

OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

www.ilsfo.org

October 2013 • Vol. 19, No.11

Minister's Message

By Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,

As I write this, it is just two days after the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis. Francis was able to pray that he might experience, as much as possible, the sufferings of Christ in his own body...and his prayer was answered in a very literal way. As I think about what it would take to actually desire to experience Christ's sufferings, it's another way of making it clear that Francis was a great saint and I'm not!

Francis wanted to suffer more in order to love as much as Christ did. For us, I don't think there's any need to ask for more suffering in our lives – there's plenty there already. If we need to suffer more in order to love more, then I think God will put us in situations where that's what we're faced with. The crucifix reminds us that great love and great suffering go together.

Jesus tells us that in order to follow him, we must take up our own crosses daily (Luke 9:23; Matthew 16:24). You've probably heard the story about being in a room with Jesus and being given the opportunity to take on whichever cross you choose...and walking out with the one you had. St. Paul tells us that we will not be tested beyond our strength - God will see to that (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). I'm grateful that the trials I've had are suited to my strengths and weaknesses. When I compare the trials in my own life with those of others, it's humbling to realize how much strength other people have, if they can bear so much. Is there anything about dealing with the inevitable challenges of life that is unique to us as Secular Franciscans? Article 10 of the Rule says, "Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to Him even in difficulties and persecutions." St. Francis' story of "perfect joy" provides a clue to what that witness might look like. When we are in difficult situations, it's as tough for us as for anyone else, but we do have the gift of faith that God is with us in our trials,

which leads to hope that we will get through them. "Joy" - perfect or otherwise - would not be the word I'd use for my response, but I've experienced a certain peace that comes from knowing that there's nothing more I can do and it's in God's hands. The power of Christ that is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9) really shines through in those times. If we can just keep ourselves from getting in the way, others can see that there's no way we're surviving on our own...and that reliance on Christ is our witness.

As we pick up our crosses each day to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis, let's remember to pray for each other to have strength to bear whatever is in store today. (My mother observed that the promise is for strength to bear TODAY's trials, not whatever we're worried might happen TOMORROW.) You may want to particularly consider praying for the needs of someone who you don't see eye to eye with. While I can't guarantee that he or she will be less annoying, I do promise that your attitude toward him or her will change as you persevere in prayer.

Of course, in order to pray for each other, you need to know what's happening in each other's lives. This is an important aspect of fraternity meetings: sharing what's going on and asking for what we need from each other. It's not always easy, but it's vitally important. We have to let others help US if we want to help THEM.

I pray that we all may know the power of Jesus's love in our lives today and always. May we face today's challenges with faith that we will be given what we need to endure them, and hope that all things will ultimately work together for good (Romans 8:28). May others see Christ shining through us when all we can do is rely on Him.

Peace and everything good,
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

LeAnneTjelle, OFS
atlarge@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Communications/Public Relations

Marc Golab, OFS
sfonews@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Fraternal Life

Bonnie Michels, OFS
fratlife@ilsfo.org

Councilor for JPIC

Stephen Lanterman, OFS
jplic@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Visitations

Muriel Baum, OFS
visitations@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Vocations

Norman Mosk, OFS
vocations@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Youth/Young Adults

Kristi Loar, OFS
youth@ilsfo.org

Spiritual Assistant

Br. Joe Middleton, OFM
spiritualassistant@ilsfo.org

The *OFS 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)**

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,
A place for pilgrimage in our Franciscan lives:

Having just returned from a three week road trip which in many ways was a pilgrimage, and as I prepare for a weekend retreat at the Cenacle retreat and conference center for the secular Franciscans of the St. Peter’s cluster that will be built upon the pilgrimage experience; I am absorbed with pilgrimage thoughts to share with you. According to the famous Encyclopedia of Catholicism by Richard P. McBrien, *“a pilgrimage is a religiously motivated journey to a specific location to visit a holy person or to commemorate a special event that occurred there. The journey to and from this special place, along with the stay, compromise the pilgrimage.”* McBrien goes on to state that, *“Three requisites constitute an authentic pilgrimage: (1) the belief that God responds to prayer, (2) the conviction that God is present at holy sites, and (3) the desire to make a sacred journey to a holy site. People undertake pilgrimages to seek guidance for direction in life, to thank God for favors received, to petition God for spiritual and physical favors, or to atone for sin”* So, with all that said, I would like to build upon his words about pilgrimage, atop of the great historical force behind pilgrimages, as well as the modern abundance of pilgrimage sites and opportunities. To me the whole idea of a pilgrimage journey makes perfect sense. And as Franciscans because of our dear St. Francis’ vision we have the freedom to go beyond the definitions and the historical facts into the mystic potential of truly becoming Pilgrim People.

We don’t necessarily have to go halfway around the world once in a lifetime (although it is wonderful to do just that). but we can recognize that our loving creator God who is present and especially in the hearts of those who gather in communities of love allows those of us who have eyes to see and recognize that any instance in life can be a pilgrimage to God’s close association. I will go so far as to say that I am convinced that any exceptional or ordinary activity or reposition can become a pilgrimage. This could mean a pilgrimage to your parish holy place for mass with holy and precious people; your brothers and sisters. A pilgrimage to visit someone special or even I suppose one could create with a Franciscan heart a pilgrimage to Wal-Mart. But I believe for certain and can authentically testify that the ultimate benefit to the pilgrim and the result and experience of pilgrimage is that one is changed; you can return home but you will never be the same. Pilgrims are converted.

My blessings and best wishes are yours pilgrim.

Brother Joe Middleton, ofm 

In-Formation – Regional Formation Council

Praying Earnestly and Confidently...

As the October issue of **OFS NEWS** goes to press, our hearts lead us to reflect on our Holy Father St. Francis and how he gave us the example of living the gospel life. As we read or re-read one of the many biographies we recall his compassion and his whole-hearted dedication to Our Lord. We also read and reflect on his great love for our Blessed Mother and it is from this vantage point that I offer a view of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model of Gospel living and role model for us in living the Gospel life after the manner of our Holy father St. Francis.

Article 9 of the Holy Rule reads: The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and patroness of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.

Our General Constitutions expound further, Secular Franciscans in their fraternities should seek to live the experience of Francis, who made the Virgin the guide of his activity. With her, like the disciples at Pentecost, they should welcome the Spirit to create a community of love.

We learn of the first example of Our Lady's humility and trust in the Annunciation narrative in the Gospel and we memorialize it as we pray the Angelus. Mary's reply to the angel, and thus to God "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word." What a powerful example of humility and trust. Let us pray to grow in humility and in trust in God's will and His love for us, even in, or especially in, the scary and uncertain moments of our lives.

With Our Lady, we will also be able to say "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior, for he has regarded the lowliness

Of his servant... He has done great things for me.... God, in His boundless love continues to do "great things" for us.

Our Lady models compassion for us as we read the story of the Visitation. Her compassion invites us to a compassionate presence in whatever way we can in the circumstances of our lives, whether it is some effort of peace and justice on a large scale or just in the "everydayness" of our lives – helping a neighbor, visiting the sick or imprisoned, volunteering at a shelter – and the many other opportunities we find each day to be the love of Christ and the Blessed Mother made visible.

Together let us pray earnestly and confidently, the prayer composed by our Holy Father, Francis, himself: Hail His Palace! Hail His Tabernacle! Hail His Dwelling! Hail His Robe! Hail His Servant! Hail His Mother!

Mary, Queen and Protectress of the Franciscan Family, pray for us who have recourse to you!

On behalf of the entire Regional Formation Commission, I wish you all the choicest blessings of the Feast Day. Rejoice and be glad! This is the day the Lord has made!

Patrick Mend. Rejoice and be glad! This is the day the Lord has made!

Patrick Mendés, OFS,
Member, Regional Formation Commission

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Peace Begins at Home

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Councilor

“In their families they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.” Article 17

On September 7th, a special man in my life lost his life to colon cancer. At 56 years old, at the height of his career, he was stunned by his unexpected diagnosis and its fierce attack on his body that took his life less than a month later. He was my husband of fifteen years, the father of my 22-year-old son and the empty spot in my heart since our divorce in 2002.

Last month, I wrote that JPIC is simply putting our Rule into action. It is about building relationships and being open to the possibilities that these relationships can bring. My experience this past month brought to light how I was called to live this Rule at this time.

Integrity of Creation – I made two trips to South Carolina to be with my son during this time. While there, I was awed by the greatness of the ocean, the beauty and wonder of watching the sunrise on the beach, protective of the nests of the Loggerhead sea turtles and comforted by the quiet majesty of the foothills as we traveled to and from the Upstate to the Low Country. Throughout my days, I was reminded often of the circle of life presented through all of God’s creation.

Justice – During this time, I struggle with all the feelings of grief by wanting answers to the age-old questions of “Why?” and dealing with “It’s not fair!” My son and I will continue to cope both together and in our own ways, with the unanswered questions about our relationship to his father and the grievances of our past that were not fully reconciled.

We will move forward in faith to navigate our individual relationships with my former husband’s wife, his family and friends. We will celebrate his life by nurturing our memories. Relationships are not always easy and life isn’t always fair but to live the Rule is to answer the call to build the bridges that connect the people in my life. We are all children of the same Father.

Peace – My first concern was for my son and to support him through this tragedy. It was through prayer that I found the strength to be where I was needed, to listen with compassion, to speak with courage and to trust in God’s will. I encountered peace through the generosity of family, the kindness of friends and the traditions of our faith. I continue to grow in humility as I struggle with my pride. Each day I seek forgiveness and gain more peace.

Take this time to make peace within your family and to embrace the relationships in your life. Rekindle friendships from your past and be open to the possibilities that may arise. Be grateful for the kindness of others and seek forgiveness for past hurts.

Prayer of Thanksgiving to God

Thanks be to God for His love and mercy,
Thanks be to God for His boundless grace,
Thanks be to God for the hearts that love us,
Thanks be to God for each friendly face.
Thanks be to God for strength in suffering,
Thanks be to God for joys we’ve known,
Thanks be to God for the hope He gives us,
of rest eternal beside His throne.

- St. John Eudes

T
