

# OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the  
Secular Franciscan Order

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## Minister's Message

By Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,

Happy New Year! I hope and pray that 2014 brings many blessings in all of our lives, most particularly an increase in our awareness of God's love for us. I ask for your continued prayers for our beloved Muriel Baum as she continues to recuperate at her son's home in Arizona. Please also pray for Br. Joe's recovery; the Sacred Heart Province newsletter reported that he was hospitalized on Dec. 16 with bleeding and a perforated colon.

As I've mentioned before, I'm not one for New Year's resolutions. However, I am looking at the year to come with a renewed desire to be open to God's working in my life. It is easy to be comfortable with the way things are – to hold on tightly to the good that I already have, even if by letting go I will receive something even better. If you've ever insisted that your child or grandchild listen to a different story or try a new food, you know that the recipient of your goodness doesn't always appreciate what you're doing for them! When we feel unsettled and that change is being forced upon us, sometimes that's God doing for us what you do for your little ones.

I think that in our lives, holding what we have now "loosely" is part of Franciscan poverty. (Believing that doesn't make it any easier to do, but it gives me some small comfort to recognize that it hasn't been easy for most anyone else, either.) In Murray Bodo's *Francis: The Journey and the Dream*, he starts from the difficult point in Francis' life when he had to let go of the order and give it back to God.

No matter how thoroughly Francis embraced physical poverty, I don't believe this was easy for him!

We can be completely confident today that something is God's will for us –and tomorrow things may change. Ideally, we know what's next ("when one door closes, another opens"), but it seems that more often, we find out that what we know is changing and have to trust that God has something good in store.

You may be reading this and wondering what's changing in *my* life that is prompting this reflection. Don't worry! I've been in something of a transition for over three years now, both personally and professionally, and I've been waiting (and waiting...patience is not one of my virtues, except when I have no choice!) to see what comes next. Maybe this will be the year when God reveals the next step! I simply want to be ready when God is ready. It'll be easier that way!

May we each continue to prepare ourselves, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to hear Christ when He tells us what is ours to do, and to do what is asked of us each day. May God make us each worthy of His calling and powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in us, and us in him, in accord with the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ (cf 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).

Peace and blessings, Vickie 

## Council Members

### Minister

Vickie Klick, OFS  
▪ [minister@ilsfo.org](mailto:minister@ilsfo.org)

### Vice-Minister

Lorna Miressi, OFS  
▪ [viceminister@ilsfo.org](mailto:viceminister@ilsfo.org)

### Formation Director

Nick Noe, OFS  
▪ [formation@ilsfo.org](mailto:formation@ilsfo.org)

### Secretary

Jerry Stecker, OFS  
▪ [secretary@ilsfo.org](mailto:secretary@ilsfo.org)

### Treasurer

Dale Marzano, OFS  
▪ [treasurer@ilsfo.org](mailto:treasurer@ilsfo.org)

### Councilor At-Large

LeAnneTjelle, OFS  
▪ [atlarge@ilsfo.org](mailto:atlarge@ilsfo.org)

### Councilor for Communications/Public Relations

Marc Golab, OFS  
▪ [pr@ilsfo.org](mailto:pr@ilsfo.org)

### Councilor for Fraternal Life

Bonnie Michels, OFS  
▪ [fratlife@ilsfo.org](mailto:fratlife@ilsfo.org)

### Councilor for JPIC

Barbara Elkins, OFS  
▪ [jpic@ilsfo.org](mailto:jpic@ilsfo.org)

### Councilor for Visitations

Muriel Baum, OFS  
▪ [visitations@ilsfo.org](mailto:visitations@ilsfo.org)

### Councilor for Vocations

Norman Mosk, OFS  
▪ [vocations@ilsfo.org](mailto:vocations@ilsfo.org)

### Councilor for Youth/Young Adults

Kristi Loar, OFS  
▪ [youth@ilsfo.org](mailto:youth@ilsfo.org)

### Spiritual Assistant

Br. Joe Middleton, OFM  
▪ [spiritualassistant@ilsfo.org](mailto:spiritualassistant@ilsfo.org)

### Newsletter Editor

Marc Golab, OFS  
▪ [ofsnews@ilsfo.org](mailto:ofsnews@ilsfo.org)

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)**

**November 2013**

- 3: Living Water Korean Fraternity (E)

- 17: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration

**December 2013**

- 14: Wellspring Community (V)

**January 2014**

- 18: Regional Executive Council Meeting

**March 2014**

- 1: Per Capita/Census/Fraternity Annual Reports Due

- 15: Regional Executive Council Meeting

**April 2014**

- 20: Easter
- 26-27: Candidates Retreat (no overnight)

**May 2014**

- 16: REC meeting w/National Visitors (late afternoon/evening)
- 17: Chapter of Ministers – Fraternal and Pastoral Visitation

**July 2014**

- 10-13: Summer Seminar – Spiritual Assistance
- 17-20: Korean OFS Meeting – St Mary of the Lake, Mundelein
- 19: Regional Executive Council Meeting

**August 2014**

- 2: Regional Gathering – Feast of the Portiuncula

**September 2014**

- 27: Study Day / Leadership Workshop

**October 2014**

- 11: Regional Executive Council Meeting
- 21-26: NAFRA Chapter, Lake Dallas, TX

**November 2014**

- 16: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity – Location TBD

**Spiritual Assistant’s Message**

We pray for Brother Joe as he continues to battle health issues –

The theme of the three Advent sermons given this year by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., preacher of the pontifical household, was “to prepare ourselves for Christmas in the company of Francis of Assisi.” These homilies can be accessed at Zenit.org via both the short and long links below. The brief paragraphs I’ve summarized from each barely scratch the surface of each 7-8 page message; please read and reflect on them yourselves.

**1<sup>st</sup> Advent Homily: Francis of Assisi and the Reform of the Church by the Way of Holiness**

Francis’ love of Christ is what led him to embrace the poor and Lady Poverty. “At the base of love of poverty and of the poor, there is either love of Christ, or the poor will be instrumentalized in one way or another and poverty will easily become a polemical event against the Church, or a display of greater perfection in regard to others in the Church, as happened also, unfortunately, with some of the Poverello’s followers. In either case, poverty becomes one of the worst forms of wealth, that of one’s own righteousness.” Francis did not set out to reform the Church, but his reform of his own life by a return to the Gospel showed the way.

<http://t.co/hcy6zR0fl9>

<http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/father-cantalamessa-on-the-mystery-of-the-incarnation-contemplated-through-francis-of-assisi-s-eyes>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Advent Homily: Humility as Truth and Service in Francis of Assisi**

Francis’ humility comes from his recognition of who God is and who he himself is. “To be humble in fact does not mean to be unhappy with oneself or to recognize one’s own misery, or even one’s littleness. It is to look at God before oneself

or to recognize one’s own misery, or even one’s littleness. It is to look at God before oneself and to measure the abyss that separates the finite from the infinite.” Francis recognized God’s humility in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist. In humility, we are called to serve – just as Jesus demonstrated in His life and words.

<http://t.co/st7WPnAaIP>

<http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/father-cantalamessa-on-francis-of-assisi-s-humility>

**3<sup>rd</sup> Advent Homily: The Mystery of the Incarnation Contemplated through Francis of Assisi’s Eyes**

In the re-enactment of the Nativity at Greccio, Francis demonstrated to those present the humility and poverty of Christ’s humanity. He made concrete and real the circumstances of Jesus’ birth. In a certain sense, because of the fact that Christ came as a poor person, He identified with the poor. “In the poor there is certainly not the same kind of presence of Christ that there is in the Eucharist and in the other Sacraments, but it is a presence that is also true, “real.” He “instituted” this sign, as he instituted the Eucharist. He who pronounced over the bread the words: “This is my Body,” said these same words also of the poor. We should be doing much more to love, help, and evangelize the poor, who Francis identified as our brothers and sisters.

<http://t.co/XU48HmK4gV>

<http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/father-cantalamessa-on-the-mystery-of-the-incarnation-contemplated-through-francis-of-assisi-s-eyes>

For, Your Brother Joe,  
Sandra Kisel, OFS 

## In-Formation – Regional Formation Council

FRANCISCANS, BUILD UP MY CHURCH  
WHICH AS YOU SEE, IS FALLING INTO RUIN...  
by Sandra Kisel ofs

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord.”

Advent, is a preparation for the coming of the Lord – the coming of Christ into every heart and soul and anticipation of His *Second Coming* when He will come among us again exactly as He left us; all glorious, with all the Angels and the Saints; that day when He will gather up all His elect from the four corners of the earth, those who have been faithful to Him!

As I write this Christmas is approaching quickly and the New Year too, and the snow has begun to blanket the earth once again. I’ve been decorating the Christmas tree and I’m preparing to set-up the Christmas crèche in the house, and I’m thinking about St. Francis, and the First Christmas and the beginning of a New Year.

This is a wonderful time to slow down the pace of our lives instead of getting so caught up into the commercialism of the Christmas Holiday and spend more time than ever, adoring our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, with Mary and Joseph and all the angels! *Gloria in Excelsis Deo!* It’s time for us to open our hearts to Him and receive Him. It’s a perfect time to also formulate some holy goals for the New Year.

Remember! The OFS is an Order of perfection and a gift. We are not perfect, but, we are called by God, even commanded by God in the Old and New Testament to *“be holy as also I am holy.”* We know we cannot become perfect of ourselves, only with, in and through Him.

As we gaze upon the Christ Child in the manger, His innocence, His beauty and love, how much do we long to see God face to face? What do we see in our lives right now that might hinder us from the embrace of the Bridegroom when He comes? As we hold that thought, and continue gazing on the Christ-child in the manger, we should ask ourselves, what would we gladly sacrifice or change in our lives *right now* in order to obtain our goals and the Beatific vision? It’s a fair examination to be made in complete privacy with God and within ourselves *EVEN DAILY*.

*Have we been instruments of faith to others surrounding us? We’ve just completed the Year of Faith, having received instruction for this year to immerse ourselves in Vatican 11 documents and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

The world is in great darkness right now. In *Reading 8, pg 2055 of Christian Prayer, single volume*; it reads: *“The Lord called His disciples the salt of the earth because they seasoned with heavenly wisdom the hearts of men, rendered insipid by the devil. Now he calls them the light of the world as well, because they have been enlightened by Him, the true and everlasting light, and have themselves become a light in the darkness.”*

*“Since He is the Sun of Justice, he fittingly calls his disciples the light of the world. The reason for this is that through them, as through shining rays, he has poured out the light of the knowledge of himself upon the entire world. For by manifesting the light of truth, they have dispelled the darkness of error from the hearts of men.”* By our calling, we are to be light in the darkness for souls who don’t know Christ even as the light of faith becomes obscure. We must know our faith and live our profession as never before so as to be God’s instruments. By our profession and through our Baptism what we have received in such abundance much be given in great love for our neighbor; and of necessity, *we must have faith and knowledge before we can share our talents with others.*

Brothers and Sisters, *we are called to be saints!* God bless you all throughout this New Year! Walk in the light of God with the Holy Family and the Angels into... **A NEW DAY AND INTO GLORY!**  
Pax et bonum! ☩

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Rest in Eternal Peace –

Our brother, Francis Jelen, OFS, Northwest Franciscans of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, died December 25. The visitation and funeral Mass will be this Monday, December 30, at St. James, 820 N. Arlington Heights Rd., Arlington Heights. Francis was professed for 55 years. He has requested, and will be given, a Secular Franciscan wake service.

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

### World Day of Peace and Fraternity

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Councilor

Tom Bello, our National Minister, brings to our attention this important message for the World Day of Peace. “Our beloved Holy Father Pope Francis has issued one of the strongest calls I’ve ever read for FRATERNITY in the cause of PEACE in his first World Day of Peace Message for January 1, 2014.”

Pope Francis’s message entitled *Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace* begins with this greeting:

“In this, my first Message for the World Day of Peace, I wish to offer to everyone, individuals and peoples, my best wishes for a life filled with joy and hope. In the heart of every man and woman is the desire for a full life, including that irrepressible longing for fraternity which draws us to fellowship with others and enables us to see them not as enemies or rivals, but as brothers and sisters to be accepted and embraced.

Fraternity is an essential human quality, for we are relational beings. A lively awareness of our relatedness helps us to look upon and to treat each person as a true sister or brother; without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace.”

His message continues by stressing key ways in which fraternity leads to peace: Fraternity is a prerequisite for fighting poverty; the Rediscovery of Fraternity in the economy; that Fraternity extinguished war; Corruption and organized crime threaten Fraternity; and Fraternity helps to preserve and cultivate nature.

Pope Francis concludes his World Day of Peace message with the following thoughts and prayer:

“Christ embraces all of humanity and wishes no one to be lost. “For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:17). He does it without oppressing or constraining anyone to open to him the doors of heart and mind. “Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves must be distinguished by an attitude of service to persons, especially those furthest away and less

” – Jesus Christ says – “I am among you as one who serves” (Lk 22:26-27). Every activity therefore must be distinguished by an attitude of service to persons, especially those furthest away and less known. Service is the soul of that fraternity that builds up peace.

“ May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, help us to understand and live every day the fraternity that springs up from the heart of her Son, so as to bring peace to each person on this our beloved earth.”

To read the entire message, visit the Vatican Network at [www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-issues-peace-day-message](http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-issues-peace-day-message).

If you are looking for an activity that promotes an attitude of service, I would like to recommend 64 Ways in 64 Days to practice peace, one choice at a time, one day at a time. This activity is part of a national campaign, *A Season for Nonviolence* dedicated to demonstrating that nonviolence is a powerful way to heal, transform, and empower our lives and our communities. Beginning January 31<sup>st</sup>, this 64-day reflection was inspired by the anniversaries of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi (Jan. 31,1948) and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., (April 4, 1968).

*Through our daily nonviolent choices and action, the noble and courageous spirit within each of us expresses itself as the skills, wisdom and character of a nonviolent human being. This is how we each, in our own way, move the world in a direction of peace.*

To learn more about the 64 Ways in 64 Days program, you can visit the National JPIC website at <http://jpic4ofs.catholicweb.com> and click on the Links heading. This site provides several free handouts for individual and fraternity formation with daily reflections, group activities and curriculum booklets. There are also resources for children and teens.

Let us share the gift of peace this year through fraternity. Pax e Bonum! 