

OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

www.ilsfo.org

April 2016 • Vol. 22, No.5

Minister's Message

by Lorna Miressi, OFS

Happy spring! Even though we have had a fairly mild winter, I am still happy that we got through it and are ready to welcome the new flowers, the green grass, more sunshine, and the warmer weather. Spring has sprung!

Today is also Passion Palm Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week in the church year. Our pastor Fr. Tri, this morning at mass, reminded us about all the masses and morning prayer services that will take place this week to help us live our lives in holiness; all the while remembering how our Lord suffered, died and rose again so that we will also rise on the last day and live with Him forever in heaven.

One of my most favorite gatherings during Holy Week is Holy Thursday. This day marks the beginning of the Triduum, or the three-day celebration of Christ's death and resurrection. The mass on Holy Thursday can also be called the Mass of the Lord's Supper. On Holy Thursday, the Gospel reading which we hear is from the Book of John. Whereas the other three Gospels speak of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, John talks about Jesus washing his disciples' feet. At my parish, Resurrection Catholic Parish, we started this ritual many years ago, and every year since it has grown into a beautiful celebration of love and service to one another in kindness and humility.

When one washes another's feet, whether it be a family washing each other's feet, someone washing the feet of another in the community or who has served you, or even someone with whom one needs to reconcile, one is carrying out Jesus' command to love

One another as he has loved us, with kindness and humility.

What better way to learn how we are to live our lives as Christians, and as Secular Franciscans, than to hear and learn about how Christ lived his life; especially during the holiest week of our Church year. It is my prayer for all of you that you are able to participate in the gatherings at your parish this week and that you have the opportunity to celebrate with your family and cry out "Christ is risen, Hallelujah!"

Have a Blessed Easter! ☩

This year's Mother Cabrini Regional OFS Candidates Retreat is scheduled for the weekend of April 9th - 10th, 2016. As in the past, the Retreat's location will be Mayslake Village, 1801 35th St., Oakbrook IL, 60523. The theme for the Retreat is "*Being Merciful - Like the Father*". Candidates, inquirers, formation directors and formation team members are encouraged to attend; of course all are welcome!

Please note the deadline for registration is Sunday April 3, 2015.

A response is absolutely necessary so a final number can be given to the caterer. Cost is \$40 for the two days (\$25 for one day), and will cover a continental breakfast, lunch and handouts.

Checks should be made payable Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity OFS.

Please RSVP to: Kristi Loar, OFS

Peace and good!

Kristi Loar, OFS

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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.

REGIONAL CALENDAR 2016

All events are at Mayslake Village
unless otherwise noted

Saturday, January 16
Regional Executive Council
Meeting

Monday, March 2
*Per Capita/Census/Fraternity Annual
Reports due*

Saturday, March 19
Regional Executive Council
Meeting

Sunday, March 27 *Easter*

Sat./Sun., April 9-10
Candidates Retreat

Saturday, May 14
Chapter of Ministers

Thursday-Monday, June 30-July 4
*Quinquennial Congress,
St. Louis, MO*

Saturday, July 16
Regional Executive Council
Meeting

Saturday, August 6
Regional Gathering – Feast of the
Portiuncula

Saturday, September 17
Formation/Leadership
Workshop

Saturday, October 1
Regional Executive Council
Meeting

November 1-6 *NAFRA
Chapter/National Visitation –
Winter Park, FL*

Sunday, November 13
Mother Cabrini Feast Day
Celebration – location TBA

Spiritual Assistant's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

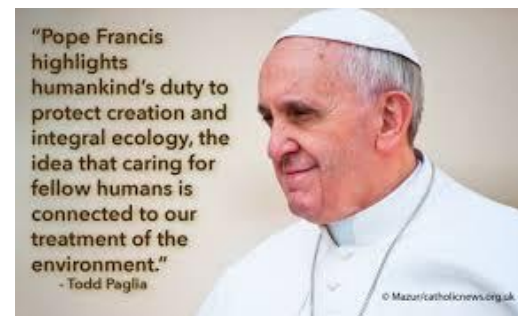
I send you all Easter and spring time greetings and best wishes. To me the double expressions of fresh new life and the ultimate hope of Easter takes away all the collected dust of being closed up all winter which inspires me to get outside to dance and plan a picnic. Speaking of dust, I'm so relieved to have all the dust, mud and sludge of the primary elections winding down. For me all this hostile rhetoric and juvenile aggression has been so discouraging and sad. Perhaps we should investigate the formation of a Franciscan party. On second thought I suppose we'll just have to filter all the possibilities through our Franciscan head, heart, and spirit. Along those lines I would like to share a fertile little snip from a document named, "A Revolution of Tenderness: A 2016 Election Pope Francis Values Guide". This 10 page voter guide was put together for our reflection by a coalition of national Catholic organizations. This excerpt comes from a section titled "The Environment." *The Catholic Church speaks on issues of faith and science not as some academic exercise, but because these issues affect human flourishing, and we're called by God to defend the dignity of every woman, man, and child. Just as the Church is unafraid to defend the dignity of the child in the womb, we cannot be afraid to defend the dignity of those who are the victims of a global economy that kills through environmental exploitation, rampant consumerism, and structural inequalities. What many seem to misunderstand, but that Francis, Benedict and the Church get is that protecting creation is first and*

foremost a religious and moral Issue. Living simply, protecting creation, and addressing climate change is a response to God's ancient request that we be good stewards of all that God has given us: clean air, fresh water and fruits of the harvest. Water is particularly a vital issue to address as many violent conflicts have been linked to water issues, and many future violent conflicts are likely. One tangible way we can protect creation is to reduce air pollution.

As Pope Francis writes, "technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay."

To me this whole document read as very Franciscan but especially this section. We friars have been called to recognize the great need for clean water around the world and to become actively and radically involved in finding solutions. I will find some material on that process to pass on to you in the near future. Till then, I will simply say, have a great Easter time.

Your Brother Joe M, ofm 



INFORMATION

Let Us Sing of the Resurrection!

By Kristi Loar OFS,

The angel of the Lord said to the women: "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for He has been raised just as He said." (Matthew 28)

This past weekend my fraternity and I followed Christian tradition by experiencing the 'Way of the Cross'. Today I want to further that momentum with the 'Way of the Resurrection!' Because the bodily death of Jesus was a new beginning for us and the events afterwards have truly changed the world.

'O sons and daughters, let us sing! The King of heaven, the glorious King, over death today rose triumphing!'

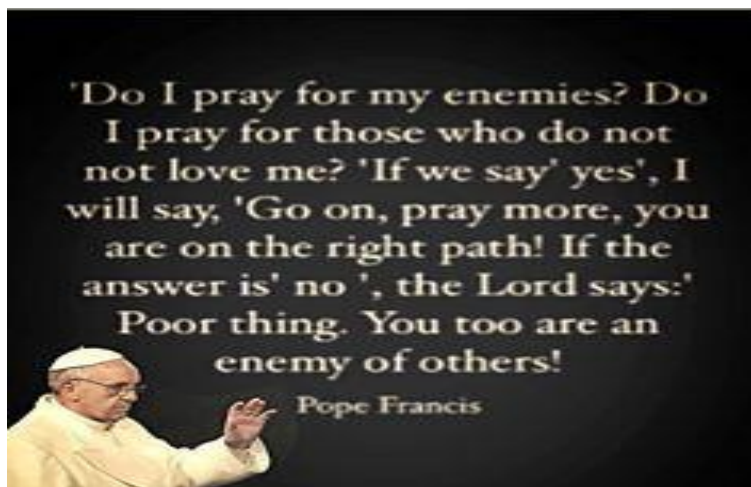
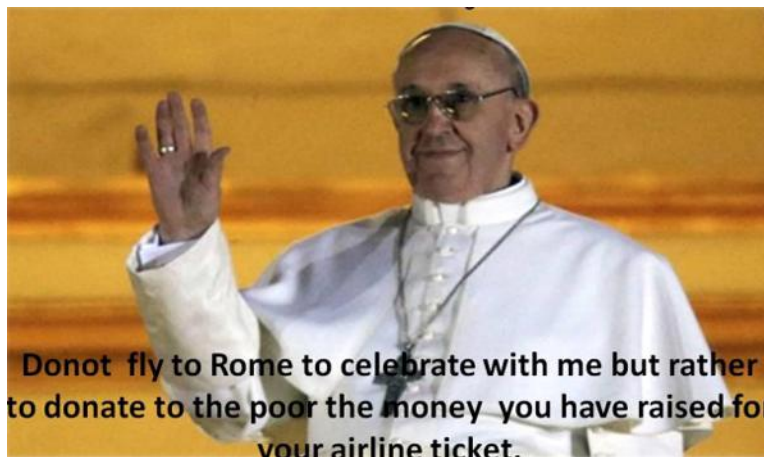
How confused, and amazed the women at Jesus's tomb must have been to hear the angel's voice, as they discovered the stone rolled away from the tomb opening and Jesus' body no longer there. How the excitement surely grew as the Disciples gave further witness to the events, with such overwhelming joy! And then, Jesus appeared to them, spoke to them, comforted and encouraged them. Capturing the essence of those moment in our hearts surely ignite real Easter joy!

Then, Jesus gave the disciples power to change the world, one person at a time. He said to them, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.' Giving them further instruction, example, and hope, Jesus transformed his followers into leaders; instructing them to go and make disciples of all the nations. We are part of that faith-filled mission. We are also called to discipleship, to keep vigil, to be prayerful and keep the faith alive in our thoughts, hearts, words, and deeds. As the Lord refreshes our spirits throughout our lives, we must then go into the world and evangelize, give witness, and make a difference. The Holy Spirit goes before us to prepare the way, strengthen our hearts and guide us. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You! Because by the Cross and the Light of your Resurrection you have redeemed the world! Happy Easter!

Kristi 📷

Remember - Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated on the Sunday after Easter, the Octave of Easter, observed by Roman Catholic as well as some Anglicans. It is originally based on the Catholic devotion to the Divine Mercy that Saint Faustina Kowalska reported as part of her encounter with Jesus, and is associated with special promises from Jesus and indulgences issued by the Church.

The feast of Divine Mercy, as recorded in the diary of Saint Faustina, receives from Jesus himself the biggest promises of grace related to the Devotion of Divine Mercy. In specific, Jesus reputedly said that a person who goes to sacramental confession (the confession may take place some days before) and receives holy communion on that day, shall obtain the total forgiveness of all sins and punishment. That means each person would go immediately after death to heaven without suffering in purgatory (or hell). Additionally, the Roman Catholic Church grants a plenary indulgence (observing the usual rules) with the recitation of some simple prayers 📷



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

A Gentle and Courteous Spirit

By Barbara Elkins, OFS

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. (Rule 13)

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, I am trying to be more aware of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. These practices provide us with an action plan by which we help our neighbors in their bodily and spiritual needs. While driving to work the other day, I was contemplating the spiritual works of mercy when I heard a reference made to the “art of accompaniment.” This term comes from Pope Francis’ encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*.

“The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other.” (169)

With this beautiful imagery, consider the ways in which we honor the sacred ground of the other through the spiritual works of mercy.

- Counseling the doubtful
- Instructing the ignorant
- Admonishing the sinner
- Comforting the sorrowful
- Forgiving injuries
- Bearing wrongs patiently
- Praying for the living and the dead

Today, when we are bombarded with messages of negativity and incivility toward others, we need to demonstrate a gentle and courteous spirit. We are asked to learn about our faith and counsel those who have doubts about it.

Through our words and actions, we are called to be a witness to God’s truth, beauty and love. We are asked not to judge but to be supportive in helping others to find their way to Christ. We are asked to be forgiving, patient and compassionate. I was reminded of this as I read the evening prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.

“Be kind to one another, compassionate, and mutually forgiving, just as God has forgiven you in Christ. Be imitators of God as his dear children. Follow the way of love, even as Christ loved you. He gave himself for us as an offering to God, a pleasing fragrance.” ~ Ephesians 4:32-5:2

In that same passage from *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis writes, “In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze.”

In our busy world, let’s make some time to share the pleasing fragrance of Christ’s love by helping those we encounter each day. Most importantly, let us practice the art of listening. Pope Francis tells us that “listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God’s love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives.” (171)

Our rule calls us to accept ALL people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ with a courteous and gentle spirit. That’s a lot to expect from our fragile human nature. But perhaps if we try to accompany each other and truly listen to each other with respect and compassion, God will help us to find the right words to say and offer us the best course of action to take.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ. (Rule 13)

JPIC is about putting our Rule into actions. Don’t be a bystander. Each time you counsel, instruct, admonish, comfort, forgive, bear and pray for another, do so with a gentle and courteous spirit.

Pax et bonum. 

**NONE OF US CAN THINK
WE ARE EXEMPT
FROM CONCERNS FOR THE
POOR AND FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.
POPE FRANCIS**

