

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

Reflection on Lent

On Ash Wednesday this year, we will hear (or read) the words of the prophet Joel chapter 2, vs. 12: "Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart". *Now*: an urgent word, not allowing for delay. Return to the Lord *now* and He will give you his grace and his forgiveness. Ask for his forgiveness and his blessings and your wishes will be fulfilled *now*. God is always ready to bless us and to pour out his grace upon us. As we begin the season of Lent this is the first thing that we need to know and to remember.

So, if God is always eager to forgive us, why do we need the season of Lent? Well, even though it is always *now* for God, it isn't so for us. We need to have, planned for us, a certain time or season like Lent to remind us to live more simply and to look to God more deeply. We need to increase our prayer time, our fasting and our almsgiving to shake up our routines and make us more willing to turn to God.

The Gospel for Ash Wednesday speaks to the three "pillars" of Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6: "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them." ... "When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret." ... "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him". Jesus then gives us the words to The Lord's Prayer, a prayer that we all know very well.

Jesus teaches us about almsgiving, the second pillar of Lent. He says, "(But) take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them" ... "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret". To me this is saying to not offer alms in front of others to make then think you are so wonderful and generous and such a great person. God will see, in secret, how loving and generous to others you have been and will reward you in secret.

Finally, Jesus speaks about fasting. He says, "When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they appear to others to be fasting" ... "But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face" ... "And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you".

To me Jesus is saying to not make yourself "look" like you are fasting by not taking care of your appearance; instead you should clean yourself up and look nice. To others you may not look like you are fasting but, then, you aren't fasting to make an impression on others. Fast so that you are seen by God who is hidden; he will see what is hidden in you and repay you.

Have a blessed, faith-filled Lent.
Return to God with all your heart.
You will be blessed indeed!
God's 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 2017

All events are at Mayslake Village unless otherwise noted

Saturday, January 21st —
Regional Executive Council Meeting

Monday, March 6th PerCapita/Census/Fraternity reports due

Saturday, March 11th
Regional Executive Council Meeting

Sat./Sun. March 18-19th Candidates' Retreat

Sunday, April 16th Easter

Saturday May 20th
Chapter of Ministers/Visitation from NAFRA

Saturday, July 15th
Regional Executive Council Meeting

Saturday, August 5th
Regional Gathering – Feast of the Portiuncula

Saturday, September 16th Formation Leadership Workshop

Saturday, October 7th
Regional Executive Council Meeting

NAFRA Chapter – Date and location TBA

Sunday November 12th Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration – location TBA

Spiritual Assistant's Message

Doing what is ours to do.

As you read this, Lent is about to begin, and we know “what is ours to do.” It comes across loud and clear in article 7 of our Holy Rule: “United by their vocation as brothers and sisters of penance, and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them (US!!) confirm their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls “conversion”. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.....”

We are admonished on Ash Wednesday to “turn away from sin” as the ashes are imposed.

Well, my best guess, is if we are trying to “live the gospel life after the manner of St. Francis...”

we probably aren't really big sinners, but we can work on our little faults as we go about reflecting on and doing the traditional Lenten fast, almsgiving and prayer.

How about disturbing our comfort level? Does it take extra effort to get to Stations of the Cross at your parish, perhaps because you have worked all day and want nothing more than to take off your shoes and sit in your easy chair? I have a “meet you half way” suggestion. How about resting in that easy chair for say, half-hour and then

heading off for church and the Stations. It's only once a week, after all.

OK, back to the easy chair now. Get some good Lenten reading – the kind that holds your attention and leads you to the prayer and contemplation that is the basis of all that we do. Article 4 of the Holy Rule tells us that should devote ourselves to careful reading of the Gospel so that we may go from Gospel to Life and life to Gospel! A personal favorite of mine is the Gospel of the Passion according to St. Matthew. It helps me to focus. Also for my Lenten reading this year I am going back to an old favorite and re-reading it. *Praying with Clare of Assisi* by Franciscan Sisters Ramona Miller and Ingrid Peterson.

As for fasting, I am going back to my old favorites. I'll turn off the TV after the evening news and pray the Franciscan Crown Rosary. I'll fast from some of my favorite creature comforts – like that afternoon coffee and muffin. You get the idea – of what will your fasting consist?

I know we all have our favorite Lenten almsgiving practices and we should continue, but can we make ourselves part of the almsgiving by giving of ourselves and our time to help a neighbor, a shut in friend – maybe just a phone call?

However you spend your Lent I wish you peace and good and ask the Sacred Heart of Jesus to surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings.

Patrick Mendés, OFS
Interim Regional Spiritual Assistant.



IN-FORMATION

As Franciscans, we are called to live in the spirit of continual conversion (const. Art. 13), our upcoming 'Candidates Retreat' on March 18th and 19th retreat offers an opportunity to maintain that important spirit. Although it is titled as such, all are welcome, not just candidates. Each year we change up the retreat theme and content so to serve those in initial formation through candidacy as well as all of us as on-going formation.

Our theme this year is 'Christ's Beatitudes' and will be presented as a series over the course of two days. Each presentation looks upon on the beatitudes of the New Testament gospels and addresses them from a Franciscan view. Time for quiet reflection follows each presentation, as well as time for community dialogue. My hope is that you find a refreshed awareness of self, others and creation in these presentations. Formal invitations have been distributed to local fraternity councils and I hope you have had time to discuss participation in this event. And in case they are helpful, attached you should find a copy of the Candidate Retreat 2-day syllabus, and registration form.

The retreat is being hosted at Mayslake Village in Oakbrook Illinois, a place that has become dear to us. I not only welcome all of you, rather, I encourage each of you to attend the retreat one or both days.

It is important for the planning committee to have an anticipated headcount, so registration is important. Please register (or at least provide a headcount) if you plan to attend to assist with facility and meal planning. Registration is due by Monday March 6th.

I look forward to seeing many of you there! And again, I wish you Peace,

Kristi Loar, OFS ☩

In Memoriam

Note: a very short obituary announcement about Paul appeared in last month's issue.

Paul Bularzik, OFS was called home to the Lord this past December. He was 96 years old.

Paul was husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather and faithful and dedicated Secular Franciscan.

At the time of his passing, he was a member of St. Clare Fraternity, Oak Brook and prior to then, he had been a member of Sacred Heart Fraternity Elmhurst until it was deactivated.

Paul contributed his considerable talents as well as his time to our Secular Franciscan Order serving on the Council of the former Franciscan Tertiary Province of the Sacred Heart, prior to Regionalization and was supportive of a great number of Province/Region efforts.

Paul also served on the founding Board of Directors of Mayslake Village.

Paul's was a life of service to our Order. We pray God grant him eternal rest and perfect happiness in heaven.

The Region has received several memorial donations in Paul's honor and memory. We thank the donors and assure you that the funds will be dispersed to Franciscan charities in our Mother Cabrini Region.

Gratefully and prayerfully,
Lorna Miressi, OFS
Regional Minister

Michael T. Doering, Jr. OFS entered eternal life this January. Both Michael along his wife Linda have been involved in the San Damiano Fraternity for almost 20 years. Michael was the San Damiano Treasurer for three terms. Michael was a devoted family man with several children and many grandchildren. ☩

"Clare and Francis" (movie) The story of two of the Catholic Church's most beloved saints, who become linked in their quest for searching for something higher than riches and social status. On EWTN on March 4th from 7-8:30PM. ☩

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

By Luana Leinhart, OFS

Grace and peace to you, sisters and brothers! February 19, 2017 marks the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 that called for the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. Every year, the Japanese American community around the country remember President Franklin D.

Roosevelt's signing of EO9066 as a reminder of the fragility of civil liberties in times of crisis, and the importance of remaining vigilant in protecting the rights and freedoms of all. It's known as Remembrance Day.

We say things like "Never Again" or "Never Forget", "Remember Pearl Harbor", but what do they really mean? Given current events, we seem only too happy to forget our country's sins when we're afraid, and especially when our 'enemy' isn't white. Our government didn't illegally incarcerate German or Italian Americans during World War II. Just the Japanese. And after the war, these citizens had to start over from nothing because their homes and businesses had been seized and sold by the US government. The Japanese Americans who served in the 442nd infantry during the war were ineligible for GI bills and other benefits received by other veterans, despite their being the most decorated army unit in our country's history. They hold this record to this day.

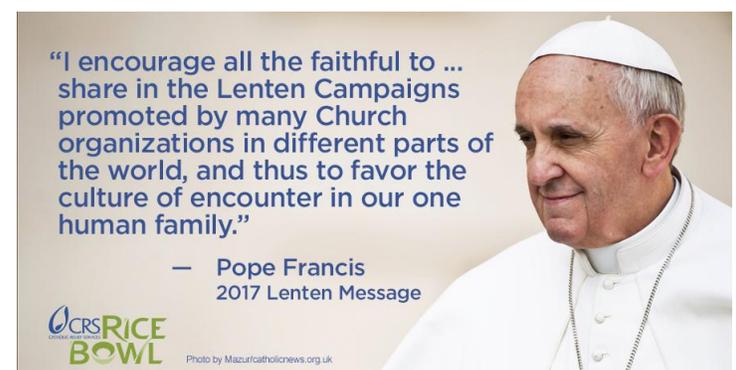
Our country has a tragic history of mistreating her citizens and then forgetting about it; only the survivors bear the scars incurred through no fault of their own. This is directly repugnant to the Gospel, and to the values our nation claims to champion. I keep coming back to these words by Frederick Douglass; they are just as true and relevant as when he first wrote them:

"America will not allow her children to love her. She seems bent on compelling those who would be her warmest friends, to be her worst enemies. May God give her repentance before it is too late, is the ardent prayer of my heart. I will continue to pray, labor, and wait,

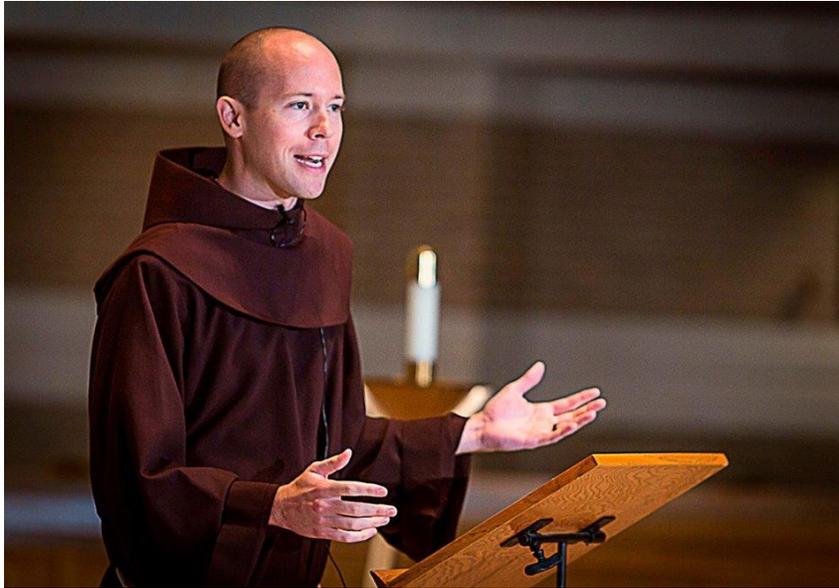
believing that she cannot always be insensible to the dictates of justice, or deaf to the voice of humanity." 

Editors Comment: Shown below is a *repeat*, plea if you will, call to action if you must, for HELP at our regional events -

Beginning with the Candidates Retreat on March 18th and 19th, there are three other Franciscan Regional events where we serve food. The other three occasions are: Saturday, May 20th, Chapter of Ministers, Saturday, August 5th, Feast of the Portiuncula and Saturday, September 16th, Formation Leadership Workshop. All these events will occur at Mayslake in Oakbrook. As Councilor for Fraternal Life I am looking for team of volunteers (3-4) who would be willing to help serve at these events. We could make this a ministry of service. For a lot of us, we already will be present at these events. So, would you be willing to come early, help set up, serve breakfast and lunch and clean up afterwards? I really need your help for all three of these events. It would make the event more fun with more hands and hearts working together. Pray over this and if you feel the urge (which I pray you will)contact me. Thank you. Sue Gribbon OFS



Racism and Fear of the Other: A Franciscan Perspective



At this free event, Father Dan Horan, OFM, will discuss racism and xenophobia, and what we can do about it. Fr Dan is a visiting assistant professor at Catholic Theological Union and is a columnist for *America* magazine. He is the author of several books, including *The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Influence in His Life, Thought and Writing*.

Saturday, March 4th 10am-2pm (approx.)

Registration begins at 9:30

DePaul University, Lincoln Park Campus

Schmitt Academic Center (SAC), Rm 154

2320 N Kenmore Ave

Chicago, IL 60614

Designated visitor parking is available at two lots on campus: Sheffield Parking Garage located at 2331 N. Sheffield, or Clifton Parking Deck located at 2330 N. Clifton. Vouchers for discounted parking will be distributed at registration. With the voucher, the parking fee is \$7.25.

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order 2017 Regional Candidate Retreat – Christ’s Beatitudes



To: Fraternity Ministers, Formation Directors, Candidates and Inquirers
From: Kristi Loar, OFS - Regional Formation Director
Re: Regional Candidates Retreat March 18th & 19th

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Enclosed please find the Registration Form and Schedule for this year’s Candidates Retreat to be held the weekend of March 18th & 19th, 2017. As in the past, the Retreat’s location will be Mayslake Village, 1801 35th St., Oakbrook IL, 60523. The focus of this year’s retreat is ‘Christ’s Beatitudes’.

As Franciscans, we are called to live in the spirit of continual conversion, and annual retreats are an important way of maintaining that important spirit. (Const. Art. 13). And even if candidates have attended previous retreats, they should find this this year’s topic inspirational and beneficial. Please encourage candidates, inquirers, along with formation directors and formation team members to attend. The expectation is those attending will be able to attend *both days*. Of course, if attending both is not possible, one day is better than not attending at all.

It is our hope of the Regional Formation Team that the Retreat will give everyone a better appreciation of the gift God has given them by leading them to the Franciscan path. But as St. Francis always stressed, gifts from God are not to be held and possessed, but passed on “through a holy activity, which must shine before others by example.” (2ndLF).

Attached is the intended syllabus of our two-day retreat. The Beatitudes will be presented over the course of both days; each presentation followed by time for quiet reflection; attendees may want to bring a journal. There will also be time for social interaction amongst all in attendance and, of course prayer.

The cost is modest. Just \$40 for the two days (\$25 for one day), and will cover a continental breakfast, lunch and handouts. Checks should be made payable *Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity OFS*.

Please direct any questions or concerns, and provide the number of people attending from your fraternity to Kristi Loar, OFS, formation@ilsfo.org.. A response is absolutely necessary so a final number can be given to the caterer.

Please note the deadline for registration is Monday, March 6th 2017.

Lastly, should participants be interested in an overnight stay on Saturday night there are several local accommodations including:

<i>Extended Stay America Hotel, Chicago-Westmont-Oak Brook</i>		
855 Pasquinelli Dr., Westmont, IL 60559	(630) 323-9292	extendedstayamerica.com
<i>Clubhouse Inn & Suites</i>		
630 Pasquinelli Dr., Westmont, IL 60559	(630) 920-2200	clubhouseinn.com
<i>Best Western Plus Oakbrook Inn</i>		
669 Pasquinelli Dr., Westmont, IL 60559	(630) 323-1515	bestwesternoakbrookinn.com

Please make copies of this letter, the schedule, and the registration form as needed. I look forward to seeing you at the Candidates Retreat!

Kristi Loar, OFS
Director of Formation
Mother Cabrini Regional Secular Franciscan Fraternity

**Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order
2017 Regional Candidate Retreat – Christ’s Beatitudes**

Registration Form

March 18th – 19th

Mayslake Village, 1801 35th St., Oakbrook IL, 60523

Name: _____

Check One: Inquirer _____ Candidate _____ Professed _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email address: _____

Fraternity: _____

I will attend: Both Days _____ March 18th only _____ March 19th only _____

Please enclose a check in the amount of \$40 for both days (\$25 if only able to attend one day) along with your registration form. Checks should be made payable to ***Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity OFS.***