

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,
Here we are, starting March with Ash Wednesday. I feel as if we've already had more than enough penance after this long, cold, snowy winter! In any event, the coming of Lent is certainly a sign that spring is finally on its way, and I think we are all more than ready.

I've written before about the challenges that Lent poses for me, with the tradition of choosing a penance. God knows me and my difficulties in choosing something meaningful and sufficiently challenging. (One year I gave up mayonnaise – that was a trial.) As I've shared in previous years, God has a tendency of providing a penance for me, whether right at the season of Lent or some other time.

I like to think I'm solidly in the Franciscan tradition in considering Lent to be a time to form some new positive habits. It's better to give up a bad habit for six weeks (which can be long enough to make the change permanent) than to give up chocolate (guaranteed to be only for six weeks!). Of course, we always have the spiritual and corporal works of mercy held up as opportunities for improvement. (Sometimes it seems easier to give up sweets...)

Our Candidates Retreat this year is based in part on Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy of the Gospel. Doesn't that sound like something our father Francis would have been talking about all the time, the JOY of the Gospel? I think it would be great if all of us Secular Franciscans in Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity could read at least part of *Evangelii Gaudium* this Lent – maybe with our Rule open and readily at hand as well. Printed copies are available at religious bookstores, including the

one at St. Peter's in the Loop (mention you are a Secular Franciscan), and of course from websites like Amazon.com. It is also available for free from the Vatican website. There are at least two versions available there:

<http://www.vatican.va/evangelii-gaudium/en/>, which is a "flip book" version that simulates the experience of reading the printed version on your computer screen; and
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.html, which is a more typical "8 ½ x 11" format (print preview shows 64 pages, so be prepared for printing to take quite a while).

I will be reading it myself this Lent, so I'm not going to comment on the content now, but instead simply encourage you to join me in this shared Lenten "penance" (which I think will be a happy one).

This is by no means the first papal document that sounds like an expanded version of our Rule. Soon-to-be-saint John Paul II's apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* contains many exhortations that parallel our Rule. This is hardly surprising, since Francis himself set out to be a more faithful follower of Christ, not to be something other than the best Catholic he could be. As we follow Christ in the manner of Francis and Clare, let's use these inspiring words provided us by our Holy Fathers to help us live the Gospel way of life we have professed ever more deeply.

Happy Lent! 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 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)**

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 20th anniversary of establishment of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity – Location TBD

Spiritual Assistant’s Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I am writing to you on St. Valentine’s Day which has become such a silly and frivolous commercial event every year but I want to proclaim that it doesn’t have to be. The Christian roots of the celebration are foggy but the idea of responding and attending to our particularly dear loved ones is a sweet and worthwhile idea. I support radical expressions of love and believe romantic actions are never a waste of time; more love letters might save the world or at least make it better. I often think of myself as God’s beloved sweetheart. Abba who chooses to freely holds and comforts me all through life. And that action shows me I believe how to behave toward others; to be radically in love. Francis extends that understanding action to radically be in love and attentive to all of creation, even sister snow and brother rocks. None of this includes a heart-shaped box of chocolates. But by the time you receive this Valentine’s Day will be over, a thing of the past. So, let me now jump ahead to a point in the future. That is Saturday April 26th & 27th at May’s Lake Village which is the annual Candidate’s Retreat sponsored by the Regional Executive Council and the Regional Formation Committee. You will hear from more about this event from many others I’m sure but I want to add my two cents worth of encouragement. We in the region want to strongly support the very good direction of The National Executive Council as well as the International

leadership to make the first priority of the order Formation, Formation, Formation. Our annual gathering is designed for the candidates and their formators to inform and stimulate their Franciscan spirited development certainly but also to build deeper connections with each other throughout the region. It is strongly recommended that all candidates and their formation teams attend this event and I believe the local ministers would do well to attend as well. Be sure to respond to the invitation from the Regional Formation Committees RSVP request in a timely fashion with the proper number so that we can accurately plan on space and the luncheon to be provided on both days, this is most important. A point of interest for this day is that the committee presenters will be using as a part of their reflection and planning Pope Francis’ recently published Apostolic Exhortation, “The Joy of the Gospel – Evangelii Gaudium.” This exciting material is filled with The Holy Father’s wisdom and insight and is from my perspective comfortably compatible with the Franciscan spirit and the Franciscan hearted call to action.

All else that I would add at this time is that you will join me in a prayer to “Our Lady, Hope of Spring Time” that this long hard winter will come to an end soon and that warmth and new growth will return to our region and to our hearts.

As I remain, your Brother Joe Middleton, ofm 

In-Formation – Regional Formation Council
Making extraordinary use of “Ordinary Time”

As I write this column, it is bitterly cold. The ground is snow-covered and there is a certain “stillness” in this early winter morning that I believe invites us “into the quiet.”

The Church is now in the period called Ordinary Time, which spans the days between the feast of the Baptism of the Lord to Lent. While “ordinary time” refers to the ordinal weeks – 1st week of Ordinary Time, 2nd. Week etc. we find our days a bit less hectic than in the Advent-Christmas season. Perhaps we have the opportunity to take some time for ourselves. Let’s take some advantage of that opportunity! Now could be a good time to get back to reading that great book that has been sitting on the shelf since before Advent!

A few feast days occur in February upon which we might enjoy reflecting. On the 2nd, we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord . Even if we aren’t able to attend Mass that day, we can read the gospel account of the Presentation in Luke 2:22-38 and take some time to reflect on it and what it means to us. Let it be an occasion for us to give thanks to Lord for all that He has done and continues to do for us. A very visual exercise in heightening our sense of gratitude which I like to do periodically, is to write down all that the Lord has done for me, just this past week and then reflect on my list. It brings to my mind a greater awareness of God’s endless love for us and calls me pray a very heartfelt THANK YOU LORD!

On February 11th we celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. This was a good time to re-read the story of the apparitions of Our Lady to St. Bernadette and to reflect on the many miracles granted through Our Lady’s intercession. That day, especially, I like to pray the rosary for all the sick among my family and friends and the sick and shut in brothers and sisters of my fraternity and our Region.

In conclusion, let me express my gratitude to you, my brothers and sisters for your constant support and encouragement, and my gratitude to our Lord for giving me the gift of you.

God give you peace and joy as you go into the quiet!

Patrick Mendes, OFS
Regional Formation Team 

Rest in Eternal Peace

As some of you may know, Deacon John Farrell, OFS, member of Wellspring Community and Spiritual Assistant to St. Juliana Fraternity recently passed away. The visitation was Friday Feb. 14 from 4-8 p.m. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Cass. Ave., in Darien. The Funeral Mass was Saturday @ 11:00 a.m. also at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel May he rest in peace.

Catherine (Kay) Berglind, OFS, (professed 1955) member of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Oak Lawn passed away January 27, 2014.

L. Jane Gresey, OFS of Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine) passed away January 20. 

Dear Fellow Franciscan,

We have released several new Franciscan books in the past month including a new edition of Franciscan Morning and Evening Praise in a 2 volume hard cover edition as well as a new leatherette edition of The Passion of St. Francis of Assisi.

Please feel free to call us anytime for additional information or to place an order at 602-625-6183. You may also place orders online at TauPublishing.com

Thank you for supporting our publishing company.

Blessings,
Jeff Campbell
Tau Publishing, LLC
602-625-6183

(ed. Note – their .pdf file catalog is an additional attachment in the email distribution)

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

“Lent: A Time for Reflection”

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Councilor

The mission of JPIC is to assist Professed Secular Franciscans as they reflect on their relationship with God as manifested in the fruits of conversion in their lives. This with special regard to the daily choices made in the areas of justice, peace making and respect for all created things and people; as brothers and sisters of penance, bringing life to the Gospel and the Gospel to life.

- Mission Statement for JPIC

In December, I mentioned that Mary Lopata, our region’s representative for the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) and I met to discuss the role of JPIC in our region. We have since designed a preliminary survey that will help us assess the current activities, interests and resources used by our regional members that relate to JPIC issues. This survey will be sent to all fraternity ministers and we ask that you prayerfully consider this and return it promptly so we can share the results.

Our goal is to create a network of resources, contacts and formation ideas to assist those in our area who would like to get involved. Individuals who want to convey their own interests or activities that are outside their fraternity’s responses may also complete this survey. We would like to celebrate the good works of our Franciscan family and to build on this foundation in order to strengthen our Franciscan voice.

I revisited the JPIC section of the *For Up to Now* (FUN) Manual as inspiration for the survey. Pat Brandwein-Ball, OFS beautifully describes how Gospel living and Catholic Social Teaching go hand in hand throughout the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. The seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching are the foundation of the Franciscan Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation concerns.

It is on these themes that our survey is based. Pat points out that within the Catechism of the Catholic Church, all of Part Three explains Catholic Social Teaching and highly recommends that we spend some time reading it.

I was inspired by her suggestion that Lent would be a good time to read and reflect on these teachings.

The following reflection questions are found in the manual.

- How do the themes of social justice impact my Secular Franciscan vocation?
- How do they call me to conversion?
- What is the Church asking of me as my part in her mission?
- What action am I called to undertake?
- In what way does my apostolic work reflect my relationship with God?

Let us bring life to the Gospel...

“Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give your drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for the one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

Matthew 25: 34-40

...and the Gospel to life. 
