

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, SFO

Dear brothers and sisters,

May you be richly blessed during our seven weeks of Easter! In this month's article I would like to consider one of Jesus' commands to his disciples at the Last Supper: the command to wash one another's feet. As we read in the note on John 13:5 in the New American Bible, "The act of washing another's feet was one that could not be required of the lowliest Jewish slave." After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said to them, "If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

We can certainly expect that Francis took this admonition literally, considering that this passage from the Gospel of John was what he asked to have read to him on his deathbed. We, as disciples of Christ and followers of Francis, are to follow Christ's commandment. How, then, do we wash each other's feet in fraternity?

I suggest that when you agree to serve in some capacity in your fraternity, whether for a single meeting or for three years on the council, you are fulfilling this commandment. Please remember this the next time your fraternity is searching for council members and asks if you would be willing to serve! It is not a minor thing that the leader of our fraternities is now called "minister" to indicate that service - ministering to the fraternity - is what the job is about. Helping to animate and guide your fraternity takes time and energy, and certainly has its moments when you'd rather be somewhere else...but we need to remember: someone has to do it, and sometimes it should be you and me.

I think it's important that Jesus told his disciples to wash *each other's* feet - not "Peter, you wash everyone else's feet,

since you're the leader of the Twelve." The fact that it is *mutual* service is very significant. Letting go of our pride of self sufficiency and admitting our needs to each other - showing our dirty feet - is not easy.

Why do we need to both serve and be served? Obviously, because Jesus said to...but I think this is closely related to the other commandment that John says Jesus gave at the Last Supper: "Love one another as I have loved you." If we want our brothers and sisters to truly live in the love of God, the best thing we can do to help them is to show them love...and we do that in concrete ways. Sometimes it will be easy to serve, sometimes it will be hard, even unappreciated. We can remember that even though Francis didn't write this prayer, it is still true that "in giving we receive."

May we continue to rejoice in gratitude for Christ's gift of himself throughout this Easter season and may we imitate His loving service throughout our lives, especially with our families and our Franciscan brothers and sisters.

Peace and blessings, Vickie

Sharing some Good News:

NW Franciscan Community will celebrate their 50th Anniversary in June. Our Regional Formation Director, Patrick Mendes, a member of this fraternity, celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Profession in April. Congratulations to Patrick and to the fraternity on achieving this milestone.

Also, congratulations to Karen Casciaro and Patrick Shannon of St. Francis Fox Valley Fraternity who celebrated their profession on March 26.

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

CALENDAR

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

- **Election & Visitation dates subject to change.**
(E=Election/V=Visitation)

January

- 15: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 17: San Jose Fraternity (E)

February

- 15: St. Junipero Serra (V)
- 26: Apostolates Workshop

March

- 01: Fair Share, Census, and Annual Reports due
- 14: NW Franciscan Community (V)
- 19: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

April

- 2: Candidates' Retreat, Day 1
- 17: St. Thomas More (E)

May

- 07: Candidates' Retreat, Day 2
- 12-15: National Formation Workshop, Belleville, IL
- 21: Chapter of Ministers - Fraternal & Pastoral Visitation

June

- 07: St. Clare Fraternity (Oak Brook) (V)
- 12: St. Juliana Fraternity (V)
- 23/ Summer Seminar - "Fraternity"
- 26: Loretto, PA
- 26: St. Anthony Padua (East Side) (E)

July

- 10: St. Elizabeth of Hungary (V)
- 10: St. Maximillian Kolbe (E)
- 16: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 23: St. Francis of Assisi Fox Valley (V)

August

- 06: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula
- 07: St. Bernardine of Siena (V)

September

- 17-18: Regional Formation Workshop for Ministers/ Formation Directors
- 18: St. Mary of the Angels (V)

October

- 02: St. Francis/St. Louis (V)
- 15: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 25-30: NAFRA Meeting

November

- 13: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration (location TBD)

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I send you my greetings from Holy Week, with blessing and best wishes to you all for your Easter Time ahead. I hope you were able to enjoy and participate as fully as possible in the glorious event of Easter this year. And I hope that your Lenten journey was seriously fulfilling and brought you around and fully prepared for the delight of the resurrection and the blessed assurance that we are properly protected and connected to God through all of those life changing acts.

Ordinarily, we could also take further delight in the warmth coming with spring but as you know that warmth is still staying down south. In light of what we've got to deal with I can at least celebrate that the fountains in the area are all turned on again which I will accept as a hopeful and good sign.

In May, many of us also celebrate Mary in a variety of romantic ways; crowning and gathering "flowers of the fairest" as well as prayer upon prayer seeking her attendance and intercession. I guess this year we'll have to buy flowers of the fairest because, I don't know about you, but there are no flowers in my garden yet. We Franciscans also have a great array of our own feasts and memorials in the month of April. Here is a listing from the Proper Offices of Franciscan Saints and Blesseds in the Liturgy of the Hours. April 9, Catherine of Bologna (1413-1463) 2nd order, April 11, Ignatius of Lacona (1701-1781) 1st order, April 16, Margaret of Cortona (1247-1297) 3rd order, April 17, Paschal Baylon (1540-1592) 1st order, April 18, Felix of Cantalice (1515-1587) 1st order, April 24, Dedication of the Great Basilica of St Francis in Assisi (from the text: Pope Gregory IX laid the cornerstone of the

magnificently constructed church in honor of St Francis the day after the saint's canonization in Assisi in 1228. Pope Innocent IV Solemnly consecrated the church on May 25, 1253. The remains of the Seraphic Patriarch were taken in solemn procession from the chapel of St George to this church on May 25, 1230. On March 25, 1754 Pope Benedict XIV raised the patriarchal basilica to the dignity of a papal chapel.) April 28, Mary Ann of Jesus of Paredes (1614-1645) 3rd order, April 30, Blessed Baptista Verano (1458-1524) 2nd order.

So, as we are enjoying the redemptive return to our early church throughout Easter time, and the arrival of the light, warmth, and the fair flowers of May, we also can ponder and pray with these Franciscan legends.

With all of this in mind I send you as always my blessings and best wishes.

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 

PS: Here's a reminder that the First of the "Three Franciscan Wise Men" presentations for Secular Franciscans at St. Peter's Church will happen on the first Sunday of the month (May 1st) beginning with the rosary at 2:00 pm. The presenter will be Fr. Gilberto Cavazos-Gonzalez, ofm. The second presenter will be Fr Bill Burton, ofm on the first Sunday of June which is the 5th. The third presentation won't be until September. I'll remind you of that in August.

Recent Fraternity Election: Congratulations to Newly Elected Council Members:

St. Thomas More

Minister	Elisabeth Shin
Vice Minister	Columba Lee
Secretary	Christina So
Treasurer	Angela Park
Formation Director	Agnes Kim

In-Formation

By Sandra Kisel, SFO
Formation Commission

Bread of Eucharist remains outwardly bread while beyond the veil of what we can see it is truly the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Holy Scripture speaks many times of God's oneness with His creation, **"When you took on flesh, Lord Jesus, You made a marriage of mankind with God"** (*Liturgy of Hours-Christian Prayer*).

"Every believer in this world of ours must be a spark of light, a center of love, a vivifying leaven amidst his fellow men. And he will be this all the more perfectly, the more closely he lives in communion with God in the intimacy of his own soul...there can be no peace between men unless there is peace within each one of them, unless...each one builds up within himself the order wished by God" *Pacem in Terris (para 164-165)*.

So, how do we draw more closely to God and find peace in our world today amid so much pain, fear, chaos and anxiety? We have the example of the Gospels and of St. Francis. Whenever Francis was troubled or anxious he took immediate recourse to our Lord and he would remain in God's presence until peace returned again. Amazingly, it is estimated Francis spent as much as 60% of his time in prayer, in the presence of God, emptying himself entirely and allowing himself to be completely drawn to God. Sometimes he would remain entire nights in God's presence and leaving the cave it was as though one person had entered and another person left. He was totally changed, renewed, energized and his direction secured! In this union with God, with the Holy Spirit guiding him, look at the fruitfulness of his life! In God's presence (communion with God), Francis was a true instrument of peace and love in this world. "...prayer and contemplation are at the core of all they say and do" *Admon. 27.4*.

Teresa Baker, SFO writes in her book, *To Set Themselves Free*, "...private time, Scripture reading, liturgical prayer, and sustained conversion lead us to the realization that we are loved by God in a truly unique way! "Clothed with the knowledge that we are walking with the Lord and in the spirit of the Beatitudes we move into the world as did Francis, not to do great acts, but to be present to others as we encounter them on our journey." "When God's love can no longer be contained, it must by its very nature, flow from us to all we meet." We don't have to set out with a planned course each day; but trusting in the Lord and along with Mary saying "Let it be done to me according to Your Will", we try to see God's action in whatever happens to us during the course of each day. Mary's "yes" was for all time – as is

our Profession and our Baptismal promises. She saw everything as coming from the hands of the Almighty. We must allow and invite the Holy Spirit to enter into us, to make room for God's perfect indwelling. Jesus' presence in the Eucharist is not symbolic. With our eyes we see the host but Jesus is truly present within it. What must happen in order for Jesus to be all in all in us so that we become Eucharist?

Father Dan Crosby, OFM Cap in his CD, *Becoming the Eucharist We Celebrate* states clearly that in becoming Eucharist, our own body and blood must be transformed as well as the bread and wine on the altar, into the Body and Blood of Christ." "The Eucharist is not primarily devotional but is a way of life, meant to transform our relationships with the whole body of Christ by the way we relate to one another. If we recognize the body and blood of our Lord on the altar and do not recognize Christ in our brothers and sisters around us, especially those who are poor or do not belong to our own circle, what good is it?" Father goes on to say that if we show great devotion to what's happening on the altar but pay little or no attention to persons around us, we're not offering or pouring ourselves out as a living sacrifice of praise as Christ did. In receiving the Eucharist we must become Christ. Jesus poured himself out for us, giving himself up for us and allowing himself to be pierced and broken to become our daily bread, not only for ourselves, but for all around us. Do we accept the trials in our lives (*crosses*) as means of being drawn closer to God, growing in our conversion and relationship with Him, or do we become bitter and resentful.

Can we see that in serving one another we are serving the Lord? Let's not hide our candles beneath a basket but place them upon a candle stick, (don't hide or be ashamed of what you believe and who you are, rather stand firm and with great love share Him with those in your home, family and through the world in an ever-widening circle, remembering all are our sisters and brothers in Christ with the same Father. By our example of living the Gospel others will come to believe and love God too.

I highly recommend Father Dan Crosby's CD's available at www.NowYouKnowMedia.com (800-955-3904). The CD's are excellent for ongoing formation either privately or within fraternity and include a complete study guide. Further they would be excellent for visiting our infirm brothers and sisters who are unable to attend fraternity meetings. 📖

JPIC – FAN Meeting and EAD

By Stephanie Sormane, SFO
Councilor for JPIC

First, Easter Blessings to all of you. I hope your Lent was a time of growth and your Easter Season full of joy!

I went to Washington, DC on March 23 for the bi-annual meeting of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) Action Commission face-to-face meeting, followed by Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD), held at a hotel in Arlington, Virginia, which always culminates with visits to the offices on the Hill of our Representatives and Senators, which this year was on Monday, March 28.

There have been a lot of changes in the staff of FAN since our last face-to-face meeting. Fr. Larry Janezic, OFM, left FAN and is now serving in a parish in Indianapolis. Monica Herald and Marc DelMonico also left (Monica to seek other areas of interest and Marc to accept a new position and also work on his dissertation for his Ph.D. in Theology). Russ Testa, who has been with FAN since the beginning, is also stepping back in order to give more time to his other job, JPIC Coordinator for Holy Name Province of the Order of Friars Minor. So, for a while the only ones in the office were Christy Elliott, who was pretty well running the show (and extremely well, I might add), and Patrick Carolan, the newly hired Executive Director, who has been busy making contacts and arranging to move his family from Connecticut to Washington, DC.

I admit to being somewhat concerned about FAN, and I was not alone. However, the Washington meetings were excellent and it appears FAN is on firm footing for moving forward. In addition to Patrick and Christy, FAN has also added Valerie Hernandez, a very sharp young woman, as an intern specializing in immigration matters, and Valerie was with us as well.

We spent a fair amount of time getting to know one another. Although some of the Action Commission has been together for some time, the Action Commission has been enlarged and at least half of those attending the meeting were doing so for the first time—there were 30 Commissioners present. We also reviewed FAN's accomplishments thus far and where we see ourselves heading in the future.

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Because we still look to enlarge the Action Commission, and are encouraging the Commissioners to start Action Circles in their areas, Patrick spoke to us about the tools of citizen organizing, the most important of which is the use of a personal interviewing technique known as “one-on-ones.” Citizen organizing promotes building relationships among people of similar interests to empower them to work together for change. Patrick felt this technique would be helpful in attracting more people to Action Circles which, in turn, would help FAN to have a stronger voice in expressing the needs of our country to our legislators. I have some background in citizen organizing, having attended 10-Day Training with Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and worked with DuPage United, a citizen's organization in DuPage County. I believe Patrick's idea to use citizen organizing techniques to further the work of FAN is a very good one.

At the present time the only areas FAN is working on with the legislature is the Federal budget and Civility in Public Discourse. The latter is to encourage our legislators to listen to each other and to deal with each other in a civil manner, with the goal of negotiating to find mutually acceptable solutions. We haven't seen a lot of that lately in the halls of Congress. The Federal budget is a very complicated matter, and there are so many half-truths or downright lies out there, it's a wonder anyone can understand what needs to happen. There is a statement by Patrick Carolan on the FAN web site www.franciscanaction.org regarding our position on the budget, and another good source to check out is Network, the Catholic Lobby www.networklobby.org. Our general position is not to balance the budget by cutting important services to the poor. I think you'll agree that's a worthy position for Franciscans!

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) is always a week end of workshops with a particular focus, with visits to Representatives' and Senators' offices on the last day. The theme this year was Development, Security & Economic Justice: What's Gender Got to Do with It?" The focus was on the reauthorization and fully funding of the Violence Against Women Act and the introduction of the International Violence Against Women Act, coming most likely in May, and the Federal budget. More information on these matters can be found on the EAD web site, www.advocacydays.org. Two really excellent talks given during EAD were by Dr. Daisy Machado entitled “Women and Girls Aren't the Problem, They're the Solution,” and the other by Jack Jezreel; the founder and Executive Director of JustFaith Ministries. His presentation was awesome and Dr. Daisy Machado ran him a very close second! 