

Minister's Message: Mother Cabrini Celebration, Elections

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, the Mother Cabrini Regional Celebration will be hosted by my fraternity, St. Bernardine of Siena (Wayne) at 2 p.m. Sunday, November 15, at Resurrection Catholic Community, 30W 350 Army Trail Rd., Wayne. I hope we will be able to welcome all of you to this festive event!

Some of you have been to Resurrection before and know it has a Franciscan history – until 2006, it was served by the friars of the Assumption BVM Province of the OFM from its beginning in 1958 as a mission church. Although we're now a diocesan parish, our pastor has been very respectful of our past, so all the Franciscan symbols remain! The new worship space was dedicated in 1999; it's quite unusual

and we'll have a short presentation about its design after Mass. We'll also talk about Mother Cabrini, her saintly life, and why she is our patron.

Afterwards, there will be lots of food to enjoy and a chance to chat with your fellow Secular Franciscans from throughout the Region. As we are constantly reminded, fraternity and community are an integral part of Franciscan life – here's a great chance to experience and participate in it!

Norman Mosk, SFO, our Regional Councilor for Vocations and minister of St. Francis-St. Louis Fraternity (Chicago), is again organizing carpools for those coming from Chicago. In addition, the Metra Union-West Line, leaving from Olgilvie Station downtown, has a 12:40 p.m. train, arriving

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Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to you during the feast of our brother Francis, whose dream we are inspired to follow and live. I hope you were able to celebrate with other Franciscans in fine style the richness of these traditions of ours, and to tell again the stories which connect us to our founder, Francis, the one who radically followed in the footsteps of Jesus the Lord. I really love being Franciscan, don't you?

I must proclaim in all honesty and humility how honored and happy I am to have been called to follow in the footsteps of Francis, and to be appointed your Regional Spiritual Assistant after our brother Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM. I will work hard to be prepared and available to serve. At this point, I'd like to share a little bit about myself and some things you might expect of me.

I was born in Texas a long time ago and claim Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi as my home. I grew up (or so it seems) in a restaurant, and for the first half of my life, I was a chef. It was a life wherein I found great satisfaction and success. I loved being a chef and the opportunities it afforded me.

Then, in the fullness of time, I left that world to become a Franciscan friar and, as I've already said, I love being a Franciscan. Even before becoming a friar, I was associated with the SFO in New Orleans. As a First Order brother, I have been a spiritual assistant to four different local fraternities and I have served twice as a regional spiritual assistant, first in the St. Clare Region (centered in St Louis) and now here.

So, what I bring is a fair amount of

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To be appointed

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Local Elections

Best wishes and prayers for Julie Cooper, SFO, the newly-elected minister of the **Junipero Serra Fraternity (Northbrook)**.

Rest in Peace

- **Genevieve Kranz**, SFO of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Oak Lawn) died August 17.

Events of Interest

November 15: Fr. Kevin Fraher, CSSR, will speak about the early life of St. Mother Cabrini at, "Journey of a Saint", from 4-6 p.m. at the Cabrini Retreat Center, 9430 Golf, Des Plaines. Mass will be celebrated as part of the event. For more information, call 847.297.6530 or email info@cabrini-center.org.

November 22: The Archdiocese of Chicago's Respect Life Office is holding "Educating Minds, Inspiring Hearts", a Chastity Education Initiative benefit dinner, at Drury Lane, 100 Drury Ln., Oakbrook Terrace. Reception is at 4:30 p.m., dinner is at 5:30 p.m. The keynote speaker is His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze, Former Prefect and current Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; Former President of the Vatican Council for Interreligious Dialogue; Former Archbishop of Onitsha, Nigeria. Special guest will be His Eminence Francis Cardinal George, OMI, Archbishop of Chicago. Cost is \$75 per person; register by Nov. 10. For more information or to register, call 312.534.5355 or email chastity@archchicago.org. Also visit www.respectlifechicago.org.

December 5: The Archdiocese of Chicago's Office for Peace and Justice is sponsoring "Advent Africa Summit", which focuses on the global food crisis, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Cardinal Meyer Center, 3525 S. Lake Park Ave, Chicago. For more information, call 312.534.8367.

Around the Region

- **Junipero Serra Fraternity (Northbrook).** This August, the Junipero Serra Fraternity was re-established as a fully active fraternity. Originally established in 1975, the fraternity requested satellite status in 1994 and was associated with the **Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine)**.
- **Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine).** In July, the fraternity organized a get-together with **St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (Wayne)**.

The event began with Mass, celebrated by Fr. Johnpaul Cafiero, OFM, followed by dinner and social time.

- **St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Crystal Lake).** In October, the fraternity celebrated the Transitus at St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton Church in Crystal Lake, and was joined by visitors from **St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Fox Valley)**. Fr. Chuck Faso, OFM, spiritual assistant for the Crystal Lake fraternity, gave a presentation, and the evening concluded with fellowship. ☒

"Francis, Build Up My Church ..."

by Sandra Kisel, SFO; Regional Formation Director

"What wondrous love is this O my soul, O my soul? What wondrous love is this O my soul? What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?" (from *A General Selection of the Newest and Most admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs*)

"This constant and total sacrifice of the will is the greatest sacrifice, which is the root of everything we do and in its simplicity it contains everything, it is something unlimited; because the Will of God to which I immolate myself, can do anything with me, something I can't comprehend." (Monsignor Luis Martinez, *Spiritual Diary*)

We long to live in the Will of God because we know that it is in this living we will find true happiness. But how do we do so? St. Francis saw God in all His creation—the rising and setting of the sun; the new day; the birds, fish, and all animals; the trees; and Sister Water, pure, holy, chaste. He dwelt on the Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection. He pondered the Eucharist and wondered at the love of the Father and Holy Spirit in their unending exchange of love. The more Francis poured himself out to God—in creation, in every living thing, in his neighbors—the more he received God in return.

We pray for oneness with God and His holy Will and know that alone, we cannot find our way to Him. But, God can draw us to Himself. Will we ever let go of our wills and allow God to live and move in us, cleanse us

of all that stands in the way of our true happiness with Him, of living no longer for ourselves but Him alone?

Oh yes, this all sounds so easy and it is. God is so wonderful, loving, and giving that He holds back nothing of Himself. He will deny nothing to a soul sincere in its desire for Him, who lives not for himself but for souls and for His Kingdom. Isn't this the example Jesus has given us?

"It seems to me that God wants the constant and total oblation of my will to his Will. ... I give you now that which I can give you: my will, sincere and complete, and I hurl myself into your sovereign Will." (Martinez, *ibid.*)

We strive to be perfect and come to know ever more how imperfect we are, yet, what joy! In spite of all our imperfections, God still loves us, really loves us! I remember a line from *The Way of Divine Love*, the diary of Sr. Josefa Menedez, who asked our Lord why He had chosen her, to which He said, "If I could have found a more wretched creature, I should have chosen her for my special love, and through her revealed the longings of My Heart. But I have not found one, and so I have chosen you."

"The precise characteristic of this extraordinary grace is to love in a new way, to love in a divine way, to love with the most perfect love, to love with the heart of God." (Martinez, *ibid.*)

Do we try to see God's Will in all things and try to understand that God has a purpose in what

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USCCB: Tell Congress: Remove Abortion Funding & Mandates from Needed Health Care Reform

USCCB Nationwide Bulletin Insert, October 23, 2009

"The President of the Conference and the Chairmen of the three major USCCB committees engaged in health care reform have written all the bishops and asked that the [following] USCCB Nationwide Bulletin Insert on health care reform be printed or hand-stuffed in every parish bulletin and/or distributed in pews or at church entrances as soon as possible." Tom Grenchik, Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, 29-Oct-2009 email alert.

Congress is preparing to debate health care reform legislation on the House and Senate floors. Genuine health care reform should protect the life and dignity of all people from the moment of conception until natural death. The U.S. bishops' conference has concluded that all committee-approved bills are seriously deficient on the issues of abortion and conscience, and do not provide adequate access to health care for immigrants and the poor. The bills will have to change or the bishops have pledged to oppose them.

Our nation is at a crossroads. Policies adopted in health care reform will have an impact for good or ill for years to come. None of the bills retains longstanding current policies against abortion funding or abortion coverage mandates, and none fully protects conscience rights in health care.

As the U.S. bishops' letter of October 8 states: "No one should be required to pay for or participate in abortion. It is essential that the legislation clearly apply to this new program longstanding and widely supported federal restrictions on abortion funding and mandates, and protections for rights of conscience. No current bill meets this test.... If acceptable language in these areas cannot be found, we will have to oppose the health care bill vigorously."

For the full text of this letter and more information on proposed legislation and the bishops' advocacy for authentic

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He allows? We know that of ourselves we cannot come to Him, but God has already given us the Way, Truth and Life: Jesus, through Whom *everything* is possible. He makes up for all our deficiencies.

"It seems to me that it isn't enough to be of Jesus, what is necessary is for me to be him. Is this audacity? But love cannot be satisfied with less, it is necessary to be him. As I think about that unity, my being is shaken by love and happiness." (Martinez, *ibid.*)

When I contemplate the burning bush Moses saw, I think of God coming to earth, becoming one with creation; about Jesus becoming man; about being all-consumed with the fires of God's love and energized by His Divine Nature. I think of the Sacred Heart afire with love for

health care reform, visit: www.usccb.org/healthcare.

Congressional leaders are attempting to put together final bills for floor consideration. Please contact your Representative and Senators today and urge them to fix these bills with the pro-life amendments noted below. Otherwise much needed health care reform will have to be opposed. Health care reform should be about saving lives, not destroying them.

ACTION: Contact Members through e-mail, phone calls or FAX letters.

To send a pre-written, instant e-mail to Congress go to www.usccb.org/action.

- Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202.224.3121, or call your Members' local offices.
- Full contact info can be found on Members' web sites at house.gov and senate.gov.

MESSAGE to SENATE: "During floor debate on the health care reform bill, please support an amendment to incorporate longstanding policies against abortion funding and in favor of conscience rights. If these serious concerns are not addressed, the final bill should be opposed."

MESSAGE to HOUSE: "Please support the Stupak Amendment that addresses essential pro-life concerns on abortion funding and conscience rights in the health care reform bill. Help ensure that the Rule for the bill allows a vote on this amendment. If these serious concerns are not addressed, the final bill should be opposed."

WHEN: Both House and Senate are preparing for floor votes now. **Act today! Thank you!** ☑

souls and the burning love Jesus has for each of us, which caused Him to make every sacrifice, even death on the cross. What wondrous love this is, O my soul!

Formation News

Thank you Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM for an outstandingly wonderful retreat, of which we had an attendance of at least 100! If you want CDs of Father's talks, contact Marytown Press at 847.367.7800. Cost will be about \$28 plus shipping and handling. Thanks also to Mary Farrell, SFO for an outstanding job with registrations, and St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity (Libertyville)—you leave me speechless! Thanks for everything you did to make this retreat so special.

Remember the Holy Souls and Saints this month, and give thanks to God for all His blessings. See you all at the Mother Cabrini Celebration! ☑

Calendar

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

November

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

December

12: Regional Elections (*to be confirmed with NAFRA*)

January

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

March

01: Fair Share, Census, and Annual Reports due

13: Apostolic Action Workshop

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

April

10: Candidates' Retreat, Day 1

May

01: Candidates' Retreat, Day 2

15: Chapter of Ministers

June

12: Leadership Workshop

July

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

August

07: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

September

17-19: Regional Retreat, The Port, Frankfort

October

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

November

14: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration (*location TBD*)

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at West Chicago at 1:39 p.m. If anyone would like to come that way, we can arrange to pick you up at West Chicago—just call me at 630.730.2441 *at least 2 days in advance* so I can make arrangements. We're looking forward to a fun day with all of you at Resurrection on November 15!

And let's celebrate through all of November! First, of course, remembering All Saints on the 1st and all our loved ones who have passed to eternal life on All Souls on the 2nd. We remember All Souls of the Franciscan Order (5); our patron, St. Elizabeth of Hungary (17); St. Agnes of Assisi, Clare's sister (19); and All Saints of the Franciscan Order (29). Truly a month of remembrance—and as we remember those who have passed on to eternal life, may they all pray for us, too!

■ **Regional Elections.** As mentioned in recent newsletters, our Regional elections are scheduled for December 12, pending verification from NAFRA; we'll notify you as soon it's received. We will have several vacancies and hope many of you will seriously consider serving.

At this time, we know that the following **elected** positions will be vacant:

- Minister

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preparation and plenty of enthusiastic experience to draw on, plus the hope that we will soon know each other well. I will actively participate with you on your journey and will challenge you to go farther and deeper into the field of Franciscan spirituality, as well as toward a truer understanding of your faith with the proper and enlightened practices of our Franciscan vocation. I will support and encourage mature ongoing formation.

In addition, I offer a great appreciation and some knowledge of our Franciscan ancestry—the holy men and women who have preceded us. I will advise you to avail yourselves of the vast wealth of Franciscan source material as well as the current materials prepared by SFOs for SFOs.

- Vice-Minister
- Formation Director

For the **appointed** positions, we're looking to fill the offices of:

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

It's also possible that the current council members who intend to run again—Councilor At-Large, Councilor for Vocations, Secretary, and Treasurer—may run for different positions, so really, all offices are open.

You can find job descriptions in the *Mother Cabrini Region Ministers' Reference Manual*, which all local ministers have. The most important qualifications are a commitment to the Region, and a desire to work to make our Region as vibrant as it can be.

See the August *SFO News* (page 3) for more information, and if you have nominations or suggestions, email our 2009 Regional Nominating Committee Chair, Monica Marko, SFO, at elections@ilsfo.org. Please pray for discernment, and if you feel the Holy Spirit calling, we hope you'll answer! 📖

Another area of my passion stems from a longtime love of prayer. I consider myself to be an emerging Franciscan contemplative and will present to you opportunities for deep experiences of prayer.

The only other element I want to mention at this time is a dream I have, and an inclination. The dream is to be a part of a pilgrimage program for Secular Franciscans to what has been referred to as the "Franciscan Holy Land", those places in Italy where Francis moved among us. The inclination is a tendency to promote a variety of "special events" and activities such as retreats, days of prayer and reflection, and study programs. We'll see where this goes.

I hope for God's blessings to continue for us all together. 📖