

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, I am privileged to receive, via email, the newsletter for the Sacred Heart Province of the OFM. Br. Joe was part of that province. "A very close friend's of Br. Joe" submitted an article about him in the August 9th edition. It reads as follows:

In Memoriam

Brother Joe Middleton, OFM, the Wisdom writer (Wis. 4: 7-15) tells us that "the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years". For most of us (and his family and friends), Joe Middleton died too soon, too young, too quick; but we can take comfort from the further message by the author: "Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career, for his soul was pleasing to the Lord". Many words can be used to describe our brother: a man with many friends in many places, colorful, one who loved life, passionate about most things, a special regard for persons 'on the edge', etc. Joe was born on March 26, 1947 in Galveston, TX to William Louis "Prim" and Mary Elizabeth Middleton. He has one brother, Mark. The family moved to Dallas in 1953. Joe attended Bryan Adams High School there and then spent two years in the Navy.

Sadly for Joe, his beloved mother died young; his father died in recent years. Cooking was one of his passions and Joe first learned his trade working at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. During his career he worked a number of years as a chef in prestigious restaurants in Dallas, New York City and New Orleans. Working at Commander's Palace in New Orleans he knew Julia Child and claims: "I taught her a few things!" For a period of time he was one of the chefs in the Governor's Mansion in Jackson, Mississippi.

It was in the 1980's that Joe found himself in New Orleans and began to dedicate himself to working with Persons with AIDS. Often he took PWAs into his own home and cared for them till they died. Discerning a call to religious life, Joe was directed to TAU House and began a relationship with the friars there. Even though in his mid-40s at the time, he asked to be accepted as a candidate. In 1993, he moved to Joliet to begin his journey of formation. Novitiate followed in 1994 at Cedar Lake, IN and Post-novitiate was in Hyde Park, IL. In his 20 + years in the Sacred Heart Province, Joe ministered in Nashville, TN in team and campus ministry, as director of Il Ritiro in Dittmer, MO, with the friars in San Antonio, TX, and for the last 10 years, working the front desk at St. Peter's Church in Chicago as well as serving as a spiritual assistant to several SFO fraternities at St. Pete's and to the region. He was also the last caretaker of the cottage in Michigan City.

Another of Joe's loves was the Southwest: the culture, the people, the food, hiking in the mountains, etc. Little wonder that he would sign up for the recent FIT gathering in Albuquerque and would stay after to visit friends and family. One can only wonder what exactly happened that fateful day when Joe fell and sustained a very serious brain injury while walking with a friend on the streets of Taos, NM. He was airlifted to Albuquerque, spent these many long weeks at the University of New Mexico Hospital there and more recently at the Kindred Rehabilitation Hospital. He died very peacefully on Saturday, August 6th. May he rest in peace!

Submitted by a very close friend of Joe's

He was a friend to all, therefore I say,
Peace to All, 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

**Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity
Study Day / Leadership Workshop 2016!
‘The space in between – Building Fraternity’
Saturday September 17, 2016
Mayslake Village: 1801 35th St. Oakbrook, IL**

The 2016 Study Day morning session is focused on building fraternities; a fresh look at how we can engage new & existing members, with an emphasis on what happens in between regular fraternity meetings and inspirational concepts for growth of the OFS community. The afternoon is dedicated to leadership breakout sessions by fraternity council roles. All council members are invited to attend as are those interested in future council roles. The Agenda:

Registration	8:30 am
Mass	9:00 am
Continental Breakfast	9:45 am
Welcome Address	10:15 am
Keynote	10:30 am
Stretch Break	11:00 am
Small Group & Intra-fraternity dialogue; Activity Summary	11:10 am
Lunch; \$15 catered and delicious (no charge if you bring your own)	12:00 noon
Ministers Address	1:00 pm
Stretch Break & Cookies	1:20 pm
Leadership Breakout Sessions: Ministers & Vice Ministers Formation Directors Secretaries Treasurers Spiritual Assistants	1:30 pm
Closing	2:30 pm

We expect to end no later than 2:45pm

Organized by the Regional Formation Commission:
Kristi Loar OFS, Regional Formation Director
Lorna Miressi OFS, Regional Minister
Patrick Mendes OFS, Commission Member
Nick Noe OFS, Commission Member
Sr. Marilyn Renninger OSF, Commission Member

Looking forward to seeing you there!
Please RSVP by Fraternity to Kristi Loar OFS by Sept 10 at
formation@ilsfo.org 

INFORMATION

For Today, Tomorrow, and Every Day

The Learner

There is something in the air each year at this time, and although I am no longer in school, nor are my children, I still feel the 'back to school' excitement. Maybe this time of year reminds me that we are all 'learners'. There are moments in my lifetime where I can clearly recall, various life lessons from my teachers, friends, and family.

Most of my aunts and uncles were teachers and naturally teamed up to encourage us nieces and nephews to do well in school. But they also challenged us to consider our everyday activities as a sort of classroom by continually asking 'what were you thinking...', or 'how are you going to ...', and 'why would you...'? Everything was an opportunity to improve and expand. I learned to question, and ponder, and explore.

All the members of my mother's family were teachers, and musicians. So we children were all encouraged to learn to play a musical instrument. Each year at Christmas we each would have to present a musical selection in front of the entire family - I was always terrified to do this. But each year, whether the performance was good or bad, there was always encouragement. I learned to love music, have courage, and patience.

We lived simply and were lovingly reminded 'don't put it on your plate if you're not going to eat it' (and if it was on our plate we had better eat it) because someone somewhere was starving...little did we know someone actually was. I learned about moderation, and temperance.

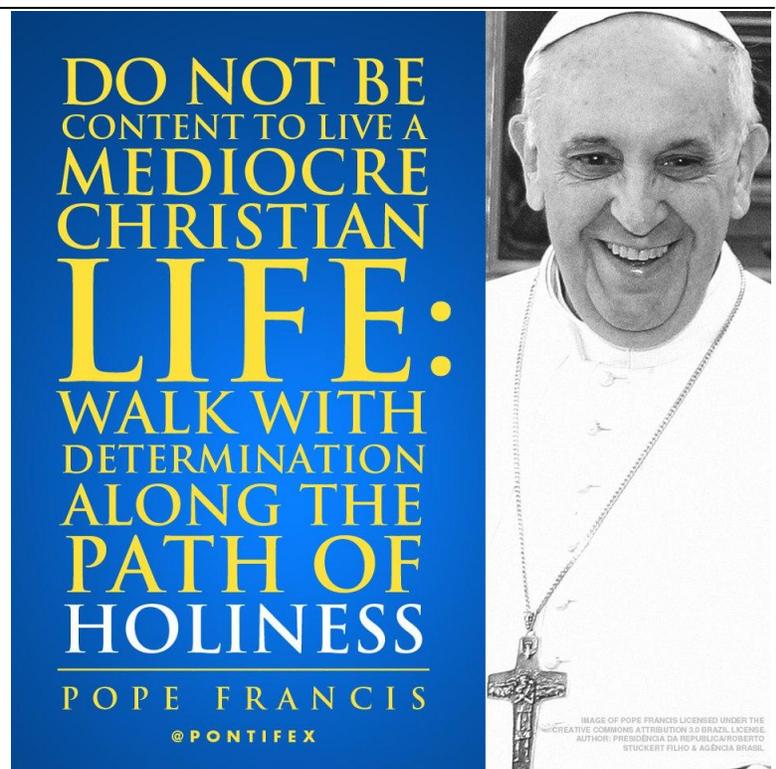
When it came to understanding how our actions impacted the environment and others, my family had an overdeveloped 'sense of self-awareness'. When we cleaned up after ourselves we were encouraged to clean up for others

(since we were 'already up'). My siblings and I were encouraged to always 'work together' in times of family battle and in times of peace - because whatever the task, we were family (whether we liked it or not). And when hand-me-downs were no longer useful, we donated them to neighbors, or local shelters, or anyone who would take them. I learned of patience, and kindness and charity.

We were often reminded that 'God was watching'. This was initially meant to be an obedience incentive, but became quite a liberating feeling. One of my aunts was quite certain she saw her guardian angel in the vehicle behind her while driving in traffic, and she was pretty excited about that. I learned about fortitude, humility - and to explore my faith.

Of course I didn't realize at the time how these lessons would influence my life, or that I was learning anything at all. As the school year begins, I find myself pausing to remember the people who cared so much to impart their wisdom, and realize how lucky I have been. So no matter where your classroom is, have a terrific school year!

Peace and all good...
Kristi Loar, OFS 



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

By Luana Leinhart, OFS

Grace and peace to you, sisters and brothers! Congressman John Lewis is an American hero. He grew up in Troy, Alabama, in the Jim Crow era, and was front and center in the Civil Rights Movement in the 60s. Lewis was one of the Freedom Riders: a group of mostly college-age young adults who rode Greyhound buses from DC to New Orleans as a form of non-violent protest against the segregation in the South. The Riders were of both genders, black, white, and of numerous faith traditions. They sat in pairs (one black, one white) peppered throughout the bus, and refused to move when they crossed into a state that expected them to separate. The riders were often harassed and beaten; the Klan attacked their bus on Mother's Day in 1961, throwing Molotov cocktails into the windows and barring the doors. Law enforcement were present, but did nothing. Lewis went on to March with Dr King on the Edmund Pettus Bridge from Selma into Montgomery to advocate for voting rights. In those days, African Americans were 'technically' allowed to vote, but had to take outrageous and unconstitutional tests proving they were smart enough to vote. Many people who marched that day were killed either in the crossing, or afterward by disgruntled townspeople. The day Dr King gave his 'I Have a Dream' speech, Lewis was there on the Washington Mall and had the unenviable position of having to follow King, and gave a speech encouraging the crowd to continue fighting for their rights. This wasn't that long ago; many of you reading this are old enough to remember these events. Unfortunately, they are often not taught in schools. When I was growing up in the 80s, the Civil Rights movement was reduced to sound bites about Rosa Parks and Dr King, and only in February. Nothing about Lewis or other Freedom Riders, like Diane Nash or Jim Zwerg. It's hard to look back at the sins of our nation, especially one as divisive as the sin of racism, but if we don't continually remember it, we are doomed to keep repeating it.

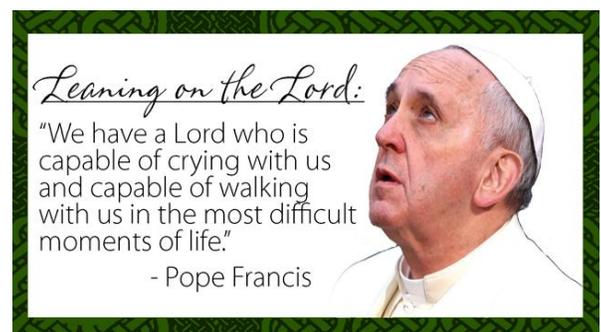
There isn't a minority population in existence in our country that hasn't had to fight battle after battle to have their basic rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Lewis co-authored a trilogy of graphic novels (novel-length comic books) called "March", documenting his story and that of the Civil Rights movement. Lewis has stated he wanted to do this project because he was inspired by a comic on Dr King and non-violence he'd purchased for a nickel. "March" is a truly inspiring and beautiful way to tell this powerful story – our story. The third and final book was released two weeks ago and all three volumes are sold out everywhere. I'm using the books with my college students in the fall, and I'm so looking forward to introducing them to Lewis and other brave Americans who sacrificed so much to give us all a brighter future. Racism is still a major problem in our country, and there is much work to do to. **T**

Last month's mystery church was St. John Cantius in West Town.



Which Chicago Archdiocese church is this one? The answer will be in next month's issue. **T**



Day of Recollection for Secular Franciscans



**Purgatory,
the Gift of God's Mercy**
A fresh, new and non-gloomy insight

September 10 (Saturday)
9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

RSVP by Fraternity by August 27 (Saturday)

About the Event

Sponsored by the Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine), Fr. James M. Ciaramitaro, OFM CONV. will present a Day of Recollection on *Purgatory, the Gift of God's Mercy* at St. Colette Catholic Church, 2900 Meadow Dr., Rolling Meadows, Illinois.

All Secular Franciscans in the Mother Cabrini Region are invited to attend. The event is free, and lunch will be provided. Aside from Mass in the Chapel, all activities will take place in Halpin Hall, located in the church's basement. Please RSVP **by fraternity** by August 27 (Saturday) to Stephanie Heavey, OFS, at minister@nwfranciscans.org.

About the Speaker

Fr. Jim holds a master's degree in Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure University (New York), and is the pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Rockford. In addition, he is the Provincial Spiritual Assistant for the St. Bonaventure Province of the OFM Conv. and spiritual assistant for St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity in Rockford. Fr. Jim is an engaging and knowledgeable speaker who will, in this Year of Mercy, provide us with a fresh, new and non-gloomy look at Purgatory and God's loving mercy.

Agenda

- 9:00 a.m. Sign-in and breakfast (Halpin Hall, in the church's basement)
- 10:00 a.m. First Conference: Purgatory, the Gift of God's Mercy
- 10:45 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. Mass (Chapel); Celebrant/homilist: Fr. Jim
- Noon Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. Second Conference: Continued Reflection on Purgatory, the Gift of God's Mercy
- 2:00 p.m. Break
- 2:15 p.m. Holy Hour
- 3:00 p.m. Evening Prayer (bring your copy of *Liturgy of the Hours*)
- 3:30 p.m. Concluding remarks and dismissal