

OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

www.ilsfo.org

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Minister's Message

by Lorna Miressi

Brothers and Sisters,
Looking back on the messages that Vickie, our wonderful minister who preceded me, sent out to you all to inspire, comfort and challenge you, I tend to feel somewhat intimidated by her awesome messages. However, when I think about, I also feel challenged to continue doing the same things with the messages that I send out to you over the next three years.

With that said, I want to share bits and pieces from the message Jan Parker OFS, our newly elected National Minister, shared with our brothers and sisters of the National Fraternity Council back at the beginning of this year. Hopefully all of you are aware that 2016 happens to be a "Q Year". The "Q", or Quinquennial XIX, is taking place in St. Louis, Missouri from June 30 to July 4th. The theme of this Q is "Reviving Our Spirit". I don't know about all of you, but I feel as though my spirit definitely can use some reviving.

Even though Jan's message was addressed to the National Fraternity council, all of us can benefit from hearing her words. We are all part of not only our local fraternities and our regional fraternity, but the entire National fraternity as well. And since we are all part of this huge national fraternity, we are also given the responsibility of letting our OFS brothers and sisters know when a very important event such as the "Q" is taking place and personally inviting them to attend this event which promises

to be an awesome experience!

I also want to share an article written by Kate Kleinert OFS, who is from the St. Katherine Drexel Region and a part of the Quinquennial Committee. This article, published in the winter 2015 issue of TAU USA, is titled "Quinquennial XIX, Reviving Our Spirit". In it, Kate gives one of three ways we can participate in the "Q" right in our own fraternities and right now. The project is called "Operation Blessing Bag". Over the next several months leading up to the Q, each fraternity and/or regions is being asked to collect travel size toiletries, snacks, socks, etc. Then next June these items can be shipped to the Renaissance Hotel in St. Louis. The items will be stuffed in bags as part of one of the Q sessions and donated to the St. Anthony's Food Pantry in St. Louis.

Let's try and take part in this wonderful project. I ask each fraternity to start collecting these items at your upcoming fraternity gatherings and, when we gather for our Chapter of Ministers in May, I ask each minister attending Chapter to bring your collections and they will be shipped to St. Louis in June. Let's do what we can to make St. Louis, Missouri a little better than we find it and all take part in reviving our spirits!

Peace and Blessings! Lorna 

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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 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

Spiritual Assistant's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Well, here we have it, we are in the heart of winter; leap-year February. And in a few short days the season of Lent begins the rich process of preparing ourselves for Holy Week and Easter. As we open ourselves up to God as penitents and inquirers into our hearts and our highest longing.

All of this applying the traditions as well as particular scriptures and music along with the actions prescribed by our church, all of which help us to focus on the fullness and depth of God's design and our place within it. Then as Franciscans we are called to recognize and animate the stories we have been told and to liberally apply by our loving actions as best we can. We hope to be balm for our aching world and light for the dark places, and comfort to our neighbor; each other. I hope that you all will become deeply blessed this holy season of Lent.

Now, another thing that occurs regularly in February is of course the celebration of Valentine's Day which at one time may have been connected to St. Valentine but these days it has become another opportunity for the merchants to cash in. This year I noticed valentines gifts put on the shelves just after Christmas.

This makes me feel disappointment and sadness. For, other than the birthday of my dear friend Marcia Valentine's Day holds no thrill.

However if we can open loves doors and windows to allow and ponder the celebration of Love that must have been the spark for Valentines Day at one time, we could go on forever.

I had a phone call the other day from a woman who asked me, "What are the four types of love, I can't remember?" I knew what she was looking for. She was looking for a basic old Baltimore Catechism definition of love. You remember; Agape, Philos, Storge', and Eros.

As I fenced with this person I tried to encourage her to speak from her own heart an authentic testimony of her experience of how has she loved and how has she found and experienced love. As Franciscans, we are formed in loves many ways but beyond that we hope and are encouraged to seek the connections between loves source and the course of its flow as well as to choose to act as an agent of loves force.

There is just so much more that we can say about love, but for me I speak from my old hippie optimism when I add one more time the anthem of my generation which is, "all you really need is love."

I send you my red heart candy blessings,

Your Brother Joe , ofm



INFORMATION

By Kristi Loar OFS

Regional Formation Commission

What Love is Love?

'We love, because God first loved us' (1 John 4:19) - with a love so perfect, gracious, and enduring. If only our demonstration of love for each other could mirror such a thing!

So what is love with its definitions as numerous as there are opinions: a force of nature uncontrollable and unpredictable; a chemically derived neurological condition that feels good; something written into our genetic code and essential for existence? Yes, and probably much, much more.

I searched online versions of the bible to see how many times the word 'Love' was mentioned and found the word listed anywhere between 480 and nearly a thousand times (depending on translation). The letters from 1 John seem to have the word 'love' written more than any other book, and seems to exclusively position the word in the context of one's action. The letters of John, and nearly every other book in both the old and new testament tell us that we must allow love, challenges us to consider its countless forms, and requires that we seek to discover what love is truly love.

Whether love is that of a parent, child, friend, lover, human or otherwise, such love is a commandment that we are called to obey voluntarily, and willingly accept in turn. We are challenged to both give and receive many forms of love, in various ways and degrees.

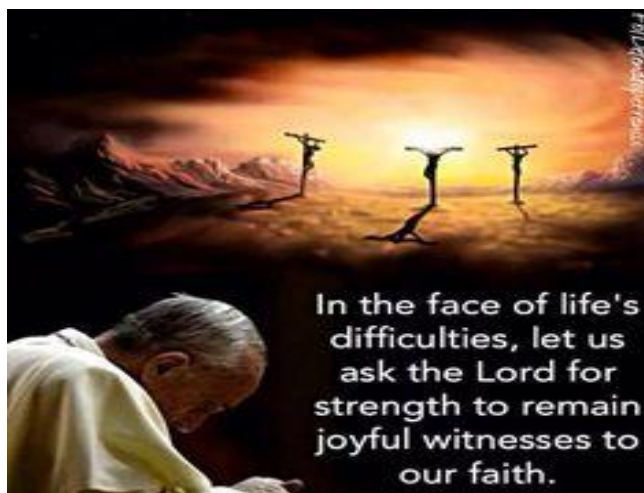
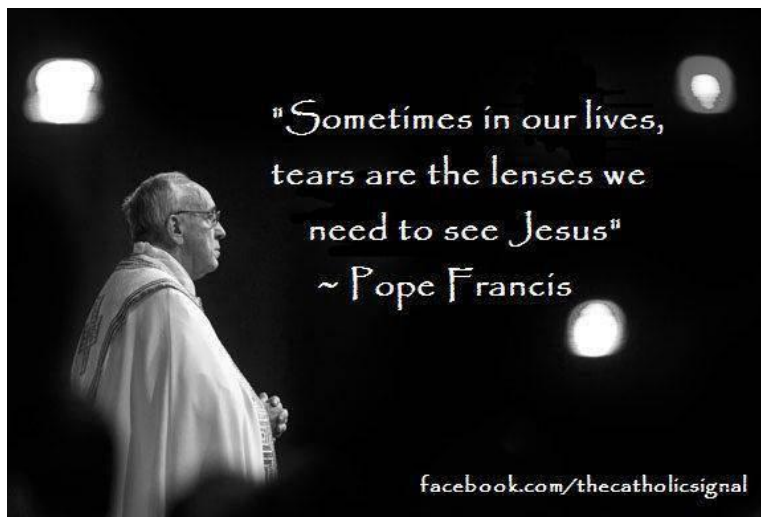
I am rather fond of a quote by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin; "Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire."

I recall this quote to remind me that the heart must be ablaze in order to inspire love in action. And even though my everyday life may include obligations I might consider a distraction from the 'love' directive, I am reminded that the heart fire can never 'go out'. I can only hope to sustain the giving and receiving of love in my

in my thinking, speaking, doing and being. Always and everyday...

With love,

Kristi 



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Animator

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

Matt. 25:35

During this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, take some time to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Tibor Kauser, our CIOFS Minister General, sent a beautiful letter (December 8, 2015) to all the sisters and brothers of the Secular Franciscan Order all over the world welcoming this Holy Year of Mercy. In it he writes, "Furthermore, we have to extend our solidarity to our neighbors... We have to open our ears and eyes, open our hearts, and then open our doors, kitchens, homes and also our purses. Particularly during this Holy year of Mercy, we have to focus on concrete acts of solidarity. As Francis did, we have to pray without delay for those who need our prayers, helping at the same time those who are in greater need than we are."

Shelter the homeless

The USCCB website www.usccb.org notes that "there are millions of children and families who are on the move, fleeing from war, illness, hunger and impossible living conditions, and searching for peace and safety. Christ encourages us to go out and meet those without homes, affirming their worth and helping them seek a resolution to the challenges they face."

Mary Lopata, from St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Fox Valley) passed along this resource that may interest some of you. Exodus World Service, a local organization, mobilizes the Christian community to welcome refugees by educating churches about refugee ministry, connecting volunteers with newly arriving refugees through practical service projects, and equipping leaders to advocate on behalf of refugees.

The refugee crisis continues to grow, with increasing numbers of refugees fleeing Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and other people around the

world with 42,500 new refugees every day. Most refugees wait in camps for 17 years. The United States allows 85,000 refugees to enter our country each year. In the Chicago area, 2,500 refugees resettle here annually.

<http://exodusworldservice.org/plight-refugees>

Perhaps you or your fraternity would like to help welcome a stranger to our area. Exodus World Service is looking for people to help welcome a refugee family or to meet with a refugee to help them adjust to life in America. You can help by engaging your parish to participate with this program or inviting a speaker to educate your fraternity or other groups. The Exodus World Service is offering several upcoming informational sessions in the area. For more information, visit their website <http://exodusworldservice.org>

Exodus World Service is partnering with the Office for Human Dignity within the Diocese of Joliet to assist refugees. For those living within the Archdiocese of Chicago, Catholic Charities has been assisting refugees for more than 40 years.

Br. Joseph Schenk, OFM Conv. is the Outreach Coordinator for Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program. To learn more about this program, contact the Refugee Resettlement Program. www.chicagopeaceandjustice.org/migrant-refugee-crisis. This site contains a wonderful 2-page handout with graphics describing a refugee's journey to Chicago.

Let us all find a way to open our ears, eyes and hearts to the plight of refugees. Let us pray during this Holy year of Mercy for those who need our prayers:

- Bring healing to those suffering from violence.
- Bring comfort to those mourning the dead.
- Strengthen those who care and welcome refugees.
- Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms.
- Protect those committed to peace.
- Inspire leaders to choose peace over violence and to seek reconciliation with their enemies. 