

OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

www.ilsfo.org

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Minister's Message

By Vickie Klick, OFS

Dear sisters and brothers,
While we still have two more weeks of July as I write this, it feels as though summer is nearly over! That is a reminder to me that I tend to live in the future more than the present. Planning for business travel and deadlines, OFS events, and fitting in the rest of life around these dates can definitely take one out of the moment and weeks or even months in advance. Such planning typically results in our doing one of two things:

- 1) Ignoring the fact that between now and the events we are planning, many things can happen that are completely out of our control;
- 2) Attempting to anticipate the things could happen and make contingency plans so whatever happens, we are ready.

Depending on the situation, of course, it is right and proper to do one or both of these. The challenge for us who want to live Spirit-filled lives is to allow for a third option: being open to the inspirations of the Spirit *in the moment*. I believe we need to do our preparations as best we can, and *then* let events happen and respond as they happen, recognizing that we are not in control. The tricky part is letting go of the outcome when it clearly is not going to be what was planned. Feeling responsibility and ownership is good until personal identification with the result runs head-on into reality. It may be necessary to remember Francis' story of "perfect joy" in the struggle to let go of anger, frustration, and the need for control. It may be helpful to think of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta's insight that we are not called to be successful, we are called to be faithful.

The other, which is where I started this reflection, is that we can be too busy planning tomorrow or next week (or even next year) to recognize the promptings of the Spirit in the ordinary moments we are living NOW. Is that interruption really God's nudge to do something different for a little while? That makes me think of Jesus' words, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious about many things. There is need of only one thing." (Luke 10:41-42a). Many if not all of us can identify with Martha! How do we let go of worry caused by the many demands that are pressing on us when Jesus is calling US to spend time with Him (maybe in the person of our spouse, children, parents, friends, fraternity, nature, etc., as well as in the Real Presence)?

As with so many things in our spiritual life, we can't choose one or the other – as people called to life in the world, we have to attend to many things, without losing sight of the better part that is time with Jesus. As our Rule states in Article 10, we are to "faithfully fulfill the duties proper to [our] various circumstances of life", while at the same time we are to let "prayer and contemplation be the soul of all [we] are and do" (Article 8). Francis struggled with some of this same tension when he asked Brother Sylvester and Sister Clare to help him discern whether he should spend all his time in contemplation, or go out into the world preaching. We can ask Francis and Clare to pray for us that we may be open to God's "rebalancing" of our lives' priorities, starting with these last weeks of summer. May they be a time of blessing for all of us.

Vickie 

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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)**

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
- 28:** St Thomas Moore – (E)

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 was recently visiting out in the twilight zone of our region and while there I was speaking with one of the dear ones about my visit to Scotland and London. In that conversation I admitted that I was homesick for Scotland. I was experiencing Scotland withdrawal. And she said that sounds like a good topic for a future article in the O S F News. At first I cordially dismissed the idea but having pondered the notion a little further I am now working on it as if it was divinely inspired by the Franciscan Holy Spirit. The first and obvious level is the memory of a truly wonderful experience of all that I saw and did while exploring Scotland. I enjoyed Glasgow’s hustle and bustle, the blustery Islands, those beautiful (bonnie) lochs, and the magnificent highlands, the fields of woolly sheep and their dogs, those sturdy long horned (and long haired) cattle. There are the ruined castles and estates and those palaces and castles that are intact such as the royal Scone Place (pronounced Scon) and the treasures therein including the famous coronation Stone of Destiny. I loved the visit to St. Andrews on the north east coast where the game of golf was born and the protestant reformers ran rampant as they prescribed the solution to the Catholic Church was to be dealt with by a hammer and fire (ouch). There is a wrecked rectory palace and Cathedral with great views of the tempestuous North Sea. I particularly enjoyed Edinburgh the modern capitol city built around the ancient castle which was built atop an extinct volcano. It was green there in Scotland and fairly lush. There were vast golden flowered canola fields growing all around, the source of the cooking oil. The people were beautiful and warm with a special ability it seemed to me to be great story tellers. I generally could listen to them for hours. I guess it is safe to say that without shame I have fallen in love with Scotland.

This brings us to a second level of consideration, that of missing people or a place resulting in the sweet romantic in your gut emotion and physiological experience of heart tugging homesickness which is like being in love; ah yes falling in love again and again. And this is where I would like to apply the Franciscan spirit which is as I see it all about the ongoing conversion experience of falling in love. God’s love is so particularly directed at his marvelous creation and his people so dear that he choose to join us more deeply through Jesus who became one of us designed to show us the way, the truth and value of life. God choose life and Jesus choose life and then twelve hundred or so years later along came Francis who reenergized those choices by falling in love anew with all of God’s creation and Jesus’ wisdom. Then Francis by his example demonstrated for the Church and the people of his times the value and benefit of his choice to include all life; especially beautiful the poor and marginalized. And this he handed on to all of us, his Franciscan brothers and sisters to translate and apply today as we hopefully choose to fall in love freely and often.

Let us love one another as they have shown us.

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 

In Memoriam:

We are sad to say that Angeline Czerkowski, OFS (St. Francis / St. Louis Fraternity), passed away on 6 July, 2014. Angeline celebrated her 50th OFS anniversary in October, 2013. 

In-Formation – Regional Formation Council

IN-FORMATION

Sr. Marilyn Renninger OSF

Saints Francis and Clare were great lovers of nature. They knew that God gave us all this beauty and wonder as gift, to show us His presence all around us.

St. Teresa of Avila, a contemplative Carmelite, used the image of a garden for a soul. She writes, “What an appealing image to think of my soul as a garden and imagine that the Lord was taking a walk in it.” (Adapted from Collected Works)

Millions of people, including myself, have planted seeds and flowers, with the hope that they will grow, bloom, and make our yards colorful. So many gardens at this time of summer are in their fullness of beauty.

However, gardening, whether it be in the soil or in ourselves, is one thing in which we never achieve perfection. We work at it: we plant, transplant, rearrange, and pull weeds (and there are many of these). A garden is never finished.

We read in Genesis that life began in the garden. Garden images are frequent in the Scripture and also in the writings of the saints and mystics. There is a definite connection between gardening and spirituality. That means we are all to be gardeners.

The saints show us how to sow seeds, seeds of hope, seeds of love. If only we could see everything we do as a potential “sowing,” planting little seeds of hope and love. That is how the kingdom grows—quietly, from tiny seeds. Jesus came to sow seeds, the Good News of the Kingdom. He told parables about seeds, planting and producing. Every seed of hope we plant, every act of love, every thoughtful deed, no matter how small, increases God’s kingdom on earth, making our world more beautiful, more God-like. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta reminds us that the important thing is not how much we accomplish but how much love we put into the

seeds we sow each day .

Are you tending your garden?

What does the Divine Gardener want to do in your soil?

What weeds is He pulling?


What good seeds are being planted in you?

What are you doing to water them so that they do not wither but come to bud and flower?

Take some time before summer is over to walk with the Divine Gardener through your spiritual garden. Open your eyes and your senses. Look for signs of growth. Look for weeds that need to be pulled and replaced with virtue.

What seeds will add color and beauty to your garden?

Our life is about planting seeds: seeds of hope, seeds of love, seeds of kindness, FOR A GARDEN IS NEVER FINISHED.

Happy Gardening! 

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity celebrated their chapter of elections last Sunday, July 13, 2014. Our regional treasurer, Dale Marzano, presided; Br. Donald Thielsen, OFM Conv. was spiritual assistant witness. Dale reported to the REC that this election was notable for the number of fraternity members who were willing to serve - each of the six elective offices had three or four candidates, and there were some different candidates for each office. That is a witness to the vitality of the fraternity! As always, we thank the outgoing council for their commitment and service to the fraternity and the region. The new council members are listed below:

Minister:

Randel (Randy) Jacobson, OFS

Secretary:

Karen Verr, OFS

Treasurer:

Roger Gaura, OFS

Formation Director:

Steven Verr, OFS

Infirmarian:

Doralee Tayler, OFS 

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

By Barbara Elkins, OFS, JPIC Councilor

Is your fraternity looking for some fresh ideas for on-going formation? Are you searching for ways to put your faith into action? Do you feel overwhelmed and ill-prepared to respond to the current social and legal issues that oppose the teachings of the Church? Do you ever wonder if one person can really make a difference? I was reminded this morning about the great potential of something small from the Sunday reading of the holy Gospel according to Matthew. This passage (Mt 13:24-43) shares the parables of the mustard seed, the yeast and the weeds in the field. These parables demonstrate how our actions can produce good works no matter how small or insignificant we may feel that they are. With God's grace, we can make a difference in how we live our faith.

In my attempt to learn more about the social issues of justice, peace and integrity of creation, I have turned to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for guidance. Their website provides a wealth of information with timely and practical examples of how to advocate for policies that support the Church's social teaching. The USCCB Action Center states that *"public advocacy from the Catholic community is a civic responsibility that serves the common good, and we hope this platform assists in your own commitment to advance justice in defense of the dignity of every human life."* Here are a few ways you and your fraternity can plant a small seed that may yield a wonderful harvest.

PRAY

The prayer below is just one of several prayers available on the USCCB website for issues that require us to be faithful citizens. Add one of these prayers to your next fraternity gathering to increase awareness and active interest. Use the search feature to locate them by typing in "Prayers".

Gracious and loving God,

let your Spirit be with us today.

Hear our prayers, and increase in us the will to follow your Son Jesus. Help us to draw on the resources of our faith as we use the opportunities of our democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person, especially the poor and vulnerable.


We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

LEARN

The USCCB Action Center is a comprehensive resource concerning the following social issues: Pro-Life; Religious Liberty; Marriage and Family; Catholic Education; Justice, Peace and Human Development; Migration and Refugees; and Communications. For many of these issues, the USCCB Action Center partners with other organizations and coalitions. It provides fact sheets and position statements on these issues so you can gain confidence in defending the Church's teaching. Consider one of these topics for ongoing formation and become familiar with the issue. Look to current headlines and legislation for ideas. Challenge yourself to learn more about the issues that are of interest to you.

ACT

The USCCB Action Center can provide you with action alerts for issues that are of immediate concern. You may receive these alerts by email or text messaging. This website provides tips on how to effectively communicate with federal and state legislators and well as other ways to get involved. To receive alerts through text messaging, text the word "FREEDOM" to 377377. The texts briefly describe an action to take and a link for more information. Text messages are limited to two or less per month. To receive alerts through email, complete the registration form found under Alert Central.

To learn more, visit the Issues and Action tab on the USCCB website: www.usccb.org. 

Our Pope, on...technology...

"We also try to reach out to people who are far away, via digital means, the web and brief messaging."

Our Pope, on...Jesus...

"When one does not profess Jesus Christ, one professes the worldliness of the devil."

Our Pope, on...check it out...

<http://www.catholicbible101.com/popefrancisquotes.htm>