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Please note that the views expressed herein represent those of the individual contributors,
and may or may not reflect the collective view of the Region.

Minister's Message for March 2018

I would like to share with you excerpts from an article I read in one of my favorite prayer resources. The article is titled "A Healing Sacrament" and it can be found in the Lent 2018 edition of The Word Among Us.

The Sacrament which the article is referring to is, of course, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When we participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation we most often sit in front of a priest and talk about our faults or our mistakes and ask for forgiveness. Perhaps we are worried about what the priest might say to us. We may be worried whether God will really forgive us. We easily forget that this sacrament is a sacrament not only of forgiveness but also one of healing. Confession does not just "pardon" us, it also "changes" us.

The article contains questions that can help us examine our consciences and prepare us for Reconciliation with God.

These questions focus on three aspects of our spiritual lives: our life with God (upward), the status of our hearts (inward) and our relationships (outward).

UPWARD

- Are there ways I am failing to honor the Lord?
- Am I honoring the Sabbath in a way that brings me closer to God?
- How am I doing in honoring the name of the Lord?

INWARD

- Have I harbored anger against another person or group of people?
- How have I given in to grumbling or discontentment?
- Do I allow lustful thoughts to run uncontrolled in my mind, even if I don't act on them?

OUTWARD

- Have I wounded relationships with unkind or insulting words?
- Where do I need to seek another person's forgiveness?
- How have I been faithful to my state in life, whether single or married?
- Do my material belongings have too strong a hold on me?

An Act of Contrition –

"My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with all your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy."
(From The Word Among Us, Daily Meditations: February 14-April 1, Joe Difato, publisher)

May God give you peace
Lorna Miressi,
OFS, Regional Minister

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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 2018

All events are at Mayslake Village unless otherwise noted

Saturday, January 20th Regional Executive Council Meeting ?*Per Capita/Census/Fraternity reports due*

Saturday March 10th Regional Executive Council Meeting

Sat./Sun. March 17th/18th Candidates' Retreat

Saturday May 19th Chapter of Ministers/ Election of New REC

Summer Seminar, Loretto PA (Date TBA)

Saturday July 14th Regional Executive Council Meeting

Saturday August 4th Regional Gathering - Feast of the Portiuncula

Saturday September 15 Formation Leadership Workshop

NAFRA Chapter - Date and Location TBA

Saturday October 6th Regional Executive Council Meeting

Sunday November 11th Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration – Location TBA

December Chapter of Elections (Date TBA)

Spiritual Assistant Message Bro. Marc Scheckells ofm

"The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people" (The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, Article 4).

The season of Lent has a way of reminding me that I am both human and that I am fully dependent on Christ's grace. Although I have great faith, I am often guilty of failing to embrace my responsibilities as a human being. Additionally, and because I fail to embrace those responsibilities, I also fail to recognize that Christ leads the way and is the foundation of my blessings. As Catholic Christians, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* reminds us that, "He [Christ] is present . . . when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:20)" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Article 7). This gift of having Christ present to us whenever we gather is important because we, as Secular Franciscans, gather often with the goal of praying in Jesus' name. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that our Fraternities, much like the larger Eucharistic celebration, serve as a point for both encountering Christ and becoming Christ.

It is significant to encounter Christ! Christ is wonderful and can fulfill us in ways that words will never fully capture. One temptation is to believe that I, personally, can know the way better than everyone else. This belief may not be limited to one person, but can even permeate small groups, or cliques, in a fraternity. Saint Francis, in his profound wisdom, knew that

simply encountering Christ was not enough. We must move from solely encountering Christ to becoming the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and person of Christ that is present to those around us. Hence, when the fraternity gathers in prayer, they are taking the necessary measures to actively become the person of Christ and recognize that Christ is in others.

Now, as human beings, we can take this gift of Christ for granted; I know I guilty of this sin. If the fraternity, then, becomes a space where Christ is present and active, do we not have a duty to bring the best we have to offer and share it with our brothers and sisters? Do we not have an obligation to encourage one another to be the best that they can be? When we have brought the best we have to offer, we give our Fraternity the proper respect and fully embrace the Christ that is present before us. In reality, we make ourselves vulnerable as Christ did on the cross. Additionally, we unite ourselves with his resurrection when we rejoice and celebrate the gifts that each brother and sister bring to the larger fraternity. The season of Lent has a way of reminding me that I am both human and that I am fully dependent on Christ's grace. I encourage every individual Franciscan to ask oneself "Am I bringing the best and fullest 'me' that I can?" I admonish every Franciscan to look at their fraternity and ask "How can I, with both my presence and my gifts, make this fraternity a better image of Christ?" I urge each person who reads this column to remember that you have the power to make your fraternity a bold beacon of peace, reconciliation, and love – a fraternity that witnesses to the rule we have professed and actively demonstrates that Christ is the center of our life with God and people. Sadly, we also have the power to criticize, demean, and demand that others change before you do – placing our desires in a higher priority than those of the Gospel. How are you better coming to know Christ during this Lenten season? I am spending my time reminding myself that I am both human and that I am fully dependent on Christ's grace. **✠**

IN-FORMATION

Kristi Loar OFS – Regional Formation Council

This year our national and regional focus returns to the Secular Franciscan Rule; in its present state. That means the 'new Rule' as approved by Pope Paul VI in 1978.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of that Rule! I am sure that each fraternity will find their own way to revisit, review, and reflect upon St. Francis' Prologue, the Rule and its Articles – and renew, in the hearts of membership, St. Francis' vision for the order.


The theme of our regional upcoming 'Candidates Retreat' on March 17th and 18th is 'St. Francis & A Trinitarian Way of Life. The very first article in our Rule clearly indicates Francis' view of the Trinity. Several keynote speakers will present over the course of two days. Each presentation looks upon on the nature of the Holy Trinity, and our Rule from a Franciscan view. Time for quiet reflection follows each presentation, as well as time for community dialogue. This year's retreat offers an opportunity dig deeper into the Trinitarian nature of St. Francis.

And as always, all are welcome, not just candidates. 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.

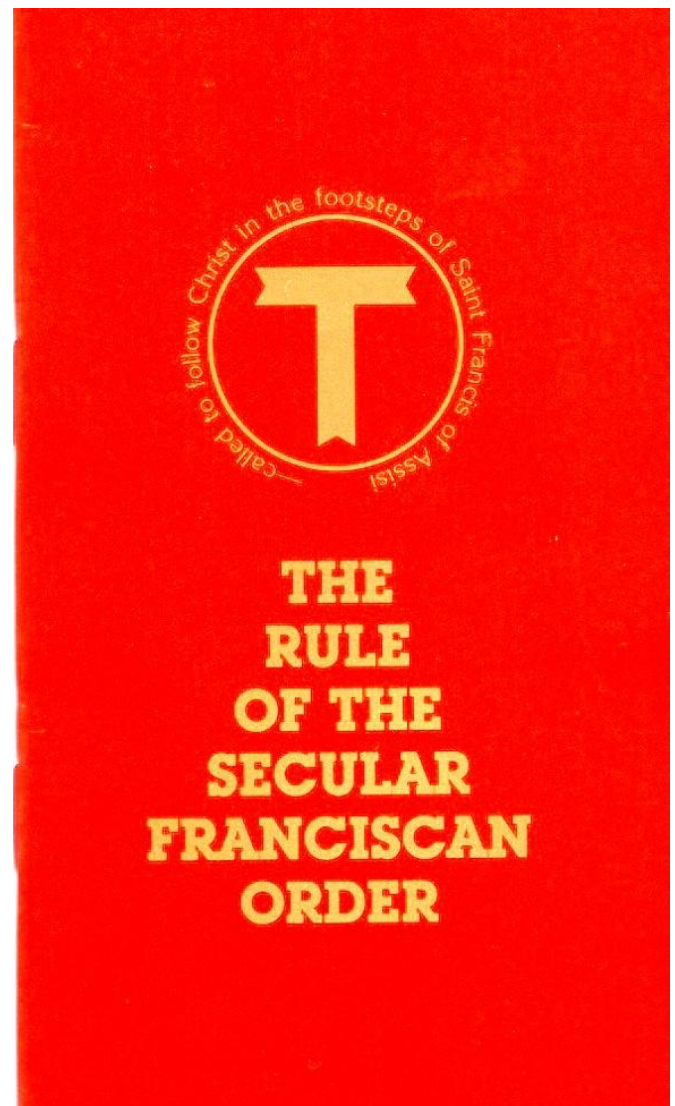
Registration is due by Monday March 5th.

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

V. The Four Franciscan Rules

Within the 800-year history of the Secular Franciscan Order, four Rules were established to help guide and govern how the laity were to live out the Franciscan Spirituality and Charism in the world:

- The Rule of Cardinal Hugolino - 1221 - Memoriali Propositi
- The Rule of Pope Nicholas IV – 1289
- The Rule of Leo XIII - 1883
- The Rule of Pope Paul VI – 1978



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

By Luana Lienhart, OFS

We need to talk about racism. It's hard to convince people that it's still a problem, and they can get defensive and shut me down, or tell me they'd listen if I had a more pleasant tone. In other words, they won't listen unless I protect their feelings about my oppression. Racism literally kills people of color like myself, so yes, my tone is urgent and angry. I'm (justifiably) angry and afraid, not at any single person, but at the structure that wounds us all.

I define racism as *a structure or system of policies and beliefs that perpetuates White Supremacy*. It's not the dictionary definition, but the dictionary was written through a White lens, and White people don't experience structural racism.

They benefit from it, whether or not they want to, and whether or not they know it. Generally speaking, people of color are the experts on racism because we're the ones who are forced to live in the structure.

To call someone racist isn't an insult or saying that person is bad or evil. Please note that my definition doesn't say anything about hatred. When I said in another column that Donald Trump is racist, I wasn't calling him a bad person, or the scum of the earth, or a KKK member. However, a person who repeatedly and unapologetically says racist things is racist, no matter how many friends of color they have. My husband and his family of origin are White.

They are wonderful people who love me, and whom I love deeply. They've all said and done racist things to me, more than once. So have some of you.

Jesus' death and Resurrection saved us from sin and death, but we still live in a fallen, sinful world. Legislation and time have moved us closer to racial justice, but our country's original sin continues because we won't end it. That you don't hate people of color isn't anti-racism. You may not be adding to the structure, but you're not dismantling it either.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr said, "Whites, it must frankly be said, are not putting in a similar mass effort to re-educate themselves out of their racial ignorance. It is an aspect of their sense of superiority that the white people of America believe they have so little to learn."

Knowledge is power, and educating yourself is a massive step toward being actively anti-racist. One of my favorite books on the subject is *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Dr Beverly Tatum. Another is *How to Be Black* by Baratunde Thurston. Dr Tatum's book has more data and statistics; Thurston's is an autobiography and very humorous. Both are engaging, easy reads.

It's my fervent prayer that you will take the time to learn more about this difficult topic. Have uncomfortable conversations with people of color, and really try to listen without becoming defensive, interrupting, or shutting them down. May God, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion.

Drop me a line if you want to talk further. Peace and all good, my brothers and sisters. 📧

St. Francis & A Trinitarian Way of Life

Mother Cabrini Region Annual Candidates Retreat 2

Mayslake Village, 1801 35th St, Oak Brook, IL 60523



Saturday March 17th, 2018 – Agenda

8:30 – 9:00 am	Registration (Lobby) & Check-in
9:00 – 10:00 am	Mass
10:00 – 10:30 am	Continental breakfast
10:30 – 10:40 am	Opening Prayer, Welcome & Introductions
10:40 – 11:40 am	<i>Keynote Speaker</i>
11:40 – 12 Noon	Group Reflection (and break as needed)
12:00 Noon	Angelus Prayer, Meal Blessing & Lunch
1:00 – 1:50 pm	<i>Keynote Speaker</i>
1:50 – 2:00 pm	Candidate Dialogue and Interaction
2:00 – 2:10 pm	Break & Cookies
2:10 – 2:30 pm	Lenten Reflection
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Evening Prayer
2:45 pm	Blessing and Dismissal

All segments are held in the cafeteria & chapel unless noted otherwise - we expect to end by 3:00pm

Sunday March 18th, 2017 - Agenda

9:00 – 9:30 am	Registration (Lobby) & Check-in
9:30 – 10:30 am	Formation Team's Address
10:30 – 11:40 am	Mass – with Mayslake Village community
11:40 – 12 Noon	Group Activity / Reflection (and break as needed)
12:00 Noon	Angelus Prayer, Meal Blessing & Lunch
1:00 – 1:50 pm	Keynote Speaker
1:50 – 2:00 pm	Candidate Reflection
2:00 – 2:10 pm	Break & Cookies
2:10 – 2:30 pm	Lenten Reflection
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Evening Prayer
2:45 pm	Blessing and Dismissal

All segments are held in the cafeteria & chapel unless noted otherwise - we expect to end by 3:0pm

The [Lord](#) bless you and keep you.
May He show His face to you and have mercy.
May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.
The [Lord](#) bless you!

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order

2018 Regional Candidate Retreat –

A Trinitarian Way of Life

St. Francis &



Mayslake

Registration Form

March 17th – 18th

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

To register for this year's Candidate Retreat please fill in the below information:

Name: _____

Check One: Inquirer _____ Candidate _____ Professed _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email address: _____

Fraternity: _____

I will attend: Both Days _____ March 17th only _____ March 18th only _____

Please enclose a check in the amount of \$40 for both days (\$25 if only able to attend one day) along with This registration form. Checks should be made payable to ***Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity OFS***. Please return this registration form and check(s) by **March 5th**, 2018 to:

Kristi Loar, OFS

Please contact Kristi with any questions you have at email at formation@ilsfo.org



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A ONE-OF-AKIND FILM"
- CAROL COBURN

CHOSEN

Custody of the Eyes

A FILM BY ABBIE REESE
AND THE POOR CLARE NUNS

Rockford Screening
2-4:30 pm Sunday, March 18
Nordlof Center, 118 North Main Street

Tickets are \$5
Please purchase in advance

www.chosenthefilm.com

www.chosenthefilm.com

Please purchase in advance
Tickets are \$5