

Minister's Message

Dear sisters and brothers,

I've only been home from National Chapter for two days as I write this. It was such a busy time, and such a blessing! It's always good to be with the family – to greet old friends and make new ones. It was great to be able to spend a little time talking with our Minister General, Tibor Kauser – there is a lot going on at the International level, and we will ALL have an opportunity to contribute input to that effort soon!

It was easy to see that the Holy Spirit was part of our election process – three of the eight members elected to the National Executive Council were nominated from the floor! It's easy to understand why we can't have absentee voting when the slate can (and often does) change when we vote for each position. Thank you for your prayers for our new leadership.

Also, thank you for your continuing prayers for our former National Minister, Dcn. Tom Bello. He was able to participate in most of the week's activities, and was noticeably stronger as the week went on! He is very grateful for all our prayers.

A former regional minister came as an observer, to see everyone one last time. She has been battling an incurable cancer for several years (and served a second term as regional minister after her diagnosis!) and her battle is nearing the end. It is good to be part of an Order where we can talk plainly about Sister Death. She also demonstrated how important it is to be with the fraternal family.

While I was at Chapter, I wrote to all the local ministers, asking that Tom's final annual report be shared with all of you and be used for ongoing formation. You can find his report at the NAFRA website, linked right on the home page (www.nafra-sfo.org). Tom spells out his

concerns for the future of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States and makes some recommendations with associated action items to address them.

First, his two greatest concerns (emphasis Tom's):

WE CONTINUE IN 2015 TO SHOW BOTH A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS AND OF THE FRANCISCAN CHARISM AND THE LACK OF A SINCERE LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO LIVING INTENSELY THE GOSPEL LIFE OF CHRIST IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINTS FRANCIS AND CLARE.

He follows with three recommendations:

1. More Individual and Fraternal Prayer from our hearts at every Secular Franciscan gathering.
2. Better Formation, from Initial to Ongoing, in every Fraternity, Local, Regional and National, at every opportunity.
3. More social sharing and JOY at every Secular Franciscan gathering.

I don't have space here to list Tom's action items to support these areas, but I will start by encouraging us all to pray and reflect on our Essential Documents, using the method of Lectio Divina that we demonstrated at our recent Study Day. We now have an article from the Constitutions or the Rule posted on the NAFRA home page each week; committing to reflect on that one article each week would be a good place to start. When I consider the Rule and

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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 14
Chapter of Ministers

Thursday-Sunday, June 30 - July 4
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 17
Formation/Leadership Workshop

Saturday, October 1
Regional Executive Council Meeting

October 13-18 (tentative)
NAFRA Chapter/Chapter of Elections, FL

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

Ministers Message cont.

and Constitutions, I can truly say that I need to begin again, for up to now I have done little or nothing. May God give us all the grace to start anew each day! 

Spiritual Assistant's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Greetings and best wishes from my favorite month of the year; Sweet November. I really appreciate how we begin this month with the theme of memorial remembering. We remember and honor all the saints on the Feast of All Saints on the first day, then on the second day we celebrate The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed formerly known as The Feast of All Souls. And then a few days later on the 5th the Franciscan world honors the deceased members of the three Orders, their parents and benefactors, and those buried in our churches and cemeteries for The Commemoration of All Souls of the Seraphic Order. Of course there is for us in this region the celebration of our patroness Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini when we are all invited to come together to feast and pray as well as to remember our deceased brothers and sisters as we do every year. In all of this we honor our heroes and loved ones and we honor our creator God who connects us all. Remember also that the lovely season of advent begins later in the month on the 29th as we prepare for you know what. But let's not rush into all of that just yet. What we can do is to prepare to celebrate my favorite secular holiday event; the feast of Thanksgiving.

It is also my favorite time to cook up a storm. This year I will prepare a never frozen free range turkey with gravy and a smoky ham with pineapple and orange sauce. There will be cornbread dressing, creamed potatoes, black eyed peas, south Indian carrots with cardamom butter, French cut green beans with toasted pecans, and creamed spinach. Since I am not a baker I will try and coerce someone into baking a nice cake or more. Otherwise I will go to Bakers Square for a wide variety of pies with ice cream. Does that sound good to you?

I wish you all the best at this wonderful time of the year as I pray for your comfort and joy with these few short words.

Your Brother Joe, ofm 

A communication from Franciscan Outreach:

Dear Friends,

Last night's loss against the Mets was a hard one. And though the #cubschallenge ended far sooner than we were hoping, it was fun while it lasted. It was wonderful to see so many Chicagoans come together for the greater good, regardless of which team they root for. **With the support of forty-seven donors, we were able to raise a total of \$8,125 for Franciscan Outreach!**

On behalf of our guests, thank you to those of you who got in the game, and to the many others who helped us spread the word; we couldn't have done it without you! We are so thankful for the support of such a generous community and we look forward to celebrating many more accomplishments together (#cubschallenge2016?).

Franciscan Outreach - bringing Cubs and Sox fans together since 1963.

Our mailing address is:
Franciscan Outreach
1645 W LeMoyne St
Chicago, IL 60622

A Challenge to knowing and doing.

I recently returned from Clinton, New Jersey where I attended the National Chapter. As you know, it was an Elective Chapter and our Regional Minister has already notified you of our new National leadership, so I won't repeat the information in this column.

Aside from the excitement of meeting the Minister General, Tibor Kauser, OFS, who came to preside over the National Elections and the opportunity to see and hear General Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, I was most impressed with outgoing National Minister, Deacon Tom Bello's State of the Order address.


In his recommendations, Tom expressed concern for the lack of knowledge of the *Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order* by elected leaders and others at all levels of fraternity. It is Tom's belief and I certainly concur, that it seems unlikely that unless people know these, lifelong commitment likely isn't possible.

So we have our first challenge of knowing and doing. I see an opportunity for some very lively on going formation sessions! The inside back page of your **TAU USA**, has all the ordering information

Tom had some recommendations to make especially to the local fraternities. I'll take a moment here to review them and offer some suggestions:

1. Regular personal and communal prayer. I'm sure we all attend our personal prayer daily - hourly if we are particularly distressed! What about our community prayer at our fraternity gatherings? Do we vary it, or is it always the same? Some variety in addition to the Divine Office might be praying the Crown Rosary, say at our May gathering; making the stations of the cross together during Lent; Lectio Divina. You get the idea.

2. Strong initial and on going formation. Are we using our resources to our best advantage. Initial formation has an abundance of formation materials and an extremely well organized Model Curriculum On-going formation at Fraternity gatherings, likewise have an abundance of materials available but what about our time in between fraternity gatherings? Are we reading some of the gospel daily? Have we made an effort to read such formative materials as the Holy Father's encyclical **Laudato Si**?

I hope these few ideas have offered you some food for thought and added a little spark to your Franciscan life. 



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

In Gratitude for Family

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Animator

November brings to mind the final days of autumn and a feeling of thanksgiving for the many blessings God has bestowed upon me. As I prepare to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday and the beautiful Advent season, my thoughts turn to my family. My heart echoes the words of Pope Francis as he spoke at the World Meeting of Families, *"The family is like a factory of hope."*

My days were filled during the Pope's visit to the United States so I was not able to watch much of the coverage. Fortunately, there are many places in our media-rich culture to catch up on the events. I was able to watch and read his speeches and homilies by accessing two websites: Pope Francis Visit at www.popefrancisvisit.com and the World Meeting of Families www.worldmeeting2015.org. Pope Francis' words and actions provided many opportunities for reflection.

At the Canonization of St. Junipero Serra, he tells us, "the joy of the Gospel is something to be experienced, something to be known and lived only through giving it away, through giving ourselves away."

At the prison in Philadelphia, he shares that "Life is a journey, along different roads, different paths, which leave their mark on us... Life means 'getting our feet dirty' from the dust-filled roads of life and history. All of us need to be cleansed, to be washed. All of us are being sought out by the Teacher, who wants to help us resume our journey. The Lord goes in search of us; to all of us he stretches out a helping hand."

At the Closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families, he talks about the importance of sharing the little things of life. "Jesus says, 'Do not hold back anything that is good, instead help it to grow!' To raise doubts about the working of the Spirit, to give the impression

that it cannot take place in those who are not 'part of the group', who are not 'like us', is a dangerous temptation. Not only does it block conversion to the faith; it is a perversion of faith! Faith opens a 'window' to the presence and working of the Spirit. It shows us that, like happiness, holiness is always tied to little gestures ... These little gestures are those we learn at home, in the family; they get lost amid all the other things we do, yet they do make each day different."

"Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home. Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, encouraging all these little signs of love as signs of his own living and active presence in our world."

As you prepare for the holidays and plan your fraternity calendars for next year, look for ways to include families. Pope Francis notes, "A people that does not know how to look after children and grandparents is a people that has no future because it does not have the strength or the memory to go forward."

Let us share our Franciscan spirituality with young and old through little gestures within our homes and fraternities. Explore ways to include your families or to reach out to families in your community. Envision your fraternity as a "factory of hope" by sharing the joy of the Gospel through our faith-filled experiences.

Relationships can be challenging, especially those within families. We are called to use our gifts to bring the Gospel to life and life to the Gospel. Jesus tells us not to hold back anything that is good but to help it to grow.

During this season of families, keep in mind Pope Francis' advice, "Never let the day end without making peace. A society is strong, it's solid if it's edified on beauty, goodness and truth."

Let's find little ways to encourage and strengthen families by protecting and sharing the beauty of God's creation, demonstrating goodness toward others and spreading the truths of the Gospel.

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 youth@ilsfo.org 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*).