

OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

www.ilsfo.org

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Minister's Message

by Lorna Miressi, OFS

Brothers and Sisters,
Well, I must say that summer is in full swing. Hot sunny days. Cooler pleasant nights. Kids out of school, summer vacations in the works. Busy, busy time of the year. Needless to say, I have been quite busy babysitting my grandchildren and getting ready for two up-coming out of town trips; one to Greenwood Mississippi with a group of adults, young adults and high school youth to help the poor of the Delta fix up their homes and minister to the children through our Vacation Bible School program. The other trip, of course, is our Quinquennial Convention in St. Louis the end of this month. I am so excited to be going, this time, as minister of our Mother Cabrini Region. I know it will be wonderful!

My message, this month, to our region will be a collection of educational and inspirational quotes I have been receiving from Kathleen White, OFS, who is the Regional Minister of Our Lady of Indiana region. Kathleen has formed the Tau-Daily email list and has been sending out emails to those who have subscribed to TAU-Daily. (To do so send a blank email to: TAU-Daily-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) This email list now serves 603 members, with new subscriptions being added almost daily.

Read, reflect, and perhaps make one of the following quotes your mantra for a day:

"Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of overcoming self."
— Francis of Assisi

That heart is free which is held by no love other than the love of God. ~ St. Bonaventure

"The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today" — Francis of Assisi

Francis points beyond himself to the Word of God, and his brothers form the context and highlights the profoundly relational spirituality that would become the Franciscan tradition. St. Francis of Assisi Writings for a Gospel Life – Armstrong

"Study, love and live the Rule of the Franciscan Secular Order, approved for you by my predecessor Paul VI. You have in your hands a genuine treasure, that agrees with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, and responds to what the Church expects of you" (Insegnamenti, V/3, 1982, p. 613). "I am pleased to be able to direct similar words to you today: study, love and live your General Constitutions!" - Address of John Paul II to the Secular Franciscan Order 22 Nov 2002

By virtue of this profession, the Rule and the General Constitutions must represent for each of you the point of reference for daily living, based on your explicit vocation and special identity (cf. Promulgation of the General Constitutions of the OFS). If you are truly driven by the Spirit to reach the perfection of charity in your secular state, "it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity" (Novo Millennio ineunte, n. 31).~ Address of John Paul II to the Secular Franciscan Order, Friday, 22 November 2002

While Clare and her religious sisters were still subject to the confines of the monastic cloister, Francis and his religious brothers moved beyond the walls of a monastery, rectory, or cathedral house – the typical locations of male religious life up to that time. Francis saw Jesus' personal model and his instructions in the Gospel as an example for an itinerant lifestyle that involved popular preaching, daily work, communal prayer, and encounter with women and men of all backgrounds and in all locations. It was both freeing and risky. ~ Daniel P. Horan, The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Inspiration of His Life, Thought, and Writing

We adore you and we bless you, Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all the churches which are in the whole world, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world. ~ St. Francis of Assisi

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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 For Brother Joe, via Patrick Mendes

Dear Sisters and Brothers, Musings
of a lay spiritual assistant.

At Regional Spiritual Assistant, Bro.
Joe's request, I am writing about my
life as a spiritual assistant.

It all started about 20 years ago when
I became aware of the many
fraternities around the country who
were without a spiritual assistant,
simply because there were fewer
friars available. The Conference of
National Spiritual Assistants were
very aware of the situation and
prepared the training program for lay
spiritual assistants. The course of
study, then called *Life Giving Union*
and now called *Franciscan Family
Connections* is facilitated by the
Provincial Spiritual Assistant to
which the individuals fraternity is
bonded. In various regions the
course is implemented in a variety of
ways. All lessons are completed in
writing and submitted to the
Provincial Spiritual Assistant who is
seen as the primary mentor. In our
Region at the time, we completed our
studies by correspondence and met
quarterly with the Regional Spiritual
Assistant to review our studies and
receive additional support, guidance
and instruction. There were five of us
in that first class in our Region. 3
completed the course and only two of
us are presently active in our Region.
Upon completing my studies I was
assigned to the newly emerging St.
Thomas More Fraternity and
accompanied them to canonical
establishment. It was a joy to
accompany them on that journey.
They were able to secure a friar
Spiritual Assistant, so I moved on.

My next fraternity was St. Anthony of
Padua in Oak Lawn. I was with the
venerable 130+ year old fraternity
until they were deactivated.
Simultaneously, I was serving as
interim Spiritual Assistant to St. Clare

of Oak Brook, until they acquired a
permanent spiritual assistant.
At the same time I was also serving as
spiritual assistant to my own
fraternity, the Northwest Franciscan
Community of the Immaculate Heart
of Mary, where I continue to serve.

What does the lay spiritual assistant
do? The same things that the
Religious do. We work with the
Fraternity Council to plan for the on-
going formation; prepare the liturgies
for our fraternity meetings with
special attention to the major
Franciscan feasts as well as the
patronal feast of our fraternity. I help
present the on going formation
programs, participate in the initial
formation program, and serve as
principal cheer leader and encourager
-my favorite part of the assignment!

Have I piqued your interest? Have
you been Professed at least 5 years?
Think you might be a good fit for the
role of Spiritual Assistant? Contact
Bro. Joe Middleton, OFM at St. Peter's
Church. He'll talk with you and help
get you on your way.
Patrick Mendes, OFS **T**

The interior of the 'mystery church'
from the June edition is...you guessed
it...St Peter's in the Loop!



Look familiar? Anybody recognize
this church? Hint: it is in the city of
Chicago. C'mon, this should be a dead
giveaway...The answer will appear in
next month's issue. **T**

INFORMATION

Nicholas Noe OFS, Regional Formation Commission

The Spiritual Power of a Smile

"Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing"

Mother Teresa

Three years ago, Pope Francis gave a moving and challenging homily on the Island of Lampedusa. The Italian island is located in the Mediterranean Sea between the shores of northeast Africa and Sicily. Because of its location, it is the first stop for refugees from Africa and the Middle East who are leaving the deplorable conditions in their countries. It was Pope Francis' first trip outside of Rome after having been elected to the Papacy a few months before. He went to the island to be in solidarity with the refugees and to mourn the thousands who had lost their lives trying to cross the Sea. Pope Francis hoped his words would cause people to reflect and have a concrete change of heart towards God and others. His major point was that we (including himself) have lost our bearings in our relationship with God and our relationships with others. Like Adam, we have lost our place in creation, and we tend to think of ourselves as so powerful that we no longer need God. Like Cain, we no longer care for our brothers and sisters in the world. There is a globalization of indifference towards other humans and all creation.

I think about Pope Francis' homily when I read and hear about the streams of refugees still trying to enter Europe and our own country. It seems to me the resistance to accepting refugees, the new strangers, has grown both in Europe and in the United States since the Pope's homily. Also, recent events and public reaction to some political statements suggest the problem may go much deeper than "indifference" toward others. The biases within our own country resulting in discrimination and even hate may not be as great as thirty years ago, but they do exist and have risen to the surface. It seems too many of the injustices, inequities, and tragedies reported in the news are due to differences in race, ethnicity, sexual preference, religion, political ideology, and nationality.

One of the major pillars of our Franciscan tradition is respect for the dignity of the human person.

Article 13 of our Rule states the following: *..Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially the lowly... We consider each person uniquely created by God with a unique role to fulfill in building God's Kingdom. To unjustly restrict a person's freedom and well-being or take a Person's life, because the person is different, is certainly against God's will and interferes in the building of God's Kingdom.*

So is there anything we can do to help heal the broken relationships that exist between different groups and bring a little peace into the world? Of course, the problems are immense and it's so easy to stay within our own privileged group and do nothing. But as Franciscans and Christians we are called to act. First of all, we need to examine our own attitudes toward others of different races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, religions and political ideologies. Second, we must pray for guidance. Third, we can act by joining one of the many political and religious organizations that fight prejudice and discrimination, support just and fair immigration, promote effective gun legislation and so on. But the fourth action is perhaps the easiest. *Learn to give and share a heartfelt smile to all people you encounter, especially strangers.*

A smile, especially when accompanied by a greeting, is a way of reaching out to other people. Henri Nouwen refers to it as a little step towards love. It indicates your connectedness with others, that you care, and are open to dialogue, the first step of evangelization. A smile reflects inner happiness and joy, and it is contagious. My own experience is that a smile will always be returned and makes me even happier. (Research proves this is the case.) Because we are all connected, a smile will be passed on and may ripple through the world like a wave. As the saying goes, *"smile and the world smiles with you."* 📖

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As he approached his own earthly end, Francis, recalling the love of God made manifest in the gift of creation, looked forward with hope to his share in the resurrection of Christ. There was no longer a need to avoid or exploit death, because death was his sister, closer to him than the fear of the unknown. With arms extended, Francis did not cower from his destiny in fear and anxiety but embraced his sister bodily death with his whole heart and left this world in peace.~ Daniel P. Horan, OFM [Embracing Sister Death: The Fraternal Worldview of Francis of Assisi as a Source for Christian Eschatological Hope](#)

I do have several more that I could share with you and will do so at a later date. I encourage you, though, to subscribe to this email list and receive quotes, reflections, etc. as I have been. I also hope to see many of you the end of this month in St. Louis for the Q.

God's Peace.

Lorna Miressi, OFS, Regional Minister 📖

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

By Barbara Elkins, OFS

Every year, my family gathers at a lake house in Michigan. This year, we are especially blessed to have the 4th generation of our family present. The reunion takes place around the Fourth of July holiday. The day brings bicycle parades and lemonade stands. Families play games, stroll the walkways and watch the sun slowly set over Lake Michigan. After dinner, we set out our chairs in the sand and await the late-night fireworks, thankful to be sharing this day together as a family. We marvel at the beauty and majesty of creation with each sunset we witness together.

How will you celebrate our country's 240th birthday? What does our national Independence Day mean to you? Are you thankful for the rights and freedoms that our country guarantees? Are you mindful of these words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Try to take some time this summer to reflect on what it means to be a faithful citizen. Here are a few suggestions for your personal or fraternal ongoing formation.

1. Read, Learn and Discuss the Church's teaching on participation in public life. Several resources may be found at the USCCB website including *Catholics Care*, *Catholics Vote*, part of the "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" series. This 2-page insert is a good starting point to help us respond to our choices in the current political landscape. www.usccb.org

Another book of interest is *Render Unto Caesar: Serving the Nation by Living Our Catholic Beliefs in Political Life* by Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap. You can purchase this book for \$3.00 or \$2.00 for multiple copies from Lighthouse Catholic Media.

www.lighthousecatholicmedia.org Group study questions are available to download.

2. Share some Success Stories

We Are Salt and Light is a project of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that provides

resources highlighting ways to live the Gospel. Be inspired by these stories that demonstrate how people strive to pray, reach out, learn and act together.

<http://www.wearesaltandlight.org/success-stories-act>


3. Pray for justice and peace

This novena, rooted in the biblical tradition and the Church's social teaching, is intended to promote justice and peace in our neighborhoods, our country, and our world. <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/novena-for-faithful-citizenship.cfm>

4. Take the Franciscan Pledge. Make a commitment to civility in discourse. Support each other in fraternity as you model graciousness and respect while sharing differences in opinions.

<https://franciscanaction.org/franciscancommitment>

- ☐ Facilitate a forum for difficult discourse and acknowledge that all dialogue can lead to new insight and mutual understanding.
- ☐ Respect the dignity of all people, especially the dignity of those who hold an opposing view.
- ☐ Audit myself and utilize terms or a vocabulary of faith to unite or reconcile rather than divide conflicting positions.
- ☐ Neutralize inflamed conversations by presuming that those with whom we differ are acting in good faith.
- ☐ Collaborate with others and recognize that all human engagement is an opportunity to promote peace.
- ☐ Identify common ground such as similar values or concerns and utilize this as a foundation to build upon.
- ☐ Support efforts to clean up the provocative language by calling policymakers to their sense of personal integrity.

Reminder: The Archdiocese of Chicago will host its 30th Annual Social Action Summer Institute on Sunday, July 17 through Thursday, July 21 at St. Xavier University in Chicago. This year's theme is *Who is My Neighbor? Discipleship in the Year of Mercy*. For information, call, or www.ChicagoPeaceandJustice.org/SASI. 

HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

Of course the whole Franciscan Family celebrates the Feast of St. Mary of the Angels of the Portiuncula. We all participate in the Mass and pray to obtain the “great pardon” the Portiuncula Indulgence. However, our Mother Cabrini Region celebrates it with a great family gathering. Here’s how it came about.

Back in 1996, when our Region had only been established 5 years, the Regional Councilor for Communications and Public Relations, known more familiarly as the Editor of OFS NEWS, was Tom Mitus OFS, who would go on to become our Regional Minister. Tom cited two factors which gave birth to the idea. The first factor was the coming millennium. Pope St. John Paul had called for a Year of the Son, a Year of the Holy Spirit and a year of the Father for the three years leading up to the Great Jubilee of 2000, the Millennium (ref: *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*)

The second factor was the Region’s recollection of the Chapter of Mats, when all the brothers and sisters would come to spend time together. As we were now a cohesive geographic area, we thought how wonderful it would be for all the fraternities in the Mother Cabrini Region to gather together once a year.

So a Millennium Committee was formed to do the planning and work out the details.

We began planning for our first celebration in August, 1997. We planned our day and it pretty much follows the same format as today. We sent invitations to the Friars, OSF Sisters, as well as our fraternities, since this was intended to be a gathering welcoming the whole Franciscan family and we would not forget our Poor Clare Sisters. We sent them, as we still do each year, an invitation to join us in prayer. We always notify them of the time of Mass, so they can join us in spirit, much as our holy mother, St. Clare did in that famous incident where even though she couldn’t attend Mass with the friars because of her failing health, the Lord made it possible for her to see the liturgy. This is why, in our entrance procession for Mass, the Vice-Minister of the Region carries a bouquet of white roses, representing the presence of our Poor Clare Sisters with us. This bouquet is placed before the altar.

Early on in our planning, we decided we would invite a special celebrant/homilist for the Mass, have an hour of ongoing formation and some special entertainment to round out our day. The saintly Bishop Kaffer, auxiliary Bishop of Joliet was our first celebrant. He has since gone home to the Lord.

Our entertainment was varied and diverse. Living Waters Fraternity presented traditional Korean Dance, one year. A dramatization of the story of the Wolf of Gubbio complete with liturgical dance was presented another year, and Fr. now Bishop Ferd Cheri OFM, brought the Gospel Choir from the high school where he taught.

Our Portiuncula Celebration has always been very successful, so here we are 19 years later, still having this wonderful summer celebration.

When the annual Regional Retreat became too expensive for so many of our brothers and sisters, the REC requested we have more of a day of recollection, which we have done and it has been well received.

As we grew in the development of our Region, our committee ceased and what had by now become an annual event, became the responsibility of the Councilor for Fraternal Life, Of course the Councilor for Communications and PR continues to help with publicity and together we continue to celebrate. See you in August!

Patrick Mendés, OFS

Special thanks to Tom Mitus , OFS for his help in preparing this article. 

On Being A Spiritual Assistant, OSF Conventual

Being a spiritual assistant is as it is described, to assist the Spirit, but how can one assist the Spirit?

I once saw a bumper sticker that stated, "God has all your problems taken care of, and He doesn't need your help, thank you!"

So what we can do is just be available, to serve his grace, to be a conduit by letting His grace be afforded through us.

Being "Conventual", the word comes from *convento* or 'friars of the community', so we live, work, and serve as community, much like is understood of family, groups or company related, or fraternity. We are called to work together and relate with one another, reaching outward to serve as Franciscans to emulate the life and example as St. Francis lived in the state of grace and was enlightened by the Holy Spirit!

If you ever held a flashlight or a 'British *torch*' you know you were told to keep the light 'on focus' to enable the other to see what is in focus and not be distracted from this simple task! So as assistant I will say, call attention, shine the light of reason, to better see what is in reality so one can actually see the real core of the problem and figure it out by light of reason! It is not to have all the answers, but to work together through it!

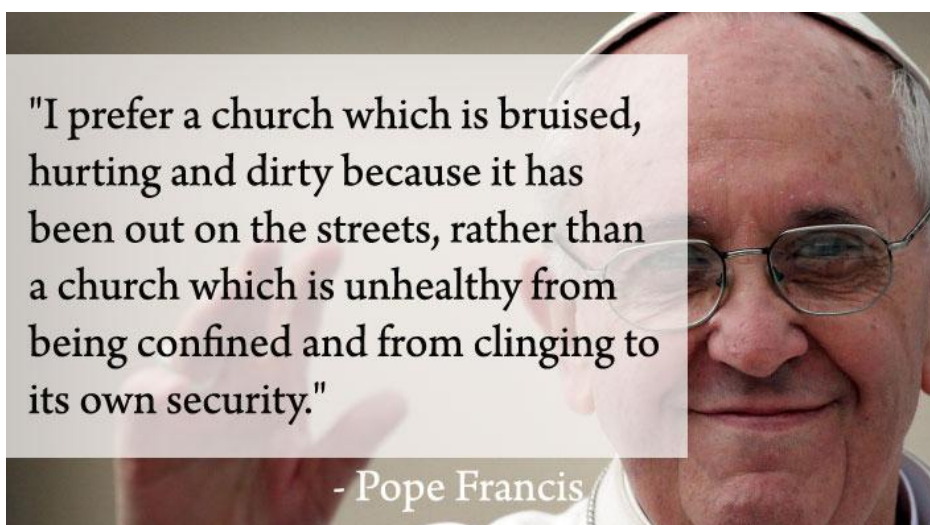
Who am I to assist the Spirit? As if the Lord needs my help; but to allow God to work with me as His instrument, or benefit together what God is doing in our lives! As an axiom used in speaking publically goes, "I am only one, but I am one, I can't do everything but I can do something, and what I can do I will do!"

My name is Brother Donald Thielsen OFM Conv. of MARYTOWN, a City of Mary Immaculate, as followers of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, a martyr of charity.

I have served as a Franciscan Friar for twenty years inspired by the life and witness of others. I have continued in community throughout my vocation and life in witness.

I have asked to serve as Spiritual Assistant, a seemingly daunting task, but it has served me well because of being a part of a caring, prayerful and grateful fraternity.

So may we work together and be that light of grace to one another! **T**



"I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security."

- Pope Francis

**YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED
TO THE MOTHER CABRINI REGION'S 2015**

FRANCISCAN GATHERING

CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS OF THE PORTIUNCULA

FEATURING AS GUEST SPEAKER

Br. Marc Sheckells, OFM

SPEAKING ABOUT

**The History of Christian Religious
Orders**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6th, 2016

MAYSLAKE VILLAGE

**1801 35TH STREET
OAK BROOK, ILLINOIS**

**REGISTRATION AT 8:30 A.M - MASS AT 9:00 A.M.
SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR FULL AGENDA AND MORE INFORMATION**

CATERED LUNCH - \$15.00 PER PERSON

YOU CAN BRING YOUR OWN IF YOU PREFER

**PLEASE LET ME KNOW HOW MANY WILL BUY LUNCH AND HOW MANY WILL BRING
THEIR LUNCH**

PLEASE RSVP BY FRATERNITY TO Susan Gribbon, OFS BY JULY 29th

FRANCISCAN GATHERING

AUGUST 6th, 2016

AGENDA

8:30 A.M.	REGISTRATION
9:00 A.M.	MASS
9:45 A.M.	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
10:15 A.M.	ADDRESS
12:00 P.M.	LUNCH
1:15 P.M.	ADDRESS
2:30 P.M.	EVENING PRAYER

(TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE)

ABOUT

Br. Marc Sheckells, OFM, is a friar living at St. Peter's Church in Chicago. He is a professor of History and has studied in the past at Loyola University. He will soon begin theological studies at CTU as well as begin his priestly formation.

HOW TO RSVP

It will help us a lot if fraternities could have one person call with the total for your group. Many thanks for your understanding and assistance! RSVP to Susan Gribbon, OFS

GENERAL INFORMATION, DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

All events will be inside at Mayslake Village; the day will begin in the chapel. Presentations and lunch will be in the Senior Center.

Directions: Get to Route 83 from wherever you're coming from; exit at 31st Street; go west to the first signal (St. Pascal to the left; Regent to the right); turn left and follow to where road dead ends into 35th St.; turn right (only way you can go) and continue to main (chapel) entrance to Mayslake Village (3rd street on your left). Parking: Suggest parking at chapel entrance first; if that gets full, park in Senior Center lot (next entrance west on 31st St.); if that's full, drive around to the back of the building facing north in the Senior Center lot – you would find parking at the back of that building