

# OFS News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the  
Secular Franciscan Order

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## Minister's Message

by Lorna Miressi, OFS

Brothers and Sisters,  
Welcome summer! I pray that all of you enjoy these summer months; whether you are planning a vacation, taking a "stay-cation" with you families, or simply taking some time for yourself. And, don't forget about the "Q" in St. Louis next month. If you are able to attend, I look forward to seeing you there.

Back in April, I received an email from Tirzah Spang, OFS. She is the newly-elected minister of St. Clare Fraternity in Oakbrook. I had the opportunity to meet Tirzah, and her little daughter, at the Chapter of Ministers May 14<sup>th</sup>. Tirzah put together a beautiful reflection and I have decided to share it with all of you below. I hope you like it. If you would like, drop Tirzah an email thanking her. Her address is [tirzahspang@gmail.com](mailto:tirzahspang@gmail.com)  
Delight or Disappointment?  
by, Tirzah Spang OFS

Recently, while on retreat, a question was posed that rocked me. The question was simple, but the effects of the answer touched basically all areas of life. It affected how I view others and how I ultimately view God.

The question was, "Do you think that when God looks at you, He sees a Delight or a Disappointment?" Now we were instructed to choose one side or the other. We were told that we could not sit on the fence saying that sometimes God sees me as a little of both. No, we had to choose.

Are we a delight or a disappointment to God?  
How does He see us?

I knew intellectually that I should choose to say that God saw me as a delight because God is Love. God loves all and is always perfectly good, so He has to see me as a Delight. If I was honest, though, I had to say that I thought God sees me as a Disappointment. Wow! That is not what I wanted to admit.

I thought about this some more and what that view meant and I came up with a few more ideas. If I thought that God viewed me as a

Disappointment then I would be forever under the impression that I could just do a little more to earn God's Love. Maybe if I worked harder at holiness, I could earn God's Love. As I write this, and as I thought that, I realized that that was both foolish and impossible. I cannot jump to Heaven on my own and I cannot "earn" God's Love. I know that I do not need to, but I hadn't really thought about it this honestly or in this way before.

If I viewed God as being so difficult to please, then this could also lead to seeing those around me with less love. Maybe this is more honestly put as being judgmental of those around me.

The priest, on our retreat, went on to read the scripture, which became a soothing balm on my wounded view of God. (Hebrews 12). He asked us if we would have fallen in love with

God if He was a God who was disappointed in us? No, I would not have. Rather, it was the sweetness of His Love that drew me to Him. This is not a God who would be disappointed in me.

Why did I think this way? I do not know, but I decided, timidly to accept that God saw me as His Delight. This was a little difficult to do. It was hard to let go of God seeing me as a disappointment, but it required only a small step from me over that fence that divided Disappointment and Delight.

What did I realize? At the next Mass, that I attended, I was walking up to Communion and waiting for the people in the rows ahead of me. As they filed out, the Holy Spirit inspired me when I looked at each of them. Delight! Delight! Delight! Delight! Delight! Delight! Delight!

Praise God! It was a joy! By accepting that God saw me as His Delight, I accepted also that He sees each of us as His Delight. So I pose the question to you...How does God see you? As a disappointment or a delight? (Remember, no fence sitting. You have to choose one side.)--

Tirzah **T**

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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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Sisters and Brothers,  
Aloha! My Brothers and Sisters,

First of all, here is just a little travelogue. Don't look for me in the month of June for I will be happily gone. I will begin the month with a family vacation in Hawaii for 8 days then we will return to Texas then I will go to southern Colorado for a week in the mountains. After that I will drive down to Albuquerque, New Mexico for a national gathering of friars to discuss the reconfiguration of our provinces. I will then visit Santa Fe and Taos before returning to Colorado to begin my long way home. I hope also to drop in on the Quinquennial in St. Louis.

Doesn't that all sound wonderful? I have asked several of our spiritual assistants to submit something from their experiences in place of my normal feature. I'm sure they will provide a nice change of pace. Speaking of our spiritual assistants, I have the sad duty to let you know that our dear and faithful friend of the SFO, Fr. Jim Perluzzi, OFM of the San Damiano fraternity here at St. Peter's has died after a long illness. This loss will have a profound effect on the fraternity and upon friar life here at St. Peter's. May he rest in peace and may his memory shine before us like God's promises of mercy; freely abundant.

In this month of June when summer surely begins, the church gives us two heart fests to consider. On Friday the third we celebrate the Solemnity of The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus which will be a paternal fest day for us friars of the Sacred Heart

Province. We will then enjoy celebrating the memorial of The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup>. This event will be remembered in a special way I'm sure by The Northwest Franciscan Community of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Palatine. June also presents a number of feasts honoring many holy and good men but most especially the most favorite of all Franciscan saints, St. Anthony of Padua on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup>.

So I leave you this month with best wishes for your good old summertime which I hope might include a picnic, a splash in some cool water, a little stroll or two under real trees, and don't forget sweet corn, fresh tomatoes, peaches, cherries, and watermelons. And then I hope a good number of you will be able to gather with the National Fraternity for the Quinquennial in St. Louis in very late June and early July. Those very special events are always such inspiring memorable experiences as well as an opportunity to connect more deeply to the Secular Franciscan Family.

Your Brother Joe 



Look familiar? Anybody recognize this church? The answer will appear in next month's issue.

## INFORMATION

### Franciscan Devotion to the Sacred Heart

The Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, comes early this year-

June 3<sup>rd</sup>. I pray that the love and peace of the Sacred Heart be with you always. As most of you know, after Christmas and Easter, this is my favorite feast day!

The devotion to the Sacred Heart has a long history in the Church. By the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century devotion to the Sacred Heart was bursting forth in many areas. The first recorded apparition of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Lurgard of Trond, a Cistercian nun.

During this period, devotion to the Sacred Heart spread quickly to the laity from the monastic communities.

It was also during this era that there were great advances in theology and the rise of the Franciscans and Dominicans who gave tremendous impetus to the devotion to the Sacred Heart. These Orders carried the devotion back to their communities in Germany and it is reasonable to assume that our OFM Friar Province of the Sacred Heart, to which most of the fraternities of our Region are bonded, was placed under the patronage of the Sacred Heart by the founding German Province of the Holy Cross.

Of course, we all think of the later apparitions to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque who in her vision of October 4, 1673 acknowledges St. Francis of Assisi, whose feast it was, as a great friend of the Sacred Heart. Our Lord, by bestowing the gift of the Stigmata demonstrated His great love for Francis.

By receiving the stigmata our Holy Father Francis bore the wounds of Christ on his own body and this led his heart to a deep understanding of the wounded heart of Jesus.

Some spiritual exercises we might want to try as a way to celebrate the feast and demonstrate our

love for the Sacred, wounded heart of Jesus are: Attending Mass on the feast day. A good day for us to also pray the Litany of the Sacred Heart. Review the promises of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary regarding the First Friday. On the feast of the Sacred Heart We might renew our fervor and make a stronger commitment to making the 9 First Fridays.

While we honor the Sacred Heart and give Him thanks for His boundless love for us, let us ask Him to grant those special petitions we hold in our hearts. Can we pray for others? Can we reflect the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the small acts of kindness we are able to do each day? Just a few ideas.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings!

I wish you all, a feast day filled with Christ's love, peace and joy.

Patrick Mendés, OFS  
Regional Formation Commission 

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A word from Sue...

Hi all. An addendum from my note that was posted last month...

I really am looking for a little more formal team (?) to assist me with the duties of setting up, organizing, serving, and of course, cleaning up, the goodies we all enjoy at our Regional gatherings we host each year. In particular

- (1) Candidates Retreat (usually April, completed for 2016),
- (2) Chapter of Ministers (usually May, completed for 2016 as of this publication),
- (3) Feast of the Portiuncula August 6, 2016,
- (4) and the Formation Leadership Workshop September 17, 2016.

Many of the people who read this newsletter are present at these events. If I can be of assistance in helping you serve our fellow Franciscans, do not hesitate to contact/email me at [fratlif@ilsfo.org](mailto:fratlif@ilsfo.org)  
Thanks much,

Sue Gribbon OFS, Councilor for Fraternal Life 

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

By Barbara Elkins, OFS

### *Living in the Spirit of Continual Conversion*

Our Rule directs us as brothers and sisters of penance to conform our thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls conversion. It reminds us that human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily. (7) We are to cultivate this by listening to and celebrating the Word of God, participating in penitential celebrations and spiritual retreats, seeking the help of a spiritual advisor and by reviewing our life. (Art 13.1) As my term as JPIC councilor comes to a close, I look back on these three years and think about how this position has helped me to live in the spirit of continual conversion.

First of all, my understanding of our Catholic faith has been strengthened. By taking the time to research topics for my articles, I have discovered many aspects of our faith that I never knew or had failed to remember. My knowledge is nurtured each day as I listen to Relevant Radio on my commute to work. This station has inspired me and provided resources for many of my articles. For the past few years, I have participated in my local RCIA program as a parish companion. Rediscovering my faith through the eyes of our sojourners has been a true blessing. My formation is ongoing.

I have also come to view the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy as a blueprint for living the Gospel message. This spirit of conversion has changed how I view my role in tending to the needs of others. It has prompted me to serve in areas that speak to my heart and directed me toward the right people and resources.

Secondly, I now try to view the social, political and economical issues of the day through the richness of our Catholic Social Teaching. I question how my actions and those of our policy makers serve the good of the human person, who is made in the image and likeness of God. I view service as a way of proclaiming the Gospel

and ask how our society can seek justice that serves the common good. I know that there are no easy answers but that should not prevent me from taking an interest and being open to prayerful discernment. I am called to face the challenges of forming my conscience for faithful citizenship by making moral choices and applying the principles of my faith to my decisions.

Thirdly, the spirit of daily conversion has led me to reflect on the beautiful writings of Pope Francis. His writings have guided me to seek peace by overcoming my indifference to the needs of others. His apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love* and his encyclical letters *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* and *Evangelii Gaudium: Joy of the Gospel* are now a part of my ongoing formation library.

In reading over my past thirty-four articles, I have come to realize that writing these reflections has become a form of prayer for me. The Holy Spirit has certainly guided my thoughts and words as I tackle each month's topic. I pray that through these articles, you have found something of interest that speaks to your heart and prompts your actions.

I will continue to serve our region through our Prayer and Praise Ministry. These monthly reflections letters and prayer intentions help our homebound brothers and sisters stay connected to our fraternities.

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### Upcoming Events

Carolyn Townes, our national JPIC animator, will be one of the speakers at our Quinquennial Congress in St. Louis being held on June 30 - July 4, 2016.

For those who are not able to attend the "Q" or are looking for something closer to home, the Archdiocese of Chicago will host its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Social Action Summer Institute on Sunday, July 17 through Thursday, July 21 at St. Xavier University in Chicago. This year's theme is *Who is My Neighbor? Discipleship in the Year of Mercy*.

The Social Action Summer Institute (SASI) offers presentations and sessions with national and local leaders connected with Chicago's frontline efforts in racial, social, criminal and economic justice along with site visits to local organizations. For information, visit their website

[www.ChicagoPeaceandJustice.org/SASI](http://www.ChicagoPeaceandJustice.org/SASI). 