

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

"Advent has been on my mind...

Prepare the nest of the heart.

Patch up the broken parts.

Place more softness in the center.


Sit and warm the heart-home with prayer.

Give the Christ a dwelling place"

Next Sunday, November 27th, marks the beginning of a new Church year. We will begin the season of Advent; the season in which we prepare our hearts and our minds to welcome Jesus Christ into our world. While a great deal of our world typically prepares to celebrate Christmas by shopping for gifts, planning festive get-togethers with family and friends, grocery shopping for our Christmas meal, planning a trip to visit out-of-town relatives we, as Christians and as Franciscans, are called to prepare our very selves to receive our Savior. As the poem states, we need to "patch up the broken parts" of our hearts; our feelings of doubt, resentment, wariness, unhappiness. We need to "place more softness in the center"; joy, hope, love, peace. Just as a newborn baby sleeps more peacefully in soft, warm blankets, so our Jesus undoubtedly appreciates if we soften and warm our hearts to welcome Him into our lives. And how are we able to soften our hearts, patch up broken parts that might be there, and warm our hearts to receive Him? I have found that one of the best ways to accomplish this, for me, is through prayer. I look at reading Scripture – typically the daily readings throughout the week and on Sunday – as

the most meaningful form of prayer for me. I also spend most of my time focusing not so much on how our culture prepares for Christmas but on what I must do to prepare for Christmas. There is a difference, and I strive to choose the warmer, softer way.

This past year has been a very challenging one for me. Together with the rest of the regional council, we will soon complete our first year serving all the brothers and sisters in our Mother Cabrini Region. There were many challenges, some anxiety, but much, much joy! Just today I was blessed with being able to welcome two brothers and two sisters into our Secular Franciscan Order through profession at Living Water Fraternity in Chicago. Even though I could not understand the words that were spoken I could feel the love, the joy and the peace. For me it was a beautiful way to prepare my heart for the coming of Christ Jesus.

Please permit me to express my gratitude for the support that all of you in our region have given me over the last year. And, of course, the love you have expressed has enormously softened my life more than you can imagine. I pray for each one of you every day – especially now in this Advent season – that the broken part of your hearts is patched, the center of your heart is softened, and that each of your lives are warmed and ready to receive Christ this Christmas as well as every other day to come. May God give you Peace! 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 Waiting in Joyful Hope

The Advent Journey

It seems that the year has gone by so quickly – and what a year it has been! And now we begin the new Liturgical Year.

Soon we will be in midst of preparations for Christmas. There are the cards to write and the annual Christmas letter so many of us write, to update friends and family who are far away, on what has occurred in our lives this past year since we last wrote.

Many of us have lost loved ones over the past year. In our own Franciscan family, brothers and sisters of our own fraternity; in our National Franciscan Family our beloved former National Minister, Deacon Tom Bello.

We have also had the joy of new lives in our biological families – new children and grandchildren; in our fraternity lives new inquirers, candidates and professed.

Ah yes, the busyness of our lives and yet, all of the preparations, all of the excitement and all that is part of the Christmas season need to give way to the waiting in joyful hope of “the reason for the season.”

Advent is the time of prayerful waiting in joyful hope. Waiting for the birth of our Savior again in our hearts and

lives.

There is spiritual excitement in the season of Advent and it is good for us to spend some time each day to reflect on the great gift of the Incarnation. God loves us so much that he sent His only begotten Son.

Our Franciscan spirituality is said to be “Incarnational.” God has become one of us, coming as a baby into our midst. It is good for us to reflect on this great gift as part of our daily prayer – we wait in joyful hope. A good practice during Advent is to pray and reflect on the Angelus ... “The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary and she conceived of the Holy Spirit...” Can we make Mary’s “yes” our yes as we share our time, talent and treasure – as we share ourselves with others by small works of mercy everyday?

Let’s ask ourselves how we can be mirrors of God’s great love? Can we set aside a little extra time reflecting on God’s great love? Can we make an extra effort to remember to thank God for all of the many little blessings in our lives everyday? Can we give glory to God and return His great love by sharing it with others?

Make the most of your Advent prayer and reflection as you wait in joyful hope.

I wish you serene moments in the often hectic pace that is part of our holiday preparations and I wish you and yours a very blessed and joy filled Christmas.

Patrick Mendés, OFS
Interim Regional Spiritual Assistant



INFORMATION

IN-FORMATION

Sr. Marilyn Renninger, OSF
Regional Formation Commission

Congratulations to the work force behind this year's Mother Cabrini celebration. It was a great Franciscan day, lovely weather for travel, and wonderful people to share the special day with. God bless all the hands and feet that worked!

The Year of Mercy has come to an end. We have experienced God who is love and mercy, and we made special efforts to reach out in love and mercy to others. In the letter to the Colossians we read, "Jesus is the image of the invisible God" (1:15). It is in Jesus that the fullness of God's mercy is revealed to the world. So we look to Jesus' words and action, what he taught and how he lived, and then follow. My prayer for us is that we continue the good works we have begun, and in our Franciscan way, always be people of mercy.

We are now thrust into the beautiful, busy, and grace-filled season of Advent, anticipating the celebration of a very special event in the history of humankind. We want to set aside time so we can accompany Mary as her wait is almost over. Led by the providence of God, through an edict of Caesar Augustus, we go with Mary and her loving husband Joseph as they travel the eighty to ninety mile journey to Bethlehem. What an inconvenience and hardship it must have been for a woman nine months pregnant.

On Christmas Eve we place ourselves in the animal shelter with Mary and Joseph and share their joy in the birth of their son, Jesus, God. Looking on in awe, we see them gazing into the face of their baby, caressing him, and holding him close. I wonder if as Mary gazed on her helpless baby boy, she marveled that this little bundle was God; or if she and Joseph ever imagined what it would be like raising a child who is God. Let us kneel before the crib this Christmas, play the song, "Mary, did you know?" and let our imagination run wild.

Christmas is such a wonderfully blessed and special time for Franciscans that twelve days are just not nearly enough time to take it all in, and to celebrate it to its fullest. Perhaps, that is why every day should be a Christmas.

May we live fully this Advent and Christmas Season. May it be Holy and Merry, packed with gifted blessings of peace and all good!

Blessings of peace and all good!
Sr. Marilyn ☒

Profession Anniversary Announcement

Joseph Rice, OFS, and the Francis/St. Louis fraternity is happy to announce Joseph's 50th Anniversary of Profession into the Order of Franciscan Secular's on Sunday, December 11th 2016. Our heartfelt congratulations go out to Joe. ☒

The mystery church in last month's publication was... Holy Trinity (Roman Catholic) church (yes, there is more than one, but only one *catholic*) at 1118 N. Noble.

Now, can anyone guess which (Chicago Archdiocese) church this is? ☒



The answer will appear next month! ☒

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)


By Luana Leinhart, OFS


Grace and peace, sisters and brothers! The election is over, thanks be to God. Now the hard work begins. A new President ascends, and we must put our country (and our broken hearts) back together. No matter how you voted, as Catholics and as Franciscans, we must pray for our new President, that he be attentive to the Holy Spirit and be the man God created him to be. It's also our responsibility to speak out if his policies aren't consistent with our Constitution or maybe unfair to our countrymen.

We must all find the way forward together, with empathy and compassion. People of color are protesting because they're afraid, and not without merit. Many people who voted for Trump are not racist, race and racism are inextricably linked in all of this. We shouldn't forget the times our country has stripped its citizens of their rights, with Congressional approval, like the internment of the Japanese during World War II.

A recent article on the NPR website caught my eye with a constructive solution to the divisiveness plaguing us: read a book that's not for you. Lisa Lucas, head of the National Book Foundation, recommends that liberals and people of color read *Strangers in Their Own Land* by Arlie Russell Hochschild, about Tea Party conservatives in Louisiana's bayou country. *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates is recommended reading for conservatives and whites to better understand the complexities of being black in America. Both titles have received numerous accolades, including the National Book Award. I've ordered one title for myself to read and the other to give away.

Have you ever intentionally read the story of someone totally different from yourself? A black or Native American author? A Muslim author? A gay or transgender author? We can learn so much from those whose experience is nothing like our own, while also being affirmed of our common humanity.

Please, let's not miss an opportunity to see the humanity in the people with whom we disagree. 

Notes from the editor: If you want something printed in this newsletter, simply write it up and (e)mail to pr@ilsfo.org. That's me. If I get it, I read it, and (usually) I print it. If it lacks detailed information that I think it needs, I'll probably email you back for that detail. This is *our* newsletter. Let's keep a good thing going. Marc 



Cardinal Cupich on the question of Pope's animosity towards JPIC Catholics read at: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/cardinal-cupich-on-the-question-of-popes-animosity-towards-jpic-catholics>

