978, with its emphasis on personal
and communal spirituality, social
justice, peace and the integrity of
creation provides the guidelines for
the contemporary Brothers and
Sisters of Penance: the Secular
Franciscans. It contributes to that
dynamic diversity which has been
part of the whole Franciscan Order
since the beginning.”

Please continue to raise up
your summertime prayers for me
and for each other.

Your
brother Joe, ofm 

In Memoriam

Ronald Beaupre OFS, of St.
Paschal’s Fraternity, passed on to
meet The Lord the week of 14
September, 2015.

Delphine Kronau, OFS, of the
Northwest Franciscan Community
of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
entered into eternal life on
September 7 at 12:40. Delphine is
survived by a rather large family
and is sorely missed by her
fraternity. 

To Really See


Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha" – that is, "Be opened!" – And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. (Mark: 7-31-37)

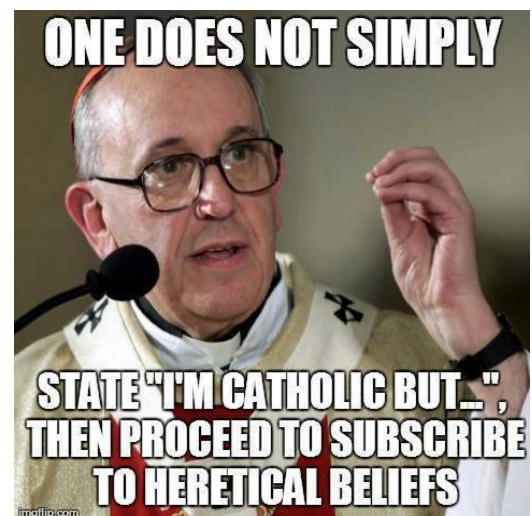
When I heard this gospel passage read a few weeks ago, the words "be opened" struck two chords with me. First, I was reminded of other healing passages in Mark, especially where Jesus opens the eyes of blind men. Jesus put spittle on the eyes of a blind man at Bethsaida, laid hands on him twice, and after the second time, the man could see clearly (Mark 8: 22-26). In Jericho, the blind Bartimaeus received his sight after crying out to Jesus for pity. Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus replied, "Master, I want to see." Jesus tells Bartimaeus his faith has saved him and immediately Bartimaeus received his sight and begins to follow Jesus (Mark: 10: 46-52). Although Jesus does not touch Bartimaeus, his encounter with and deep faith in Jesus is enough to open the eyes of the pleading blind man.

The second chord, perhaps more dissonant than the first, reminded me of a phrase used by James Balog, a notable nature photographer. Balog argues that a major reason the majority of people aren't concerned enough about the effects of climate change and overall environmental degradation is they don't see the negative effects of their economic decisions and actions on the environment. He uses the phrase, "a crisis of perception," to describe this environmental blindness. So, Balog, using several time-lapse cameras, photographed the rapid melting of glaciers in the Arctic and other parts of the world. His films show the glaciers rapidly receding by miles and enormous chunks of melting ice falling into the ocean and down mountainsides. Most of the melting ice will contribute to rising ocean levels and the eventual displacement of people living on the coastlands, many of whom are poor.

But whether Balog's documentary or Pope Francis' first encyclical, *Laudato Si*, really open our eyes so

we see deeply depends not only the images and words before us. We must be open, aware, and present, and not have our vision clouded by our own cares and busy schedules, or by political ideologies. We need to be open to changing our lifestyle and begin the process of what Pope Francis calls, "ecological conversion." Our goal should be to attain the heartfelt eyesight of Francis of Assisi so we can see all creatures, human and non-human as brother and sister, and absorb the suffering and beauty in the world. In Chapter One of *Laudato Si* ("What is Happening to Our Common Home"), Pope Francis writes: "*Our goal is not to amass information or satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.*" Certainly, people can be aware and see with compassionate eyes the suffering of the poor and the earth without believing in God or belonging to a religious tradition. But Christians, and especially we Franciscans, see not only with compassionate eyes, but in a deeper sense also see all creation as an image of Christ. Therefore, all suffering in the world, reflects the suffering of Christ. But deep seeing is not just about suffering. It is also seeing the wonder and beauty of the created world, a world created and still being created by God through and for Christ.

So how do we acquire the penetrating eyesight of Francis of Assisi? The answer is the same for us as it was for St. Francis and that is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. But, of course, we have Francis and our Rule as guides. And it's the answer also given by Pope Francis. In both *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si*, the Pope invites all Christians to have a renewed encounter with Jesus Christ. It is only with the help of Christ and the Holy Spirit that interior change can occur resulting in both an ecological and evangelical conversion. A renewed encounter with Jesus Christ will open our eyes to both the suffering and beauty of the world. 



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

2015 Animate Peace Retreat

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Animator



I had the great pleasure of participating in the 2015 Animate Peace Retreat held August 20-23rd at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, IL. Our national JPIC animator, Carolyn Townes describes the *Animate Peace Retreat* as a national gathering for all Animators of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation as well as JPIC – hearted folks. There were thirty of us in attendance representing nineteen of the thirty OFS regions in the United States.

It was a joyful time in which we shared our faith and justice experiences along with prayer and contemplation. The relational spirit of our Franciscan charism was highlighted within our sessions. To assist us in building our spiritual relationship with God, Carolyn would lead us in “sacred Franciscan moments” in which we would practice being still and entering into a place where that small voice of God can be heard. The need for self-care and personal reflection was discussed as part of our transformation. We are animators of peace. In that role, it was noted that if you don’t transform suffering then you transmit it.

I encourage you to visit Carolyn’s blog at <http://animatepeace.blog.com>. There is a beautiful video that she created that describes the focus of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. This brief four-minute video provides a wonderful introduction for discussion and ongoing formation. As


animators of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, it is our role to give life to the issues of peace and social justice in our world - which will, by God's grace, incite others to action. We are all called to this role.

The JPIC logo demonstrates how each of us are called to contemplate, educate and animate the Gospel message, our OFS Rule and our Catholic Social Teachings within the four foundational pillars on which our Secular Franciscan Way of Life is based.

There are two helpful resources that Carolyn created to assist you in your journey. The first is a reflection packet for the *Season of Caring for Creation* for September 1 – October 4 and the other is entitled *12 Weeks of Franciscan Peace* that spans from October 3 – December 25. Vicki Klick forwarded both of these documents to fraternity ministers on August 31st. I plan to post these on our regional website as well.

Throughout the retreat, we were encouraged to build relationships using the PEACE principles: Prayer, Empathy, Active Listening, Compassion and Evangelical Love. Five of our brothers and sisters took this to heart as they traveled to nearby Ferguson, MO. Jim Myres from Cincinnati, OH took the initiative to contact Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church in Ferguson to learn more about this community. Deacon Allen Love graciously met with five of our brothers and sisters to share his insight on the issues that surrounded the fatal shooting of Michael Brown and the work that is being done in the community to repair and rebuild relationships. Members of our group then spent some time in Ferguson and related how their impressions from the visit were so different than what was depicted in the media. The message that resonated with them was this: What happened in Ferguson could have happened in any town in America.

As Gospel people, we are called to give life to the issues of peace and justice in our world. Share your Franciscan story with others and actively listen to other people’s stories.

I encourage all of you to participate in OFS events. We were reminded that we all belong to four fraternities: local, regional, national and international. Get to know others in our family. 

Study Day/Leadership Workshop

“Forming the Formators and Formation”

Saturday, September 19, 2015

Mayslake Village

1801 35th St. Oakbrook, IL

Registration	8:30 am
Mass	9:00 am
Continental Breakfast	9:45 am
Session #1 “What Has Worked Well for You in Doing or Participating in Initial Formation” (Nick Noe Facilitator-Small Group Discussions)	10:15 am
Session #2 Pathway to Profession/<i>Required Topics</i> (Sandy Kisel OFS and Patrick Mendes OFS) “Discussion and Questions”	11:00 am
Lunch **	11:30 am
Session #3 Formation Curriculum, Franciscan Journey & The FUN Manual (Nick Noe OFS)	12:00 pm
Session #4 Fostering Transformation (Vickie Klick OFS)	1:00 pm
Session #5 Leadership Breakout Sessions	2:00 pm
	3:00 pm *

***session will end no later than 4pm**

**** lunch provided at no charge**

Organized by the Regional

Formation Commission:

Nick Noe OFS, Regional Formation Director

Vickie Klick OFS, Regional Spiritual Minister

Br. Joe Middleton OFM, Regional Spiritual Asst.

Patrick Mendes OFS, Comm. Member

Sr. Marilyn Renninger OSF, Comm. Member

Sandy Kisel OFS, Comm. Member

**Please RSVP by Fraternity to Bonnie Michels OFS by Sept. 14
(fratlife@ilsfo.org)**

Mother Cabrini Regional OFS Fraternity Celebration

Sunday, November 15, 2015

At St. John Neumann Parish,
2900 E. Main Street, St. Charles, IL 60174
St. Charles, Illinois



Schedule of Events:

10:00 am Sign-In / Registration

10:30 am Speaker Fr. Chuck Faso

12:00 Pot-Luck Lunch (*no charge*)

1:15 pm Mass

2:30 pm Evening Prayer & Remembrance of the regional deceased

3:30 pm Departure

Each fraternity is invited to bring a banner (or comparable item) and to bring a food item to share with regional attendees as part of our pot-luck lunch. Kitchen, oven and refrigeration space is available but limited

Please RSVP to Kristi Loar by **Sunday, November 1st** with the number of people attending from your fraternity, and what kind of dish you plan to bring; salad, vegetable, meats, dessert, etc (*although actual attendance won't be known until all fraternities respond, a rule of thumb is to provide enough to share 15-20 servings*).