

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,

As we start a new year, a new Regional Executive Council also begins its work. The results of our Regional Election, held on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, are as follows:

Minister: Vickie Klick OFS,
St. Francis Assisi – Fox Valley

Vice Minister: Lorna Miressi, OFS
St. Bernardine of Siena

Secretary: Jerry Stecker, OFS
St. Bernardine of Siena

Treasurer: Dale Marzano, OFS
St. Anthony of Padua – Joliet

Formation Director: Nick Noe, OFS
St. Francis Fox Valley – Fox Valley

Councilor at Large: LeAnne Tjelle, OFS
St. Anthony of Padua – Joliet

Br. Joe Middleton, OFM, continues on the REC as our Regional Spiritual Assistant.

We will announce the appointed councilors in the February *OFS News*, once the newly elected REC has approved the appointments.

Please note that we have a vacancy for Councilor for Communications; if you would be interested in editing and publishing the OFS News, please contact me or Gloria.

As I look at the makeup of our new Council, I think about how important it is that we have term limits planned into our election process. Just as the vitality of our fraternities depends on new members, our councils also need to change in order to bring in new perspectives and different gifts. At the same time, we need “seasoned” members to provide their experience and perspective. Our new

REC will have both. It's been wonderful working with our outgoing REC, and I will miss all of those who will no longer be part of it, but I look forward to the new possibilities and potential of our new Council.

As we make a new beginning with the new year, it's a good time to consider how we want to grow this year as individual Secular Franciscans and as fraternities (local AND regional). At the Leadership Workshop in September, we had some dialog about goals, based on what had come out of the Quinquennial. One of the items was precisely to set annual goals in our fraternities and check ourselves on how we do on achieving them. Some of the items that we discussed are included below for your consideration; your fraternity minister should have the complete list.

- Be the bridge within our local fraternities as well as with other people you meet. Smile, greet people, etc.
- Build more bridges between fraternities – do more things together
- Be passionate and enthusiastic about our vocation. Don't be afraid to witness/share how you live the charism. Be authentic in all we do
- Get more involved in meetings and fraternity activities, even if you aren't professed yet

May God show each of us what is ours to do in the year to come, that we may grow in faith, hope, love, and our living of our Secular Franciscan charism. May our fraternities be alive with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Blessings for the year to come...

Vickie 

Council Members

Minister

Vickie Klick, OFS
▪ minister@ilsfo.org

Vice-Minister

Lorna Miressi, OFS
▪ viceminister@ilsfo.org

Formation Director

Nick Noe, OFS
▪ formation@ilsfo.org

Secretary

Jerry Stecker, OFS
▪ secretary@ilsfo.org

Treasurer

Dale Marzano, OFS
▪ treasurer@ilsfo.org

Councilor At-Large

LeAnne Tjelle, OFS
▪ atlarge@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Communications/ Public Relations

TBD
▪ pr@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Fraternal Life

TBD
▪ fratlif@ilsfo.org

Councilor for JPIC

TBD
jp@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Visitations

TBD
▪ visitations@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Vocations

TBD
▪ vocations@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Youth/Young Adults

TBD
▪ youth@ilsfo.org

Spiritual Assistant

Br. Joe Middleton, OFM
▪ spiritualassistant@ilsfo.org

Interim Newsletter Editor

Gloria J. Huerta, OFS
▪ sfonews@ilsfo.org

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

Submission deadline is the
20th of each month.

CALENDAR

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

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

January

- 12: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m. (transition meeting)

February

- 03: St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (E)
- 17: St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity (E)

March

- 01: Fair Share, Census, and Annual Reports due
- 10: St. Anthony of Padua, Joliet (V)
- 16: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 17: St. Anthony of Padua, East Side (V)

April

- 7: St. Francis St. Louis Fraternity (E)

May

- 18: Chapter of Ministers, Mayslake

June

July

- 13: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 21: St. Francis Assisi Fraternity, Algonquin (E)
- 27: St. Anthony of Padua, Rockford (E)
- 28: St. Anothony of Padua, Oak Lawn (V)

August

- 03: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

September

- 14: St. Anthony of Padua, Joliet (E)
- 25: San Damiano Fraternity (E)
- 28: Leadership Workshop

October

- 05: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 06: Living Water Korean Fraternity (E)
- 15: Brother Jacoba Community (E)
- 12-20: NAFRA Meeting – Denver, CO
- 27: St. Francis of Assisi, Steger (E)

November

- 10: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration

December

- 14: Wellspring Community (V)

Spiritual Assistant’s Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,


Here’s a quick word of thanks and congratulations for the recent election of a new Regional Executive Council (REC). The process went smoothly. Some of the previous servant leadership was reelected and there will also be several new persons holding important pivotal positions for the next three years. I also feel compelled to give thanks to those good people who have served us so well in the past three years. It has been a joy to work with this former council and I look forward with optimism and hope for the future. I believe that the Region has done well in this election. Also it was nice to have a good number of recently elected local fraternity ministers participate for the first time.

Next, I would like to comment further on the formation of a group of Secular Franciscans who are called and will prepare themselves to become Spiritual Assistants. It’s time to take this to the next level. If you are interested and have been professed at least five years and can commit to a process which will involve a year-long program of correspondence with our Provincial Spiritual Assistant Fr. John Sullivan, ofm, as well as monthly meetings as a community and of course are called by the Holy Spirit of God and Saints Francis and Clare, contact me. You will need to provide information about yourself and your desire to serve, along with two recommendations.

Tentatively we will begin in March when Fr. John Sullivan comes to meet with the group - more specific details to come. Call me on my cell, (636) 357-1881 or come by St. Peter’s to talk to me for more information. Each participant will need to procure a copy of “Life Giving Union” for the correspondence course prepared by the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) which can be found on the last page of the *TAU USA*;

ordered from Smoky Valley Printing. Other publications are available from the same source for future use.

And now, before I run out of space, it would be fitting and proper to give a little space devoted to the reason for the Season as they say. Christmas has come again into a world in as much need for God’s humble presence as it was the first time. We Franciscans, particularly, appreciate God’s holy longing to come closer to us by the radically loving act of the Incarnation. This lovingly simple expression sets in motion the hope and potential for all of humanity to live forever as beloved children of God as sisters and brothers intimately connected. We continue as followers of the godly example of Jesus in the footsteps of Francis and Clare. For this great gift we have, let us be deeply thankful and truly merry.

With blessings upon your new year, I am your Brother Joe, ofm 

Recent Election Results

St. Elizabeth Hungary: November 2012

- Minister – Mary Fran Consola, OFS
- Vice Minister – Tom Mitus, OFS
- Formation Director – Mary Cortes, OFS
- Secretary – Arlene Casey, OFS
- Treasurer – Robert Spinozzi, OFS

St. Francis Fox Valley: November 2012

- Minister – Kristi Loar, OFS
- Vice Minister – Mary Lopata, OFS
- Formation Director – Patrick Shannon, OFS
- Secretary – Karen Casciaro, OFS
- Treasurer – Anna Green

St. Juliana Fraternity – December 2012

- Minister – Charles (Chuck) Behrens, OFS
- Vice Minister – Jackie Campbell, OFS
- Formation Director – Barbara Elkins, OFS
- Secretary – Laura Hickey, OFS
- Treasurer – Joanie Fabiano, OFS

Congratulations to these newly elected brothers and sisters. May the Holy Spirit bless them with every gift needed to faithfully animate their fraternities.

In-Formation

By Nick Noe, OFS
Regional Formation Commission

Discovering Who You Are

It may be on the first of January, or perhaps a few days into 2013, that most of us will spend some time thinking about our New Year resolutions. Mine will be much the same as last year, meaning that I didn't too well last year, so I'll try again. Certainly, resolutions such as exercising more, eating more fruits and vegetables, abstaining from mindless TV, and having a more dedicated prayer life are important and should be pursued. But as I reflect upon Admonition V of St. Francis, I realize something deeper is required of me. A summary of the entire text for Admonition V is as follows:

Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord has placed you, for He created and formed you to the image of His beloved Son according to the body and to His likeness according to the Spirit. And all creatures under heaven serve, know and obey their Creator better than you.....(you) have crucified Him and are still crucifying Him by delighting in sins and vices.....all these things (knowledge, talents, wisdom, etc.) are contrary to you; nothing belongs to you; you can boast in none of these things.

Francis is saying that plants and animals, including my dog, Jacoba, always act and live out of their true, God-given natures. But we gifted humans often choose to live and act from self-centered motives rather than from our true natures as images of God. (It is very humbling to realize my dog is more obedient than I am in God's mind.) Francis goes beyond Genesis (Gn 1:27) by describing our God-image in Trinitarian terms: that is, God created us in the image of His Son in body and to God's likeness according to the Holy Spirit. By describing our God-image in Trinitarian terms, especially with the Word, the Son, and the Christ as its center, Francis has given us a somewhat clearer picture of our God-image. We need to look to Christ as our God-image and to live and act accordingly. And we need to realize the love of God is within us through the Holy Spirit.

So what does living and acting from our Christ-image mean? Francis writes in the First and Second Letters to the Faithful that we are to be spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we are "mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through love and a pure and sincere conscience, and give Him birth through a holy activity, which must shine before others by example." To carry Lord Jesus Christ in heart and body and then give birth to Him through a holy activity means more than just imitating Christ and asking the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" It means we are to become Christ, and as Sr. Ilia Delio OSF writes in her book, *Franciscan Prayer* (p. 147), we Franciscans should be asking the question, "how does Jesus live in me?"

We may have some difficulty in answering the question proposed by Sr. Ilia because of mystery and uniqueness. Francis was well aware of the mystery of God and ourselves as he often prayed "Who are You God, and Who am I?" To realize I am made in Christ's image is helpful, but to know at a deeper level who I really am in God requires God's help or grace. In other words, it is only in relationship with God that I can discover, although in an imperfect way, the Christ that God wants me to be. Thomas Merton calls this deeper, real, and mysterious Christ-like me the *true* self. John Duns Scotus, the great Franciscan theologian of the 14th Century, defines this deeper, mysterious me as "thisness." And Scotus argues that because each person (and created being) is "this and not that," each of us is unique. God has gifted you and me in different ways and therefore we are called to be Christ-like in different ways.

So, how am I to discover the Christ that God wants me to be? This discovery, which is integral with conversion, is a process and takes time. Certainly, initial and continuous formation has guided me along the discovery path, but two more New Year resolutions are required. First, I need to not only pray more, but pray at a deeper level. Saying prayers is fine, but contemplation and *Lectio Divina* is necessary. Secondly, I will discover my true self not only by having a deeper relationship with God, but with others as well. Reaching out to others in a spirit of compassion and love will not only help me discover my own unique Christ, but the unique Christ present in others.

Nick Noe 

JPIC NEWS— Farewell - and Some Important Information

By Stephanie Sormane, OFS, JPIC Counselor

As you all know, the Regional Elections have taken place and there are newly elected members of the Regional Executive Council. My position is appointed and will be chosen when the REC meets in January, so this is my last article, at least for the foreseeable future.

I have enjoyed serving the Region these past 15 years, 2 terms as Councilor for Fraternal Life, 1 term as Vice Minister, 1 term as Regional Minister, and 1 term as JPIC Councilor. I have recently joined the Joliet Diocese Peace and Social Justice Commission to serve both my parish and the Secular Franciscans so you may still be hearing from me occasionally.

A serious issue has come up which I wanted to let all of you know about. Following are excerpts from a letter I received from Tom Garlitz, Director of the Office of Human Dignity, Justice and Peace:

We oppose the building of a Private, For-Profit U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center in Joliet by Corrections Corporation of America.

The detention and deportation policy of ICE divides families, often separating individuals from spouses and children who are U.S. citizens. The division of families through detention and deportation places more of our citizens at risk, increases the number in poverty, and even forces many children into foster care.

What we need is comprehensive and compassionate immigration reform. We call for a moratorium on detention and deportation until such policy can be developed. Presently U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents must endure many years of separation from close family members who want to join them in the United States. The backlog of available visas for family members results in five, ten, fifteen, and more years of waiting for a visa to become available. This system is cruel and inhumane, and only increases the numbers who live in the shadows, not wanting to endure the separation of loved ones. We call for a reduction of the pending backlog and more visas available for family reunification purposes. Until such action can be taken, detention and deportation serve only to inflict

punishment and harm on families who are contributing to the economic and social well-being of our communities. The City of Joliet should not participate in unjust, unproductive, economically harmful policies by allowing the building of an ICE detention center.

There was a town hall meeting at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Joliet last week which I attended. Tom Garlitz spoke and very well. There were about 200 people there. There should be more information coming out of the Diocese soon about this matter and I will endeavor to get that information to you. In the meantime, you can look for information on the Joliet Diocese Peace and Justice web site, www.paxjoliet.org.

I hope you all enjoyed wonderful holidays celebrating the birth of our Lord. May 2013 be filled with peace and joy for all of you! **T**

New Year's Reflection:

In the song "And so this is Christmas" the opening line "...and what have you done? another year over; another one just begun" is a powerful reminder that time is a gift not to be wasted. It might be a fun and fulfilling exercise to keep a journal for the coming year and track all the good resolutions made in January so that by December...you actually can answer the question "And what have you done?" May your 2013 be one filled with good works, prayer, and illumination. Happy New Year! **T**

Gloria Huerta, OFS

New Year's Prayer

January 1

God, thank you for a new year. May everyone in our Franciscan and immediate families be willing to begin anew with a clean slate. We know that you are always ready to forgive us. Help us to be willing to forgive ourselves and to forgive one another.

As we begin a new year, remind us of our truest values and our deepest desires. Help us to live in the goodness that comes from doing what you want us to do. Help us to put aside anxiety about the future and the past, so that we might live in peace with you now, one day at a time.

T