

## Minister's Message

Dear sisters and brothers,  
As I write this, my last *OFS News* article as regional minister, my heart is still full of the appreciation so many of you shared with me at our Mother Cabrini celebration. It has been an honor and a blessing to serve you, and it has certainly been a "growth experience" for me. Two lines from St. Francis continue to be on my mind: "I have done what is mine to do" and "Let us begin again, for up to now we have done [little or] nothing." With respect to the first, I think I've done what I can, for now, as regional minister; it is time for someone else with different gifts to share them with the regional fraternity. Scripture reminds us that no one of us has it all! Part of the wisdom of the term limits in our Constitutions is to ensure that we periodically refresh our leadership.  
On the other hand, I can look at the needs of the Order (so clearly put by our brother Tom Bello in his last State of the Order report as National minister) and see that we have a *long* way to go before we live up to our potential. How much could we or should we have been able to accomplish in the last six years? Regardless of what might have been, here we are, and we need to begin again. While our numbers continue to decline, I see a lot of hope for the future in our new candidates and professed. Their formation is much better than what we had even a decade ago, and their enthusiasm is very infectious. We "experienced" Secular Franciscans have a lot to learn from and with our new folks!

The better we understand the way of life we have professed, the more room the Holy Spirit has to work on us for the transformation that we aspire to. If we are transformed, numbers will not be an issue! For myself, I feel the need to get back to basics and simply begin again, to spend time with our Rule and Constitutions as well as Scripture – to recommit myself to the daily conversion that is essential if I'm going to follow Christ in the spirit of St. Francis. Also, I feel called to be *available* for a while, rather than immediately diving into something new. Some of that availability is for my family, especially for my husband; some is for me (there are some things I've been putting off that I'd like to do); some is so I can listen for what God is inviting me to do next. I'm trying (with the help of my spiritual director) to pay attention to the little hints of what might be mine to do next, without committing myself to anything new right away. It seems appropriate that our region has elections early in Advent – we begin again as the church starts its liturgical year. Please pray for our new Regional Executive Council, along with all the leaders of our Order. As we approach the feast of the Incarnation, let us all resolve to make more room for Jesus Christ in our lives in the coming year. May the love of the Lord transform all our hearts and minds this Christmas and always!  
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 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

Saturday, December 5 (2015)  
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-Monday, June 30-July 4  
*Quinquennial Congress,  
St. Louis, MO*

Saturday, July 16  
Regional Executive Council  
Meeting

Saturday, August 6  
Regional Gathering - Feast of the  
Portiuncula


Saturday, September 17  
Formation/Leadership  
Workshop

Saturday, October 1  
Regional Executive Council  
Meeting

November 1-6 *NAFRA  
Chapter/National Visitation -  
Winter Park, FL*

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

**Ministers Message cont.**

Mayslake Village is generous in allowing us to use their facilities for the majority of our meetings. They, in turn, would appreciate our support by including us in their mailing list. If you are willing to receive mailings from Mayslake Village, please email Joan Buchanan at: < > or call the Mayslake office at:< > 

**Spiritual Assistant's Message**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christmas Greetings to you all. I hope that you are enjoying yourselves as best you can this year amid a world full of frightened people. Let us do all that we can to infuse the holidays with peace and all good. I pray that all of our celebrations will be beautiful and peaceful. I believe that this is part and parcel for the Franciscan heart and spirit, to really love Christmas. And we can find happiness again as we recall the event in Bethlehem, the event in Greccio, as well as all the growing happy memories we have created on our own. Please pray for all of us who will be traveling this year. I will be repeating my holiday home towns road trip to New Orleans, San Antonio, the Texas hill country, and then even a couple of days in Dallas. But before I speak about the future I want to recall the very special event the many of us enjoyed as we gathered for the annual Mother Cabrini celebration way out in St. Charles sponsored by cluster 5. I think that all who attended had a great day and I will further attest to the certain fact that they had an abundant

variety of wonderful food. Franciscans are generally so creative and generous and usually when they join their efforts and their food there is always plenty for every one and there is most of the time at least twelve baskets left over. And the desserts were particularly abundant. The only thing that was missing this year was tornados in the area like there were last year in Frankfort. Do you remember?

The other most important event in December right up there with Christmas will be the Mother Cabrini regions elections of the Regional Executive Council. This as you know happens every three years just the way it does in all your local fraternities. This year we are faced with many choices to make and many ways to bring fourth the gifts and talents of our sisters and brothers called into servant leadership. I expect that the transition will go smoothly for there is a history of solid leadership in this region which has advanced with the times into collectively being enlightened and able and well prepared Franciscan folks. Congratulations! And while I am not ready to drag up that much used expression about "for up to now we have done nothing," for we have actually done a lot and come very far, but let me just add one of my own overused expressions, We could do "more" and we could do it "better." My blessings and best wishes to you all as we celebrate God's wonderful gift and history of Jesus with all those inspired Franciscan applications we live by.

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 

## INFORMATION

By Sr. Marilyn Renninger, OSF  
Regional Formation Commission

Hi, Everyone!

"MERCY" is a popular word in our vocabulary these days. As we end this Church Year, Pope Francis has asked us to focus on MERCY for the coming year. As we know he has called for an extraordinary Jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, which opens on December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and closes on November 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. (This Year of Mercy also celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of Vatican II.) Many books have been written this past year to help us deepen our understanding of God's mercy, as well as discovering different actions we can take to practice more deeply the virtue of mercy in our lives.


Mercy is often defined as an attitude of compassion or concern which brings one to reach out and come to the aid of someone in need. Mercy requires action. We can't just sit and think about it and do nothing. We probably all remember in some form, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy that we memorized when we were young. If we need a refresher, keep reading. The Spiritual Works of Mercy are: teach the ignorant, counsel those who doubt, help the sinner, comfort the sorrowful, forgive injuries, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead. The Corporal Works of Mercy are: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, give clothes to those who have none, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the people in prison, and bury the dead. As Franciscans, we have been practicing many of these as a way of taking the gospel to life and life to the gospel.

How fitting it is that we focus on God's **mercy** as we prepare for the celebration of the great mystery of God becoming man and entering our world as a helpless baby. Jesus Christ, the image of the Father, is the fullest expression of the mercy of God, the compassion of God. When Pope Francis announced last April this


this Extraordinary (extraordinary because it is only fifteen years since our last holy year) Jubilee of Mercy, he said that *"Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy ... Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth."*

As followers of Jesus Christ, is mercy living and visible in us? Do my actions show that I am a Christian, a Catholic, a Franciscan? Perhaps these four weeks of Advent, we can spend extra time with the four gospels and reflect on God's mercy and how we can make it more visible in our lives. Everything Jesus said and did revealed God's love and mercy. Every healing, every parable, every rebuke and every act of forgiveness, all revealed God, God *who is mercy*.


Also, it is fitting that during Advent, we celebrate two special feasts of Mary, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe. So let us also remember her who said "Yes" to God at a young age and continually renewed her "yes" every day. This is a good time to renew our consecration to Mary.

Wishing you a Blessed and Joyful Advent season.  
May your heart and home be filled with great joy,  
mercy, love, peace, and everything good!  
Sr. Marilyn 

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On Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>, Joe Rice, OFS from St. Paschal Fraternity, celebrated the anniversary of his 50<sup>th</sup> year of profession. 

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Items of interest from our spiritual assistants -  
Need a gift for someone who finds God in nature?  
Consider the just-published book by Fr. Jonathan Foster, OFM, *Return of the Swallows: A Traveler's Companion for the Migratory Soul*. The book is a compilation of essays written between 1982 and 2008. According to the description on Amazon.com, "In this collection of essays, you will be both challenged and amused by his delightful way of seeing and honoring creation, including God's dearest creature - all of us. The author's attention and gratitude for the natural world will warm your heart and renew your sense of awe." The price is \$15; besides Amazon, the bookstore at St. Peter's may be able to get it for you as well 

## Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

*We Learn What We Live*

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Animator

I am writing this article during the last week of Ordinary time, preparing for the holy season of Advent. This is a time of waiting and preparation. How are you at waiting? Do you wait patiently or do you grumble and fidget and become annoyed? We live in a culture that wants and expects fast results and our desired wait time seems to decrease daily. For some, the uncertainty of waiting promotes anxiety, hostility and fear.

The media headlines are filled with news of terrorist attacks, fearful refugees fleeing their homelands and violence on our neighborhood streets. The unrest that is created by the ongoing delivery of these news reports can lead many into a state of despair. What is most disturbing is that the targets of these recent attacks are the most vulnerable, particularly children and young adults. How did we get to this point that children are killing children; that attacks are made within our schools, playgrounds, soccer fields and concert stadiums? What can we do, as Secular Franciscans, to right this wrong, to change the course, to convert our response and way of thinking?

In light of the recent violence and tragedies, Carolyn Townes, our National JPIC Animator, sent this birthday request from our esteemed 2016 Quinquennial Speaker, Friar Dan Horan, OFM. In this video, Fr. Horan thanks all those who sent him birthday wishes through social media but used this opportunity to make a request for prayers in solidarity for those who suffered in the tragedies that occurred in Paris and Beirut. He also asked for prayers to not let our hearts be hardened by these events, nor to seek retribution or to fight terror with more terror. We are called to be a people of peace, reconciliation and love. We are to pray for both our friends and our enemies. He highlights this quote from Thomas Merton; "for only love which means humility can exorcise the fear which is at the root of war." His entire message

can be viewed at:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg-mVD9-Elg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg-mVD9-Elg)

As children and adults, we learn what we live. The environment in which we live in can harm us or nurture us. This Advent season, take some time to reflect on the environment that you provide for by yourselves and others.

At this time, I am reminded of one of my favorite poems. It may help you to change your response to a hostile environment by encouraging peace, reconciliation and love.

Peace and all good.

### *Children Learn What They Live*

If children live with criticism,  
they learn to condemn.  
If children live with hostility,  
they learn to fight.  
If children live with fear,  
they learn to be apprehensive.  
If children live with pity,  
they learn to feel sorry for themselves.  
If children live with ridicule,  
they learn to feel shy.  
If children live with jealousy,  
they learn to feel envy.  
If children live with shame,  
they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement,  
they learn confidence.  
If children live with tolerance,  
they learn patience.  
If children live with praise,  
they learn appreciation.  
If children live with acceptance,  
they learn to love.  
If children live with approval,  
they learn to like themselves.  
If children live with recognition,  
they learn it is good to have a goal.  
If children live with sharing,  
they learn generosity.  
If children live with honesty,  
they learn truthfulness.  
If children live with fairness,  
they learn justice.  
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.  
If children live with security,  
they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.  
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

~ Dorothy Law Nolte 



## *St. Francis of Assisi Shrine*

### **Queen of Heaven Cemetery**

#### **A Burial Site exclusively for Secular Franciscans and their families.**

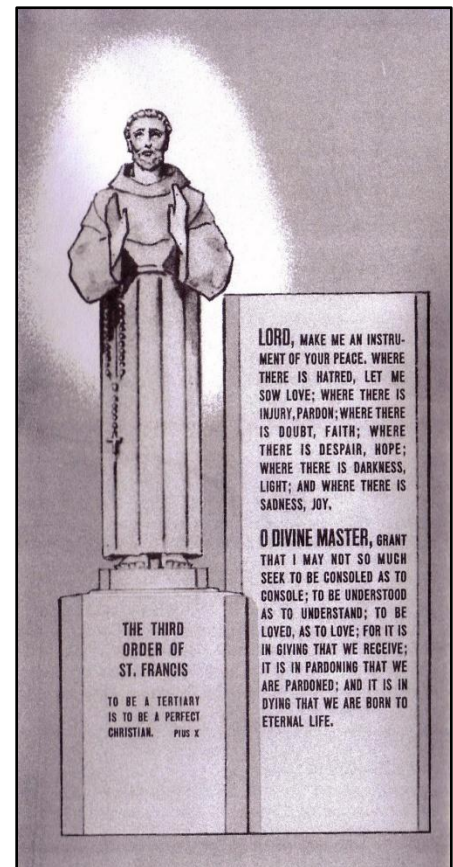
**History:** "In 1960, Rev. Luke Dittman, OFM and the members of the St. Louis and St. Francis Fraternities of the Third Order conceived the idea of a special shrine specifically designed for the burial of Tertiaries and their families. This section of Queen of Heaven Cemetery was opened for selection of graves in April, 1961 and the first burial was made on May 26, 1961. The life size statue of St. Francis on a pedestal and flanked by a granite tablet was designed by Bert Gast Jr. of Chicago and is fashioned of Salisbury granite. Individual grave markers incorporate the Third Order symbol. This shrine was established for members of the Third Order, its use will be limited to members in good standing and to their families. 'Families' has been defined to include spouse and parents of the member." ~ 1962 *Dedication Documents*

#### **Contents of the Burial Rites Inclusion**

- Grave site
- Vault (outer concrete burial container)
- Interment fee
- Use of the Interment Chapel for the final prayers of committal
- Individual granite grave marker

**Total package cost is: \$3,380.00**

Easy extended payment terms are available on purchases.  
Grave space is still available.




#### **Contact Information**

Deacon Glenn Tylutki, CCCE  
Queen of Heaven Cemetery  
1400 South Wolf Road  
Hillside, IL 60162-2197  
708-449-6100

[www.CatholicCemeteriesChicago.org](http://www.CatholicCemeteriesChicago.org)

All Secular Franciscans are invited to tour the Cemetery and Mausoleum where relics of St. Francis are located. The Mausoleum contains rooms, statuary and stained glass dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi. Call or email Deacon Glenn for more information at < > or < > [@cathcemchgo.org](mailto:@cathcemchgo.org).

If you are looking for a pilgrimage opportunity in 2016, then you'll want to consider "A Franciscan Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of St. Francis" being led by Fr. Chuck Faso, OFM, September 26<sup>th</sup> through October 7, 2016. This pilgrimage includes the feast of St. Francis IN Assisi, along with Rome, Greccio, and many other Franciscan sites. Cost per person is \$3805 double occupancy and \$4235 single occupancy, airfare included. For more information, contact A. Greg Gregori, tour coordinator, < > or email < > 

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## POPE FRANCIS' 10 TIPS TO BRING JOY IN ONE'S LIFE

1. Live and Let live
2. Be Giving of yourself to others
3. Proceed calmly in life
4. Have a healthy sense of leisure
5. Sunday is for families
6. Find ways to employ the youth
7. Respect and care for nature
8. Stop being negative
9. Respect others' beliefs
10. Work for peace



**The only war that we  
must all fight is the  
one against evil .**

