

# OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the  
Secular Franciscan Order

[www.ilsfo.org](http://www.ilsfo.org)

September 2013 • Vol. 19, No.10

## Minister's Message

By Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,

By the time you read this, days will be getting noticeably shorter as we transition from summer to fall.

We've already seen a hint of the season to come in the pleasantly mild weather we've had for much of August. I hope that your early-fall activities will include attending our combined Study Day and Leadership Workshop on Saturday, September 28, at Mayslake Village.

Everyone in the region is strongly encouraged to attend this event and learn about the documents of Vatican II from Fr. Bob Hutmacher, OFM. This is a very appropriate topic to cover at the end of the Year of Faith.

You are also encouraged to stay for one of the breakout sessions for current and future council members at the end of the day – ministers/vice ministers, formation directors, treasurers, and spiritual assistants will each have a session.

Whether you are currently serving in one of these roles or not, you will be very welcome. Please let your minister know if you are planning to attend the day soon – we need a count by September 15.

We have had a couple of changes in the Regional Executive Council over the summer. Our JPIC Councilor, Stephen Lanterman, resigned due to personal commitments. Stephen has willingly put himself at the service of the region for two terms as Regional Treasurer, as well as getting this term off to a spirited start with his commitment to JPIC.

We are very grateful to Stephen for his contributions and his generous heart.

We also thank Barbara Elkins of St. Juliana Fraternity for agreeing to join the REC as Stephen's replacement. I was going to introduce Barbara to you as part of this article, but she's done a great job of introducing herself and

her approach to JPIC in her article this month. Please make a point of reading it.

Those of you who attended the August Gathering (and there were many of you, which was WONDERFUL) already know that our Councilor for Visitations, Muriel Baum, is continuing treatment for her medical issues. Please continue to keep her in prayer. For now, our Councilor at Large, Le Anne Tjelle, is taking on Muriel's responsibilities. (This is one of the reasons we have a Councilor at Large – to fill in wherever help is needed.)

In closing, let me offer a brief thought on Article 13 of the Rule, which states in part, "...Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ." Which is easier, to remember that the homeless person on the corner is a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ, or that your spouse/child/parent/co-worker is a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ? Just as Jesus was unable to do many mighty works among the people he'd grown up with, it may be hardest to see Christ in those closest to us. If we believe that God's presence is close at hand all the time, whether we realize it or not, we need to be looking for signs of that presence in the familiar people and surroundings of our everyday lives. Let's practice remembering that God speaks to us in the voices of our family and friends.

I look forward to seeing many of you on September 28.

Peace and blessings,

Vickie 

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

Submission deadline is the  
20<sup>th</sup> 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)**

**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. Anthony 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: Study Day/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**

- 3: Living Water Korean Fraternity (E)
- 17: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration

**December**

- 14: Wellspring Community (V)

**Spiritual Assistant’s Message**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am hurriedly rushing these thoughts to you as I prepare for my vacation this year. I will be/was gone from August 10th till the end of the month.

This year’s vacation will be another one of my favorite things to do, a “road trip.” I love the travel, the solitude, the visits with dear people and wonderful places, and the time to pray in a very special way.

And that is precisely what I want to mention to you this month; prayer in very special ways. People come to me in the front office often and ask “do you have a prayer for their specific intention or concern such as, a prayer for passing a test, or a prayer for finding work, or a prayer for some kind of holy longing.

For so many of us good catholic folks, we are comfortably accustomed to reciting words composed a long time ago, that we learned when we were children. There is nothing wrong with this, but it is I believe unfortunate that we become so dependent on tried and true formulas that we miss some great opportunities for very deep and far reaching spiritual experiences as well as excellent ways to connect to God in prayer.

Having brought you to this hanging cliff let me leave you with some truly authentic examples I have seen and done with positive results.

First as I’ve already inferred, one of my favorites is “Driving down the highway prayer,” or then consider “Big time sittin’ around prayer” - on the porch, or along the lakefront, or with a dog or a kitty in the yard. Then one way that I dearly I love to pray at this time of the year is “on your knees pulling weeds prayer” which I see as the perfect blend of the active and contemplative way of life with the good result of a well-tended garden body and soul.

Some other ideas for you are “rockin’ babies prayer,” or “soaking in the tub prayer” or “ironing prayer” or “if you must, using words prayer.”

Before I go I want to offer my deep appreciation for all of those good Franciscan folks who participated in our recent regional celebration of the Portiuncula, especially Fr. Ed Shea, ofm and Fr. James Hwang, ofm. And most especially I wish to thank all of you who brought food items for our ethnically diverse pot-luck luncheon which I thought was marvelous.

Warm summer blessings on your prayer life,

Your Brother,  
Joe Middleton, ofm 

Day of Recollection for Secular Franciscans; The New Evangelization: A Franciscan Perspective

**September 14 (Saturday),  
9 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.**

About the Event:

Fr. Arthur Anderson, OFM will present a Day of Recollection on “The New Evangelization: A Franciscan Perspective” at St. Colette Catholic Church, 3900 Meadow Dr., Rolling Meadows. Aside from Mass, all activities will take place in Halpin Hall, located in the church’s basement. While the council will handle the continental breakfast items and beverages, fraternity members need to bring potluck items. If you miss signing up for a potluck item at our August gathering, please email Lisa Wathen, OFS at minister@nwfranciscans.org with your item by August 31 (Saturday).

**Pilgrimage to Assisi for the Feast of St Francis**

Join **Fr. Chuck Faso, OFM** and **Kieran Lyons** on a pilgrimageto Rome, Cascia (St Rita), Assisi for the Transitus & Feast of St Francis,Siena, San Gimmignano, and Florence.

**Date:** September 29-October 8, 2013

**Contact:** Fr. Chuck (773-844-1267) or Kieran Lyons (773-580-3220) or TWT Trans World Travel in Highland Park IL, (847-432-2400)

## In-Formation – Regional Formation Council

### Shepherd me O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life...

*Formation by Sandra Kisel of*

What's happening in us and around us right now? What are some of the struggles we're facing and how are we handling them? Where is God in our life...do we make Him take a back seat while we take control? What priority do we give Him over the everyday things that happen to us and our wants? Do we allow Him to be an integral part of the ball game called life? ***It's in the everyday struggles we face that we find God and learn wisdom and all the virtues. This going into the temple with God, listening, reflecting, loving and being loved is what we carry out into the world. It's where we're formed!***

What we experience inwardly through our relationship with and in the Trinity; with our Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, flows through us into the world, and makes Christ visible. Is God at the center of our activity or are we just busy trying to get it over with so we can move onto the next project on our To-do list? Do we even sometimes try to envision Christ or Mary as we accomplish what we do and tell them, "I love you!" "Thanks for being with me!" "I need you" and "Wow! Am I lost without You!"

Remember God is always reaching toward us, to embrace us, love us, to strengthen and guide us. Are we open to His presence, to His Spirit in prayer; in our activities, in cooking, cleaning, in the workshop and our place of employment? Do we thank Him for the embraces and little surprises He gifts us with as we fulfill our obligations? ***Being Franciscan is our life***, a life formed from frequent reading of the Gospels, our Rule of Life and the Constitutions and statutes and reading the lives of other Franciscan saints. ***If we are to be instruments for building up the Church (the Mystical Body of Christ), then we must continually be building up our spirituality through prayer, Holy Mass, and holy reading.***

This month we continue to celebrate feasts of our Blessed Mother; her birth, her Holy Name and The Feast of the Holy Rosary.

**Mary was always open to the Holy Spirit moving within her, speaking to her, directing her in the Will of God. Everything Mary did was in contemplation of the Blessed Trinity, whether she was working, reading Holy Scripture, listening to her Son, preparing dinner for the Holy Family, presenting Jesus to the Jews and Gentiles and all nations, teaching, and, well, all the things we do daily.**

Lately I've read some of the life of Blessed Duns Scotus, who had a learning disability in his youth. He wanted so much to immerse himself in the truths of the faith but his mind wouldn't cooperate. With prayers and tears he had recourse to Mary for help, as many great saints have done in the past. Mary consoled him;

***"She would heal his mental deficiency and help him with all the riches of her Son-not through any merit of his but through a heavenly gift..."***

In Paris great Masters such as Fr. Alexander Hales, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas all had taught that Our Lady contracted original sin, even if for just an instant, so as to be redeemed by her Son. Prior to defending his position before the academic faculty of his day, Duns Scotus prayed before a statue of our Lady, ***"Allow me to praise you, O most Holy Virgin; give me strength against your enemies."***

In 1993 Pope John Paul II dubbed him ***"the Minstrel of the Word Incarnate" and "Defender of Mary's Immaculate Conception!"*** I hope many of you will take time to read of the tremendous gifts the Church has received through his littleness, Mary's intercession and the all loving goodness and generosity of God. 

## Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

### Our Secular Franciscan Rule in Action

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Councilor

Last year, a member of my fraternity in South Carolina invited me to the first national JPIC Rally in Belleville, IL. I was happy to share this experience with my friend, DorothyAnn who had guided me through my formation journey. It had been just four months earlier that I made my profession to the Secular Franciscan Order – one week before my move to Chicago. I didn't know much about JPIC except that it stood for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation but I was eager to discover the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows and to visit my friend.

What I discovered was far beyond my expectations. It was a faith-filled experience that celebrated and cultivated the importance of relationships. It brought together some forty participants who were as diverse as the issues that JPIC addresses. We shared ways to strengthen our relationship to God, to others and to our environment. We learned that with Franciscan joy, relationships cultivate possibilities. Fr. Pio Jackson, OFM, our keynote speaker, explained that "JPIC is part of our life...It's the DNA of our Franciscan life, of our Franciscan spirituality."

Although I was truly inspired by the weekend, I returned home with uncertainty of what JPIC meant to me and to my new fraternity. The scope of issues and needs was a bit overwhelming for me as I settled into my new life here. Nonetheless, a seed of awareness was planted in my heart. A few months later, I accepted a new role as formation director of my fraternity and set aside my JPIC experience. I felt that this is where I can best serve my fraternity based on my teaching experience as a school librarian. Yet, a call to action was still nudging at my heart.

When I was asked to consider the JPIC councilor position for our region, I knew that the Holy Spirit had been nurturing the seed of awareness that was planted a year before. The doubt was still there as was the question of what does JPIC mean to me. To help me discern this call, I contacted my friend. DorothyAnn's first response was "Remember that JPIC is simply our Rule in action."

So this is how I would like to address the role of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in our region. My wish is to increase your awareness of the various ways in which we can assist the "spirit of Assisi to flourish" in our region. Father Pio reminded us that JPIC "proceeds from the spirit...It's Gospel-centered... We're not against something. We're for love, for peace, for joy."

At the Rally, we were encouraged to go beyond a "learn and pray" mode to one that is more action driven. This Pray, Learn, Act and Give approach is how I will address topics of concern. Some of these topics may be of interest to you and others may make you feel overwhelmed or even uncomfortable. You may ask yourself, "What difference could I possibly make. This issue is too much for one person to tackle." At this point, remember that JPIC is about building relationships and relationships cultivate possibilities.

These possibilities may include choices you make individually or perhaps with a few members of your fraternity. Once an interest is developed, it may spread to building relationships with other interested Franciscans within our region. The possibilities may grow even further by cultivating relationships with others in our local parishes, dioceses and civic communities. It just starts with a seed planted in your heart and allowing the Holy Spirit to nurture its growth.

Let's imagine the possibilities of building good relationships with others as we seek ways to promote justice, peace and caring for God's gift of creation.

"Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith."

Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

Chapter 2, Section 15 

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### Please Continue To Pray For:

Muriel Baum OFS, of the St. Maximillian Kolbe Fraternity, as she heals from a medical condition requiring prayer.