

## Minister's Message: Happy Feast Day!

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Blessings to all of you as we celebrate the Transitus and Feast Day of our Holy Father St. Francis! May these days be truly meaningful and holy for all of us!

Also, be sure to read the letter from Patrick Mendés, SFO, our National Minister, on Page 3 regarding special days of prayer and fasting for peace on October 3 and 8. I sent this letter of all Ministers of the Region by email about two weeks ago so some of you may already be aware. May all people be transformed into instruments of peace and reconciliation; may peace reign on earth!

As we come together in community on these very special days, it's good to consider the grace – and the responsibility – of our vocations. We must always remember, first, that our vocation as Secular Franciscans is a

grace from God and our response must be one of gratitude.

Next, we need to consider the responsibility of our vocation. When we make our profession, we promise “to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and center of his life with God and people.” That is the opening paragraph of Article 4 of our *Rule* and it really summarizes the entire *Rule*. If only we could all always do that!

The message of the Gospel is easy to proclaim – to love God first, and our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus said these commandments embody the entire law. But living that Gospel isn't at all easy – and

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## Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Peace and everything good to you!

How do you handle it when things don't go your way? When plans are frustrated or totally obliterated or when people get “in your face” do you get “bent out of shape” or do you take it in stride? Do you find yourself getting angry, crabby, depressed, resentful, impatient, and ruminating on it? Or do you let go of it easily, and move on from there peacefully, thankfully, grace-fully?

I think St. Francis is a good model for us here, since a lot of things didn't go as planned for him. He started off to be a knight and that didn't work out at all. He was imprisoned – not exactly what anybody would want. He got sick and took a long time to recover – no fun for anyone. Then he planned to follow Christ more closely. Ah,

good plan! Yet, he didn't know how or what type of life to live.

Pray. That's it, pray! OK, he prayed, and wonder of wonders, Christ spoke to him from the cross: “Go, rebuild my church, since it is falling to ruin.” Wow, there's a message Francis could understand, so he started rebuilding churches. It wasn't until he finished three of them that he began to realize that this was not quite the meaning of the message. Just how do you rebuild the church with the capital “C”? More confusion. Maybe frustration?

Francis started attracting followers – again, not his plan. He didn't know whether to preach or to be a hermit and live a prayerful life in caves, and after asking his brothers and sisters for their prayerful discernment

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*From Gospel to Life – From Life to Gospel*

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## Spiritual Assistant

Fr. Donald Blaeser, OFM

**Newsletter Editor**

Lisa Wathen, SFO

The *SFO News* is the official publication of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order.

**Submission deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

**Professions**

- **Henry Blum**, SFO,
- **Mike Burke**, SFO,
- **Tom Jansz**, SFO, and
- **Dennis Temple**, SFO of St. Juliana Fraternity (Chicago) made their Professions on June 10.

**Rest in Peace**

- **John F. Stiglitz**, SFO of St. Paschal Satellite Fraternity (Chicago), died September 18.

**Local Elections**

Best wishes and prayers for the newly-elected officers of **St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Joliet)**:

- *Minister:*  
Frank Kamradt, SFO
- *Vice-Minister:*  
Gayle Tennant, SFO
- *Formation Director:*  
Pat King, SFO
- *Secretary:*  
Dottie Mueller, SFO
- *Treasurer:*  
Charlie King, SFO

**Directory Corrections**

In the recently-mailed updates for our **Regional Directory**, two email addresses for local ministers were incorrectly listed. The correct email addresses are:

- **Page 15:**  
St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Rockford)  
Gail Vannetter, SFO; Minister
- **Page 22:**  
St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Crystal Lake)  
Bob Proctor, SFO; Minister

Please update your directories accordingly, and we apologize for the errors.

If you have any corrections or updates for the Regional Directory, please contact Monica Marko, SFO, Regional Secretary.

**Mother Cabrini Award: Deadline Extended**

The deadline to submit nominations for the **Mother Cabrini Award** has been extended until **October 10 (Wednesday)**.

**Nominee Requirements**

Nominees must: be Professed Secular Franciscans in the Mother Cabrini Region, in good standing, who exhibit a consistent Franciscan, Christian, and spiritual lifestyle; are known to live the Gospel way of life; are active in fraternity life; demonstrate leadership and commitment to a specific ministry/apostolate; bring the spirit of St. Francis to others; live the Franciscan charisms of peace, justice, and compassion; and demonstrate a spirit of selflessness after the example of Mother Cabrini and our Seraphic Father Francis.

Nominees must be willing to receive the award.

**Submission Rules**

Each Fraternity Council and each Regional Executive Council member may submit one (1) name for consideration. The nominee does not have to be a member of the nominating fraternity. Other nominations may be made by members at large with the approval of their fraternity councils. The nominations should be received by the Councilor for Fraternal Life on

or before the listed deadline. The nomination form—no longer than one typewritten page with 1-inch margins—should contain an informative profile of the nominee.

**Selection Process**

The entries will be voted on by the Regional Executive Council. Each council member will award five (5) points to his/her first choice, three (3) points to the second choice, and one (1) point to the third choice. The award will go to the nominee with the most points and will be presented at the Mother Cabrini Celebration on November 11 (Sunday).

**Send in Your Nominations!**

Remember, the real purpose of this award is to celebrate our way of life. Please take time to make this a discussion point in your fraternity gatherings, and send in your fraternity's nomination on or before the new deadline of **October 10 (Wednesday)** to:

Chris Bruhnke, SFO  
Regional Councilor for Fraternal Life ☒

**Transitus Services in the Region**

Just after sunset on Saturday, October 3, 1226, our Seraphic Father Francis, at the age of 44, welcomed Sister Death with open arms as the Passion of Jesus was read aloud from the Gospel.

He was born to eternal life just 3 miles from Assisi, and less than 50 feet from the Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels (the Portunicula).

Many question why the Church celebrates October 4 as Francis' Feast Day, rather than October 3. The reason is that, in Francis' time, it was considered the next day at 6:00 p.m., rather than at midnight, as we currently recognize it.

Since he died after sunset (6:00 p.m.) his Feast Day has always been celebrated on October 4.

(From "Franciscan Facts" in *Dear Brothers & Sisters*, October 2006; Northwest Franciscan Community of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Palatine, IL)

On **October 3**, Franciscans gather to celebrate the "Transitus", St. Francis' passing into eternal life. Franciscan-run shrines and churches, such as Marytown in Libertyville and St. Peter's in Chicago, have special services to honor this event; following is a partial list of services within and near our Region.

■ **Cedar Lake (Indiana)**. Our Lady of Lourdes Friary, 12915 Parrish Ave., 7:00 p.m.

■ **Chicago**. St. Peter's in the Loop, 110 W. Madison St., 7:00 p.m.

■ **Frankfort**. Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart Motherhouse, 9201 W. St. Francis Rd., 5:00 p.m., followed by a light dinner

■ **Joliet**. St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish, 404 Hickory St., 7:00 p.m.

■ **Libertyville**. Marytown, 1600 W. Park Ave., 7:00 p.m. ☒

## A Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace

by Patrick Mendés, SFO; National Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

*“When he entered the house, His disciples asked Him in private, ‘Why could we not drive it [the unclean spirit] out?’ He said to them, ‘This kind can only come out through prayer and fasting.’” (Mk 9:28-29)*

In the Gospel of Mark, we encounter the disciples, who are all too familiar with violence and destruction in their daily lived reality. Their inability to “cast out demons” echoes our own difficulties in the face of violence and destruction in our country and our world. Much like them, we too must turn to the Lord of Life and ask the same question: “Why could *we* not drive the unclean spirit out?” The much awaited reply, the call of Jesus to prayer and fasting, is a call to all of us to take seriously our responsibility to “cast out the demons” of violence which pervade our United States culture and slowly erode our understanding and commitment to the common good.

Violence seems to permeate every aspect of contemporary U.S. culture. Video games and toy stores promote “crusaders of violence.” The movie and television industries project violence as an appropriate response to all forms of conflict. Our government justifies the use of violence in its pursuit of extending democracy to Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts of the Middle East, and in its treatment of political prisoners. The proliferations of conventional arms, and their robust sales by government and private industry, provide a ready means whereby disturbed and angry citizens can exact heavy retribution at will, protected by constitutional guarantees that fail to account for seismic shifts in the thinking and acting of responsible citizens of this nation.

In Chapter Three of the First Order Rule, Francis refers to this passage from Mark and calls all of his followers to take up lives of prayer and fasting, powerful instruments for the transformation of the human heart. These same instruments are recognized and employed by Jews, Muslims and many other faith traditions. They also are critical

tools for peacemaking and reconciliation.

**This year, as we celebrate the Transitus and Feast of St. Francis on October 3–4, 2007, we invite you to join with other U.S. Franciscans, who are receiving similar invitations from their provincial administrations, to commit ourselves to a day of prayer and fasting on October 3rd in the spirit of Jesus and Francis.**

In addition, the Shalom Center and the Tent of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar are calling for an Interfaith Fast on October 8, 2007, to move us from “Conquest to Community, from Violence to Reverence.” We ask that all Franciscans consider October 8th another day of prayer and fasting—in fellowship and solidarity with our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters. To learn more about the Interfaith Fast and to sign up, go to [www.tentofabraham.org](http://www.tentofabraham.org).

Finally, we ask that you invite all Franciscan Sisters, Secular Franciscans, your partners in ministry and all people of good will to join you on this sacred pilgrimage on October 3 and 8, a passing from violence and death to peace and life, so that the peace of God might take deeper root in our lives, our nation and our world.

To help in further efforts, some Transitus Prayer Services, provided by Franklin Fong, OFM of the Santa Barbara OFM province, and a Morning Prayer for Oct. 3 have been prepared. These resources are available on the Sacred Heart OFM Province’s web site at [www.thefriars.org/justice](http://www.thefriars.org/justice) and the Holy Name OFM Province’s site at [www.hnp.org/jpic](http://www.hnp.org/jpic).

We thank you for heeding Jesus’ call to prayer and fasting in these critical times. ☒

*— Note from our Regional Minister, Stephanie Sormane, SFO: And while we're at it praying ... prayers from throughout the Region are so needed – what is purported to be the largest abortion clinic in the United States [is attempting to open] in Aurora. [See sidebar for details.] ... I'm sure prayers at any time for an end to abortion will be gratefully received by our Father in Heaven.*

### Living the Gospel of Life

As mentioned in the “Family: Pro Life Vigils” section in last month’s *Apostolic Action* newsletter, Planned Parenthood is attempting to open in Aurora (3051 E. New York St.) what would be the largest abortion mill in the U.S.

On September 20, U.S. District Judge Charles Norgle struck down a motion by Planned Parenthood to force the opening of their newly-built abortuary against the will of Aurora officials.

“The ruling will allow officials to proceed with the investigation into Planned Parenthood’s allegedly deceptive permit filing, which concealed the true identity of the facility’s occupants by using a front company, Gemini Office Development, and failing to identify the building as an abortion complex (it was called a ‘health center’ on the application). If it opens, the facility will be the largest Planned Parenthood abortion facility in North America. Aurora pro-lifers call the clinic the ‘Abortion Fortress.’”<sup>1</sup>

For up-to-date information on this crucial pro-life struggle, including a large number of news stories, see the Families Against Planned Parenthood web site at [www.fofapp.org](http://www.fofapp.org).

<sup>1</sup> “Planned Parenthood Loses Court Case to Open Aurora ‘Abortion Fortress’”, 21-Sep-2007, *LifeSiteNews.com*

Sources: Associated Press, *Chicago Tribune*, *LifeSiteNews.com*, Pro-Life Action League

From **Sep. 26–Nov. 4**, join in a unique, nationwide pro-life campaign, **40 Days for Life**—an intensive time of prayer and fasting to raise awareness, save lives, bring healing, and prepare the U.S. for the beginning of the end of abortion. For more information, see [www.40daysforlife.com](http://www.40daysforlife.com).

## Calendar

### October

- 2-7: National Chapter, Belleville, IL
- 10: New deadline for Mother Cabrini Award Nominations
- 12-14: Regional Retreat, Marytown
- 13: Regional Pro-Life “Think Tank” Meeting, hosted by St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Joliet  
1:30–3:30 p.m. (note new time!)  
Beggar’s Pizza  
640 W. Maple (US 30)
- 20: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Mayslake Village

### November

- 11: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration, hosted by St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Fox Valley) at St. Patrick Parish, 6N491 Crane Rd., St. Charles



**Minister** continued from p. 1 ...

that’s why we gather in community – to support and encourage each other!

Sometimes we get too hung up on the peripherals and don’t concentrate enough on the core of our vocation, which is living the Gospel. That is a matter of the heart, not rules and regulations – they will take care of themselves if the heart is in the right place!

As we celebrate the Transitus and Feast Day this year, let’s all take some time to ponder our vocations and how we might better bring the Franciscan charism of peace and love to our world!

I will be away at the National Chapter in Belleville at Our Lady of the Snows from October 2–7; we will be celebrating the Transitus and the Feast Day with the Friars of Sacred Heart Province. While I’m sure that will be wonderful, I will be missing the profession on October 4 of three great ladies in my own fraternity – I am so sorry to miss that celebration! I will fully report to you on the National Chapter in the November *SFO News*. I also look forward to seeing many of you at the Regional Retreat at Marytown on October 12–14! ☒

**Assistant** continued from p. 1 ...

and after praying about it himself, he decided that the answer was to preach. But of course, he couldn’t do that without prayer, so again, the answer was not simple.

Francis’ father berated him for his new-found religious fervor, and Francis managed to deal with the pain by having a beggar bless him every time his father cursed him – clever, innovative, imaginative. But I can’t imagine that it killed the pain. Then toward the end of his life, he had to deal with friars taking the whole Order in an entirely different direction from what he envisioned.

As we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis this month, we would do well to consider how we deal with adversity, with change, with frustration, loss, suffering, wounds of the past ... you name it. We live in a world in which we exercise a lot of control. We flick a switch and turn on lights, get in a car and zoom to a distant place of our choosing, prepare a meal in seconds with a microwave, turn on a tap and have clean water – hot or cold – and so on. And the more we become “control freaks” the less patient we are with adversity. The attitude of some in our society is: “I want what I want when I want it.”

But Francis of Assisi embraced the cross of Christ. Not just accepted it, but *embraced it*. That’s the significance of the Stigmata. Ouch! We avoid the cross, don’t we? I mean let’s admit it. Who wants pain and suffering? Certainly we shouldn’t seek it, nor should we think it’s our calling to provide it for others. But this year we might celebrate the Feast of St. Francis by praying that he help us to do a lot better with accepting adversity, changes in plans, criticism from others, and so on. Most of us would do well to ask Francis to help us to be more open-minded, more accepting of others, more tolerant, less judgmental, more flexible, more loving, more Christ-like.

May Christ, whom St. Francis loved so deeply, bless you abundantly. ☒