

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, SFO

Dear brothers and sisters,

It was good to see many of you at our August Gathering! Our guest speaker, Fr. Bob Hutmacher, OFM, focused on the importance of the arts in our faith life, and I thought his topic to be very thought provoking and worth further consideration.

God is Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, and all of these can lead us to God. Beauty, said Fr. Bob, may lead more people to God than goodness and truth! This topic brings to mind occasions when I have been stopped in my tracks by something beautiful. Think back to such times in your own life. Was it nature, or art, or architecture, or something else? Such moments that I recall include my first visit to the Grand Canyon (no photographs can prepare you for the reality), Zion National Park in early morning light, the bronze copy of Michelangelo's *Pieta* in the St. Louis Cathedral, and Salvador Dali's *The Last Supper* at the National Gallery of Art. Such experiences can pierce our hearts - and when our hearts are open, God can enter in.

Fr. Bob went on to talk about how the Franciscan family, with our spiritual emphasis on the Incarnation and the divine and human nature of Christ, has been in a unique position to enliven religious art with elements that speak plainly of Christ's humanity. The painting Fr. Bob showed of Mary breastfeeding Jesus - which hangs behind the altar in the church where it is displayed - is a vivid example of this. Although we can picture in our minds Jesus being fed at Mary's breast, it's quite another thing to SEE it. Think of the beautiful symbolism in that church; as people come up to the altar to be fed by and with Jesus, they are reminded that Jesus needed to be fed as well. 'Like us in all things but sin'...that includes being hungry and being dependent on his mother for the food to sustain life. It is no wonder that Francis wanted the people of his day to have a deeper appreciation of the reality of the Incarnation...especially the fact that Jesus came as a helpless newborn. We are blessed to be

Franciscans, who are particularly reminded of this reality every Christmas - it is hard to grasp even so!

Fr. Bob's final talk centered on different representations of Mary (appropriate for the feast of Our Lady of the Angels/the Portiuncula). He included some photographs of mother and child which were very moving, such as the Japanese mother bathing her grown daughter, horribly maimed from the effects of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. Such images (and happier ones of mother and child) remind us of the human reality of Jesus' life as Mary's son, as well as the pain Mary endured at the foot of the cross. The paintings he included gave us a little art history as well, showing a progression from the Byzantine icon-style paintings with no perspective to much more realistic later works.

My favorite painting of the Annunciation was painted at the end of the 19th century by an African-American artist, Henry Ossawa Tanner. As I mentioned with my other memorable experiences of art and beauty, this made me stop and think. Those of you with Internet access can find it by Googling for Tanner Annunciation.

While I have only mentioned visual arts so far, Fr. Bob interspersed some of Francis' poetry, especially the Canticle of the Sun. As Fr. Bob is an accomplished musician, we of course considered the impact of music as well. His photos of Chartres and other cathedrals reminded us that architecture can lift our hearts and minds to God.

The bottom line of Fr. Bob's presentations, from my perspective at least, is that we NEED the arts. They bring us joy, they touch our hearts...they help bring us to God. I invite you to think about some moment of beauty that touched you and share these with those you meet. You may be the means of opening someone up to God!

Peace and blessings.....Vickie

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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,

For many people of my generation (especially the guys) there is a very exciting "call of the wild" experience known as the "road trip" that many of us dream of and look forward to and of course in our youth to spontaneously go away somewhere with little or no preparation is thrilling. And hopefully, many of us have happy memories of these spontaneous family road trips.

As a seasoned and mature veteran of many forms of road trips I am once again about to step out and get behind the wheel to do it again. In addition to my own history of hitting the road I also find connection to our Father Francis who practiced hitting the road in his own time which meant on foot. It would be just like him to say to his dear Brother Leo, "come on Leo let's get out of here and go to the caves, or let's go to the mountains or the forest, let's go." Up to the end and in spite of serious affliction Francis was always on the go. In most cases, Francis was seeking solitude and undivided time to spend with God who he found at every turn in all of creation. And that's kind of what I'm going to be doing as well.

I'm calling this particular road trip "On the Road in Search of Sophia." I will head to St. Louis for an overnight, then on to Dallas for a quick visit, then down to the Texas Hill Country for a short family visit which will include even a night and day in my beloved San Antonio. And then the exceptional part of the Road Trip begins as I head off to Albuquerque for a couple of days then up to Los Alamos and Chimayo. From all of these points in north central New Mexico I will then travel into south central Colorado to go high up into the mountains to Telluride for an ultimate mountain adventure.

From there I will wind farther north through the mountains to come down into Denver for a couple of days with old friends before heading back home.

I hope it makes you happy to know that when I drove off into the sunset, you were in my prayers. And as I wandered in the forest you were in my heart. Just as when I gazed up into the night sky I longed to share it with you for a moment. I'll tell you more about it all when I see you again. Perhaps it will be at the Formation Gathering this month as we present the excellent new "FUN" (For Until Now) manual to the formators.

Peace and every goodness from your Brother Joe ☑

Exclusively For the Newly Professed

The Mother Cabrini Region is pleased to announce this very special On-going Formation Conference for the newly professed brothers and sisters. Newly Professed is defined as "those brothers and sisters who have been professed 3 years or less."

The Minister General and the General Presidency of our Order have strongly urged us to provide special support to our newly professed in accord with article 44.2 of the General Constitutions: "The Fraternity has the duty to provide special attention to the formation of the newly professed...."

Continuing Our Journey

When: Saturday, October 1, 2011
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Mayslake Village
1801 35th Street
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Fee: \$27 (includes meals, breaks & copy of the book *Essential Documents of the SFO*.)

For further details or to register please contact Patrick Mendes, SFO, Regional Formation Director at formation@ilsfo.org.

In-Formation

By Sandra Kisel, S.F.O.
Regional Formation Commission

FRANCISCANS AS “FAMILY”

*Our Father, source of all our BEing and Goodness
(Fr. Bernard M. Geiger, OFM Conv. New Covenant
Rosary)*

We are blessed that our Secular Franciscan rule of life is so rich in Holy Scripture. It becomes for us a new way of living our lives in communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with all creation. Franciscan living of Holy Scripture, always based on Church teaching and the reality of our own lives on earth brings us the greatest joy, comfort, peace, strength, light and hope, that we will attain to that marvelous vision of Christ himself when our earthly lives have ended. It brings us the fullness of grace by which we, overflowing with the love of Christ permeating our entire beings, must reach out to our brothers and sisters in whatever circumstances God places us in, thus giving Him praise.

Through Holy Scripture, through life's experiences and all creation we attain a keen sense of family using the unity and love of the Holy Trinity as our model. For a moment, let us look through the eyes of Francis.

Brother/Sisterhood of All Creatures (taken from Francis' writings)

Pondering God's word, Francis could see God's footprint. He saw...God moving over all the earth, in all creation. All of creation was a gift of God generated by the Father's love and goodness. Francis had such an appreciation of all creation as brother and sister that "finding an abundance of flowers he would preach to them and invite them to praise the Lord as though they were endowed with reason. Creator...1Cel., 58. In the same way he exhorted with the sincerest purity cornfields and vineyards, stones and forests, and all the beautiful things of the fields, fountains of water and the green things of the gardens, earth and fire, air and wind, to love God and serve him willingly 1Cel., 81. Francis admonished all birds, all animals and reptiles, and even creatures that have no feeling, to praise and love their Creator...1Cel., 58.

Do we see creation as a gift of God to be cherished and cared for, or do we see it as a gift of God to be wasted? In the Book of Genesis, the human race was given dominion over the earth; how will we answer

when asked to give an accounting of our care for creation; our Brother Sun, Sister Moon; Sister Water and Brother Fire, Mother Earth and Sister Air? Reference SFO Rule, Chapter 2:18 & Canticle of Brother Sun

In the first two chapters of Genesis, we read about the seven "days" of Creation and at the end of each of these "days" God saw the goodness in whatever He created. On the sixth day of creation God created man and woman in His own image and gave them dominion over the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame and wild animals, and every creeping creature that moves upon the earth. He blessed them saying, 'increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it'.

God created a paradise for man and woman, placed them within it, fed them; gave them everything necessary for their sustenance, delightful to the eye and for their good pleasure. From the very beginning of time God gave them charge to take care of His creation. God, our generous and loving Father has made every provision for his children.

Through Jesus the new Adam, isn't this the relationship we now have with our Father? The gift of knowing our Father's love and the gift of our BEing, brought forth from His great love? The gift of knowing that through Jesus our Brother and the Holy Spirit's action, we truly are sons and daughters of so great a Father, and brothers and sisters of Jesus with all creation; knowing that everything we have is gift. Consider the Garden of Eden and the Eucharistic Prayer, "In Him we live and move and have all our BEing". We walk with God everyday in the garden of our lives; and it is "With Him, in Him and through Him" we are invited to do all things. As we walk let us listen to His word; savor it, and give Him thanks and praise for all his gifts. **T**

Franciscan Outreach

Pooch Walk for the Homeless

Help the homeless by participating in the Pooch Walk for the Homeless on **Sept 10** at Lake Katherine Nature Center in Palos Heights. Proceeds go to Franciscan Outreach Association's shelter for people, soup kitchen, and case management services. The morning starts at 9:00 am and includes a 1.5 mile walk on the nature center path, treats and games for your dog, pictures with your pooch, silent auction, and a goodie bag. You can get pledges for your walk and increase your impact. Visit www.franoutreach.org/PoochWalk.htm or call 773-278-6724 to register.

JPIC News - Two Important Opportunities!

By Stephanie Sormane, SFO

JPIC Councilor

The FAN workshop in Milwaukee in July was excellent. I was very proud that six of us from the Mother Cabrini Region attended – there were over 20 participants, 8 from Wisconsin; I believe 5 from Michigan; Estrella Hernandez, Mary Lopata, Lorna Miressi, Araceli Ramos, Joseph Rice and me from the Mother Cabrini Region, and the remainder from all over the country. It also provided us with one of two excellent opportunities in which to participate.

One opportunity will help foster understanding of the DREAM Act. While the Illinois DREAM Act has been passed, we are talking here about the Federal DREAM Act, which is still pending in Congress. While Homeland Security is now reviewing all deportation cases and has stated it will deport only undocumented immigrants who have been convicted of a felony or present a danger to the U.S., this is a temporary situation. The Federal DREAM Act will allow immigrant youth who were brought to the U.S. as small children to work their way to citizenship by attending college or serving in the military.

I will be sending to each Minister a packet of materials for the purpose of participating in a program called “Pray for the Dream.” This program, which is fully described on the web site, www.justiceforimmigrants.org (developed by the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops) provides materials to:

- Plan a vigil or public event between September 18 and October 9 in support of DREAM students and youth; and/or
- Incorporate petitions, prayers and/or homilies in support of DREAMers into the Masses on Saturday and Sunday, September 24-25.

The purpose of all this is to raise awareness of the DREAM Act. As stated by the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops, “We support the DREAM Act because we believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, allowing everyone to reach their God-given potential.”

A similar program called “DREAM Sabbath” has been developed by Interfaith Immigration (www.interfaithimmigration.org). Thus, we have the opportunity to join with others to help raise awareness of the DREAM Act nationally and finally get it passed when it comes back to Congress for consideration. This is not a political issue but a moral one. I hope we will have broad participation in the Region – this could be our courageous initiative for CRS!

The other opportunity that is coming up is being co-sponsored by the Joliet Diocese Peace and Social Justice Ministry and the Wheaton Franciscans. This is entitled Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream Symposium. The focus of the symposium will be:

- The state of our industrial world and the thinking that got us where we are today
- A new dream – new ideas about what really matters, leading to deep connection and surprising solutions
- How you can be part of what’s emerging – because you already are!

This symposium will be given at three locations in October –

- October 8 at the Wheaton Franciscans Motherhouse, 26W 171 Roosevelt Road, Wheaton
- October 15 at the Lisieux Center, 371 N. St. Joseph Ave., Kankakee
- October 22, at St. Mary Immaculate Parish, 15629 S. Rt. 59, Plainfield

Come together with conscious, aware people who care about what’s happening in the world, our community and with our families. Join with others who care about God’s Creation and the poor. We’ll look at our biggest challenges and opportunities today. The symposium is a model for environmental and social transformation being used by diverse groups around the globe. The presenters have taken this model and infused it with Biblical, Catholic Christian, Franciscan thought and spirituality, creating one of the most powerful and engaging events you are likely to attend.

This is a very worthy presentation which deserves our support. As FAN encourages the Franciscan Family to work together for the betterment of our world, this is a great opportunity to do just that. Please consider attending one of these symposiums and please promote them in your communities and individual parishes. I will be forwarding the email I received from the Joliet Diocese regarding these symposiums to the Ministers in the Region.

You can register for any of these symposiums by contacting Jennilyn Ruihaak at the Joliet Diocese Peace and Social Justice Ministry at 815-834-4028. The cost is \$20 up to 2 weeks prior to the symposium you are registering for, or \$25 if registering less than 2 weeks prior to the symposium. You may charge the symposium cost to your credit card when you call. 

Invitation from St. Juliana Fraternity

The brothers and sisters of St. Juliana Fraternity invite you to a celebration of the Transitus of St. Francis in prayer, song and scripture which will take place on Sunday, September 18, at 3:15pm at St. Juliana Parish Chapel, 7200 N. Osceola, Chicago, IL. For more information, please contact Vice-Minister Judith J. Barys.