

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, SFO

Dear brothers and sisters,

One of the blessings of our region is our geographic closeness to one another. As we have discussed before, the fact that we can travel between our two most distant fraternities, St. Anthony – Rockford and St. Clare – Kankakee, in about three hours is VERY different from most of our brothers and sisters around the United States, who may have to travel longer than that to get to their closest fraternity! On the down side, though, we rarely spend more than six or seven hours together at a time except on retreat, whereas most other regional fraternities have annual or bi-annual weekend gatherings.

This year is a major exception. Seventy of us gathered at Mayslake Village for two long days of prayer, study, and fraternity this past weekend. The Regional Council agreed at Chapter in 2010 that two consecutive days, without staying overnight, would be their preferred format for the Regional Formation Workshop. While it was somewhat grueling, I think overall the format worked well. The part I am most pleased about, however, is the sense of fraternity that was evident the whole weekend. From the very start, I could tell this was going to be a special time that we were spending together.

To all of you who attended, I would like to extend my thanks for taking a weekend away from your family and other responsibilities and investing the time to learn about the new formation materials that have come down to us from the International SFO via our National Formation Commission. I am confident that we will all benefit from the new materials that have been provided to us, but it is also very important that the seventy of us who were present shared this experience and this time together. God alone knows which of you formed relationships that will change how your fraternity interacts with its neighbors...or how you interact with your fraternity.

I said to the group present this weekend, and I say to all of you, it is VERY important to have experiences beyond our local fraternity such as this. Yes, our local fraternity is the "privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members." (Rule 22).

However, to really grasp what it means to be a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, we must have a sense of fraternity that goes far beyond our experience at the local level. I believe this is at least part of the reason that attending a Quinquennial Congress is a transformative experience for so many. While I had been active in the Regional Fraternity prior to attending my first "Q" in 1997, it did not prepare me for being with hundreds of other Secular Franciscans from around the country, plus many spiritual assistants from the OFM and TOR. That's why I strongly encourage you to attend the Quinquennial here in Chicago in 2012, which at most is about a two hours' drive for any of you. All professed SFOs will receive registration information in the next issue of TAU-USA. (If you are professed and are not receiving TAU-USA, tell your minister to send me your name and address to update the mailing list.) If you are not professed, you are still welcome; once the next issue of TAU-USA is mailed, it will also be available electronically at www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/tau_newarticles.html. (You should all read TAU-USA regularly, as it is an excellent way to learn about what's going on in the National Fraternity as well as in regional fraternities around the country.)

In closing, I also ask that you prepare yourselves for a new adventure in learning to live our Secular Franciscan way of life - because the new initial formation materials have much to teach those of us who have been professed for many years as well. I am grateful that we all have this opportunity to grow in our vocation and to recognize how truly blessed we are in it. I look forward to seeing the Holy Spirit moving among us as we renew our efforts to follow Christ more closely in the spirit of St. Francis.

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. Maximilian 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

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 (Mayslake Village)

December

- 04: St. Bernardine of Siena (V)

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to mention quickly that my 3000 mile plus road trip vacation to the mountains was a delightful success. This is mostly due to the beautiful sights and the dear friends I visited. But...the main success was measured by the fact that this blooming old geezer can still pull it off. I thank God for that.

Another relevant point worth mentioning is the beginning of a new era of Franciscan initial formation. As others will likely mention in this month's newsletter, the Regional Formation Council held a "Forming the Formators Workshop" on September 17th and 18th for the purpose of introducing the new "For Up to Now - Foundational Topics for Initial Formation Manual (*aka The FUN Manual*). This material was prepared by the National Formation Commission of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order as directed by the International Presidency as mandated by the last two general chapters (2002 and 2008). As I shared in the June *SFO News*, this exciting collection of resource material was presented to our Regional Formation Team in May in Bellevue, IL. We have now shared effectively shared it with the Region via the local ministers and the local formation teams along with a copy of Fr Lester Bach's excellent new book "The Franciscan Journey" which supersedes his earlier works as proper instruments for initial formation. For what it's worth, in my opinion these two publications are some of the most exciting and worthy pieces of Franciscana that I've seen in a long time. I encourage you to use this material and support your Formation Directors and Spiritual Assistants toward its generous application in your Fraternities.

Two more things I would like to mention before I conclude, one of which is somewhat general and incidental and the other more prominently significant to we Franciscans; both a cause for

celebration. First, we can celebrate that the wonderful season of Autumn has begun with its benevolent climate in this part of the country, which brings us the harvest, fall foliage, and the opportunity to wear sweaters. And of course we have the opportunity again to celebrate with solemnity the feast of our dear Father Francis at the beginning of this month. I recall that this time last year I was in Assisi itself for the feast which was a remarkable experience but quite honestly I'm very happy to be home at St Peter's in Chicago this year. I hope that you all will be able to celebrate the Transitus of St Francis somewhere and especially the feast of his life on October 4th. If you are able, and desirous of a guaranteed beautiful experience, then consider yourselves invited down to St. Peter's for our activities. They will be beautiful.

October blessings and best wishes,
Your Brother Joe. ☒

**"Spirit of Assisi"
Day of Prayer for Peace" in Joliet**

In October of 1986 Pope John Paul II called brothers and sisters of diverse races and creeds to gather in Assisi to pray for peace. The Holy Father desired to call this historic meeting to prove that peace is the desire of every man and woman of all faiths. On October 4th (the Feast of St. Francis) he had strongly suggested a world truce on the 27th of that very month. The Pope chose Assisi as the gathering place for reflections on peace, for prayer raffles, and for meetings to promote peace throughout the world. He chose Assisi as this gathering place because the spirit of Brother Francis had converted it into the city of collective sisterhood and brotherhood.

In the words of Antonio M. Rosales, OFM, a Franciscan friar from the Philippine province, "To be a follower of Francis is not simply an honor. It is also a risk and a responsibility. In Assisi Francis was telling all his followers through the inspiration of the Holy Father and the leaders of world faiths, that they are to be brothers and sisters of the universe and universal peace". (continued page 3)

“Spirit of Assisi Day of Prayer for Peace” in Joliet

(continued from page 2)

(The Day Assisi Became the ‘Peace Capital’ of the World by Antonio M. Rosales, O.F.M.). Brothers and sisters, St. Francis is telling all of us the same thing today. We are still (maybe more than ever) being called to be “brothers and sisters of the universe and servants of universal peace”.

With this in mind I am writing to invite you to a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the “Spirit of Assisi Day of Prayer for Peace” being held on Thursday October 27, 2011 at the Rialto Theater in Joliet. The evening will begin at 7 PM. Fr. Benet Fonck OFM, together with Franciscan Sisters (including our own Sr. Marilyn Renninger OSF), myself, and members of our fraternities in the Joliet area have been meeting for several weeks now and are planning to invite leaders of several faith bodies in the Joliet area to an ecumenical interfaith service for an evening of music, scripture readings, prayer and reflection to bring peace to ourselves, our communities, and our world. We are inviting leaders of Catholic parishes Protestant as well as leaders of the Jewish, Muslim and possibly Hindu faiths. Invitations will be sent to entire religious communities as well to participate in this ecumenical prayer for peace. And of course, all of our brothers and sisters from the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity are encouraged to attend this historic event.

For further information, please contact Lorna Miressi, SFO, Vice Minister at lmiressi@hotmail.com. It would be greatly appreciated if someone from each fraternity be responsible to find out approximately how many from their fraternity will be attending and let me know by Friday, October 12.

Thank you and looking forward to seeing many of you on October 27!

Lorna Miressi, SFO
Vice Minister

Mother Cabrini Celebration – Help Needed

This year the Mother Cabrini Celebration will be a collaborative effort involving multiple fraternities. To date there has been only three fraternities who have said they would be willing to help with planning and hosting, and one of these already hosted last year. Please contact [Bonnie Michels, Councilor for Fraternal Life](mailto:BonnieMichels@ilsfo.org), at fratlife@ilsfo.org if you or your fraternity would like to help as she is coordinating this effort. This can be a great way to network with members of other fraternities and to get involved in regional fraternal life. Thank you! 

In-Formation

By Sister Marilyn Renninger, OSF
Regional Formation Commission

PEACE AND ALL GOOD!

As Franciscans, top on our mind this month is our founder, St. Francis. We will be gathering to remember his passing and jubilantly celebrate his feast. Because Francis was a man of peace, and left to us, his followers, the legacy to promote peace wherever we can, hopefully interfaith events will also be on our calendar.

Next to the SFO, Interfaith is one of my passions. I attend as much as I can and serve on the board of S.W.I.F.T., the South-West InterFaith Team, which is a non-profit organization made up of Jewish synagogues, Christian Churches, and Muslim mosques located in the south and south-west suburbs of Chicago. The mission is to promote dialogue among the different religious communities and to work together on common community projects. I want to briefly share our last event.

On Sunday afternoon, September 18, the last day of the Formation Workshop, SWIFT sponsored one of their Speaker’s Forums. “Violence and Extremism” was the topic chosen because of the proximity to September 11. The three speakers, one from each of the three Abrahamic faiths: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, spoke on the topic from the perspective of their sacred book and its interpretation. To our joy, extra chairs needed to be set up. It is always very encouraging to know that many people do want to respect and understand other faiths and to live in peace with one another.

Twenty-five years ago, on October 27, 1986, Pope John Paul II invited leaders of all the world’s major religions to Assisi to pray for peace in the world. It brought together religious leaders from many different traditions in an atmosphere of dialogue, prayer, and the search for peace. That “Spirit of Assisi” is a reminder to us that for Francis and Clare, prayer is an essential part in the search for peace, and has animated Franciscans throughout the world. I cannot help but think that Francis is conversing with Clare in their heavenly glory and smiling on us saying, “**Keep it alive.**”

These commemorative events pull our peace strings so we do not forget our Franciscan call to work for and daily pray for peace. On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic day in Assisi, ecumenical and interfaith gatherings are being held throughout the world.

As is noted elsewhere in this *SFO News*, a “Spirit of Assisi” is being held at the Rialto Theatre in Joliet on October 27. I want to put a plug in for it because it is in our Region and in our radius. Mark the event on your calendar and try your best to attend. If you cannot attend, try in your own way to make October 27th a special day of prayer for peace. “See you there.” 

JPIC News - September and October Dreams!

By Stephanie Sormane, SFO
JPIC Councillor

Hopefully all local fraternities did or are doing something with the materials sent out on the DREAM Act. Brother Jacoba Community had a discussion at their September meeting and I understand something is planned at St. Peter's. I'd love to hear from other fraternities what you have done or plan to do.

It's very disappointing to see the lack of participation by the dioceses. The Chicago Archdiocese did send out an emailing to its parishes which included a participation form and a flyer from the Justice for Immigrants web site. However, to the best of my knowledge, neither the Joliet nor the Rockford dioceses participated. In speaking with FAN members, some States were quite actively involved in promoting understanding of the DREAM Act, but others were not. Perhaps part of the reason for little action in Illinois is that we passed a state DREAM Act recently. In addition, the federal DREAM Act is not before Congress right now so perhaps the timing was bad.

However, the materials are still useful and don't have to be used in September or October. It would be really appreciated if fraternities could email me at stefsfo@sbcglobal.net to report any activities or contacts made to raise awareness of the DREAM Act as I would like to report these to FAN.

As announced in the September *SFO News*, the other event coming up is a symposium being given in three locations entitled "Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream." These presentations are co-sponsored by the Joliet Diocese Peace and Social Justice Ministry and the Wheaton Franciscans.

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!

The three locations where the symposiums are being presented are -

- 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

Members of the Wheaton Franciscans will be presenting these symposiums and they describe them as follows: *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.*

Attending one of these symposiums will be well worth the time and provides an opportunity to learn and grow. It also is an opportunity to support our Franciscan Sisters, and to work together as members of the Franciscan Family to promote the common good.

You can register for any of these events 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 later than 2 weeks prior to the symposium. You may charge the symposium cost to your credit card when you call. It's also possible to register on line on www.paxjoliet.org.

I also recently sent out to all the local Ministers a reflection from FAN on the readings for the Twenty - Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time. Included with that reflection were announcements of other planned activities by FAN including following:

- a webinar on hydrofracking (the process of initiating and subsequently propagating a fracture in a rock layer, by means of a pressurized fluid, in order to release petroleum, natural gas, coal seam gas, or other substances for extraction) that will be recorded and available on the FAN web site
- Other activities FAN is involved in with partners GreenPeace and Franciscans International
- Possible activities for St. Francis' Feast Day and the Spirit of Assisi, and information and actions with respect to the DREAM Act.

FAN sends out an e-mailing like this every week. If you'd like to receive it, just register on their web site, www.franciscanaction.org. 

Prayer for the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi

O God, Who, through the merits of blessed Francis, magnifies Your church, enriching it anew with spiritual offspring: make us, like him, to disdain the goods of earth, nor at any time to lack the comforting gifts of heaven. 

Happy Feast Day!