

Minister's Message: Gathering, New Web Site, & Workshop Reviews

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

■ **Regional Gathering.** First, I hope *everyone* is planning on coming to our Regional Gathering at Mayslake on August 1. Our wonderful presenters, Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, OFM, and Sr. Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSE, will help us understand why the 800th Anniversary of the first Rule of the Order of Friars Minor (thus, the birth of the Franciscan Order) is so important to us! In addition, we will have some wonderful Korean entertainment and a special closing prayer focusing on the care of our Mother Earth. Don't miss this great day of Franciscan community!

■ **Redesigned Web Site.** You'll find full information about the Regional Gathering at our newly-redesigned web site, www.ilsfo.org, be sure to visit it—it looks

great! We'll be adding new features and content to it over time, so please watch the site for more updates.

■ **Leadership Workshop.** There were two workshops in June—our own Leadership Workshop here at Mayslake, and the NAFRA Workshop on Franciscan Spirituality at St. Francis University in Loretto, PA. The purpose of our Leadership Workshop was to help prepare for upcoming elections. Our Regional Vice-Minister, Javier Orozco, SFO, gave a wonderful presentation on discerning gifts. Leading us through some fun exercises, he helped us consider some important questions: What gives me joy? How will I grow in my knowledge and skills that I bring to service? To what need in the

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Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As most of you know, music is important to me. More than that, it's part of me—in my heart and soul. I feel that it is an expression of the living God, dwelling within and singing out from my sacred center.

So it was with great joy that I attended the convention of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians the second week of July. This convention of church musicians is now held annually and provides input, new information, new materials, continuing education, and lots of camaraderie. But it is also very prayerful, with sung Morning Prayer each day, other sung prayer, and a celebration of Mass that is out of this world!

In fact, I always find myself, during that festive Mass, wishing that every Catholic would have this experience at least once in a lifetime.

You cannot even imagine what it's like to be in a huge hall with beautiful decorations, all kinds of musical instruments playing, and perhaps 3,000 participants all singing in four-part harmony. Yes, ALL singing! Willingly! Joyfully! It's enough to make your heart skip a beat, but in a healthy way.

So, I go to this convention for many reasons: to learn, to grow, to do continuing education, to be with old friends and meet new ones, to pray, to feed my soul, and maybe more. I just know St. Francis would love this way that we give honor and glory to God.

So how are you feeding your soul this summer? Do you have a way that lifts your spirit? Do you find a way to pray that is more than just "getting it done"? More than just saying the same rote words? More than

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Stephen Lanterman, SFO

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Elisabeth Shin, SFO

Councilor for Apostolates:

To be appointed

Councilor for Communications/

Public Relations:

Lisa Wathen, SFO

Councilor for Fraternal Life:

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Franciscans in the News

Six friars from the OFM Province of St. John the Baptist recently made *The Washington Post's* headlines when they walked 300 miles from Roanoke, VA to Washington, D.C. As the *Post* reported:

“For six weeks, the brothers walked from Roanoke with only their brown robes, sandals and a belief in the kindness of strangers to feed and shelter them.

“The sight of six men in flowing habits, trudging single file on the side of the road, prompted many to pull over and talk, even confess. People on their way to work described their loneliness. College students wanted help figuring out what to do with their lives. Children, mistaking them for the Shaolin monks in movies, ran up to ask the friars if they knew how to beat up bullies.

“... In every instance, the friars made time for conversation. They shot the breeze with a gang of drunk bikers, dispensed relationship advice to the brokenhearted commuters and bore witness to one and all, yea, even to the Chik-fil-A employee dressed as a cow.

“The pilgrimage was the idea of four young friars just finishing their training in Chicago and working toward taking lifelong vows. Seeking to emulate the wanderings of their founder, Saint Francis of Assisi, they wanted to journey together as a fraternity, ministering to one another and to strangers, while depending on God for every meal and place to sleep.

“Joined by two older friars supervising their training, they picked as their destination a friary in Washington, D.C., called the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land—a symbolic gesture, because the actual Holy Land was too far away.”

For more on the friars and their journey (along with a direct link to the *Post's* article), see www.friarwalk.com.

Source: “Friars Trudge 300 Miles and Find Kindred Souls on the Way” by William Wan, 29-Jul-2009, *The Washington Post*.

Around the Region

■ **St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (Wayne).** The fraternity is hosting a “Filipino Celebration”, which will feature food and culture from the Philippines, and all are invited to attend.

- **Date:** October 4 (Sunday)
- **Time:** 2–4 p.m.
- **Location:** Marvin Hall, Resurrection Catholic Church 30W350 Army Trail Rd., Wayne
- **RSVP By:** September 4 (Friday)

A free-will collection will be taken to benefit the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family, who at present have three charitable institutions in the Philippines devoted to helping the country’s children and youth in risky and troubled situations. They also work among the poor, teach catechism, and give health care to the most needy.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Lorna Miressi, SFO. ■

“Francis, Build Up My Church ...”

by Sandra Kisel, SFO; Regional Formation Director

“O Lord, You are the Center of my life: I will always praise You, I will always serve You, I will always keep You in my sight.” (Paul Inwood, “Center of My Life”)

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Men do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket. They set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, your light must shine before men so that they may see the goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father.” (Mt. 5: 14-16)

Inspired by the writings and example of St. Francis, and above all filled with the Holy Spirit, every day we are to live the great gift we have received from Jesus Christ, the revelation of our Heavenly Father. And we are called to bear witness to our faith before all people wherever we are and in whatever we do. In other words, we are called to be continually transformed into gospel, to become gospel.

Let us remember how at the beginning of Francis’ conversion, he was laughed at and mocked because they thought he was crazy, then after realizing God Himself was moving in this poor man, they sought to follow him, craving the treasure he had found for themselves. There are many who do not know God or own a Bible, and they also must have the opportunity to know God, if not by our words, then always by our love and example. (*Constitutions*, 2:12.1) “He was a bright light on a lamp stand in the house of the Lord” (Sir 15:1-4).

We commit ourselves by our professions to live the Gospel according to our Franciscan spirituality in our secular state (*Constitutions*, 2:8), while seeking to deepen in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to our Rule. We are called to a continual conversion and formation as we journey from our present state into God and everlasting life, giving up sin, Satan, and death and embracing our God who always and everywhere from all eternity has loved us and calls us to Himself. (*Rule*, 7) “Lord, who shall be admitted to your tent and dwell on your holy mountain?” (Ps 15).

As Secular Franciscans, our spirituality is a plan of life centered on Jesus Christ. (*Constitutions*, 2:9.1) We must be committed to following the example and teachings of Christ, personally and assiduously studying the Gospel and Sacred Scripture. (*Constitutions*, 2:9; *Rule*, 4.3) “The Lord nourished him with the bread of life and understanding and gave him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink.” (Ps 112)

“Christ, poor and crucified”, the greatest manifestation of the love of God for humanity, is the “book” in which we all learn the purpose and way of living, loving, and suffering. This is where we learn the value of the “contradictions for the sake of justice” and the meaning of the difficulties and crosses of daily life. With and in Him, we can live and accept the will of our Heavenly

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Regional Elections in December

Our Regional elections are coming up this December, and all **perpetually professed Secular Franciscans** in the Mother Cabrini Region are invited to nominate persons whom they believe are qualified for an office. Nominations can be made by a fraternity or by an individual, and if someone is interested in a particular office, they can nominate themselves.

Note: Only **perpetually professed Secular Franciscans** within our Region may be nominated for elected and appointed offices.

Elected Offices

- Minister*
- Vice-Minister
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Formation Director
- Councilor At-Large

* Candidates may not hold the office of minister at two different levels. (*General Constitutions*, Article 82.a)

For information on the duties and responsibilities associated with these offices, see:

- *General Constitutions*, Articles 61–64
- *National Statutes*, Articles 22–24
- *Mother Cabrini Regional Norms*, Articles 7–11
- *Mother Cabrini Region Ministers' Reference Manual*, pages B9–13, B19

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Father even in the most difficult times and circumstances in the peace of Christ, beyond what this world offers; rejecting every doctrine contrary to human dignity. (*Constitutions*, 2:10; *Rule*, 10) “Those who are learned will be as radiant as the sky in all its beauty; those who instruct the people in goodness will shine like the stars for all eternity.” (Dn 12:3)

Above all, we are to remember that the Holy Spirit is the source of our vocation, the animator of fraternal life and our mission as Secular Franciscans, and we are to seek to imitate Francis in his faithfulness to his inspiration and in heeding his exhortation that above all else, we should desire “the Spirit of God at work within us.” (*Constitutions*, 2:11)

This, brothers and sisters, is our way of life, our calling, to live as brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ and loving children of so great a Father, filled with the Holy Spirit of Life. We have much to be extremely grateful for, praising God forever!

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Appointed Offices

The following offices are *appointed* positions. While these will be appointed by the newly-elected officers during their first Regional meeting, you can still recommend individuals for consideration—and individuals can put forward their own names—for the following.

- Councilor for Apostolates
- Councilor for Communications/PR
- Councilor for Fraternal Life
- Councilor for Visitations
- Councilor for Vocations
- Councilor for Youth/Young Adult

For information on the duties and responsibilities associated with these offices, see the *Mother Cabrini Region Ministers' Reference Manual*, pages B14–18, B20.

Note: We have links to the *General Constitutions* and *National Statutes* on our web site, www.ilsfo.org. For the *Mother Cabrini Region Ministers' Reference Manual*, every local minister should have a copy, which includes our *Regional Norms*. Please see your local minister for more information.

To Submit Nominations

If you have nominations or suggestions, email our 2009 Regional Nominating Committee Chair, Monica Marko, SFO, at elections@ilsfo.org. 📧

Formation News

■ **Feast Days.** August is again filled with wonderful feast days! We of course celebrate the feast of the Portiuncula and I look forward to seeing all of you at our Regional Celebration! This year has also been declared a year for priests. On August 4, we celebrate the feast of St. John Vianney, the patron of priests and one of our own, a tertiary of the Third Order of St. Francis!

■ **National Workshop.** It was out of this world, with presenters Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO and Vinal Van Benthem, SFO! Six from our Region carpoled—thanks for allowing me to join you. I hope those who are able will try to attend next year's workshop at St. Francis University.

■ **National Formation Retreat and Materials.** The National Formation Retreat and formation materials originally planned for 2010 will be delayed until 2011 in order to accomplish all the necessary work. More soon! Peace and all good! 📧

Events of Interest

August 30. The Archdiocese of Chicago’s Office for Racial Justice is sponsoring “Catholics Praying for Racial Justice”, a series of six pilgrimages throughout each of the six vicariates in the Archdiocese. The August 30 pilgrimage, which is the first in the series, will start at 2 p.m. at St. Colette Church, 3900 S. Meadow Dr., Rolling Meadows.

Participants may meet at one of the four participating churches or travel by bus to all the churches, where prayer services will be held. Three more pilgrimages will take place in September, and two in October. For all the dates and parishes, visit www.dwellinmylove.org.

Calendar

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are at Mayslake Village (Oak Brook).

August

01: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

October

09-11: Regional Retreat, Marytown, Libertyville

17: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

November

15: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration, hosted by St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (Wayne)

December

12: Regional Elections (to be confirmed with NAFRA)

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community does my “yes” respond? Answers to those questions helps discern how each of us can best serve the SFO, whether on the local, regional, or national level.

Stephan Lanterman, SFO, our Regional Treasurer, spoke about servant leadership, and how we have been empowered to serve, especially by Vatican II, and how the changes in the Church since that time have opened many opportunities for lay leadership. Sandy Kisel, SFO, our Regional Formation Director, spoke on the importance of servant leadership being a part of our formation process, so that those coming into the SFO realize that serving their community is an integral part of our professed life.

Finally, I spoke about the importance of supporting our leaders so they never feel abandoned once they’ve taken on the responsibility of leadership, and that those leaving office “walk the walk” with their replacements, which results in a smooth transition and stronger new leadership. We had good sharing from the 37 participants representing 15 of our local fraternities.

■ **NAFRA Workshop.** The NAFRA Workshop on Franciscan Spirituality was outstanding! In the September issue, I’ll provide a description of what was shared and its importance, where I hope to give it the attention it deserves. However, since this month we are focusing on leadership and elections, following is a “Prayer for SFO Leadership”, which Anne Mulqueen, SFO, our International

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fulfilling an obligation? Prayer is all about sustaining and expressing our relationship of love with God, and so we need to find ways of praying that feed our souls.

Too many of us have been smothered to death with “shoulds” and “ought tos” that are death-dealing to our spiritual lives. When St. Francis preached to the birds and sawed two sticks together like a violin, he wasn’t just being crazy. He was letting his soul soar to the God who loved him—loved him so much that Francis had to express the

Councilor, shared at the Workshop:

Give us, O God, leaders whose hearts are large enough to match the breadth of our own souls and give us souls strong enough to follow leaders of vision and wisdom.

In seeking a leader, let us seek more than our own enhancement—though enhancement we hope for; more than security for our own plans and vision—though security we need; more than satisfaction for our own selfish wants—though many things we desire.

Give us the hearts to choose and follow the leader who will work with other leaders to bring Your will to the agenda and help us to fulfill it.

Give us leaders who lead us to virtue without seeking to impose their own version of virtue on others.

Give us leaders who will provide for the advancement of our Order without dictating to others to achieve it.

Give us insight enough ourselves to choose as leaders those who can tell strength from power, growth from greed, leadership from dominance, and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity.

We trust you, Great God, to open our hearts to learn from those to whom you speak in different tongues and to respect the life and words of those to whom you entrusted the good of other parts of this globe.

We beg you, Great God, give us the vision as Secular Franciscans to know where holy leadership truly lies, to pursue it diligently, to ask it to respect the integrity of every person in the entire Order.

We ask these things, Great God, with minds open to your word and hearts that trust in your eternal care. Amen. ■

joy of that love-relationship in something beyond words.

If you don’t already have a prayer form that lifts your spirit beyond words, find one. Sing a song, dance around the house, write a poem, plant a flower garden, do pottery or weaving, play the piano or violin or just two sticks, do some stretching exercises, hug someone who looks like she could use a hug whatever! You get the idea. The sky’s the limit! All for the greater honor and glory of God.

Have a great summer, and let your spirit soar. God bless you all. ■