

February 2018 • Vol. 24, No.3

Please note that the views expressed herein represent those of the individual contributors,
and may or may not reflect the collective view of the Region.

Minister's Message for February 2018

By Lorna Miressi, OFS

It's that time again - time for fraternities to look back on the year just passed and reflect on what we did right and what we accomplished.

It's time to take our yearly census and to set our goals for the coming year. It's time to record all these results in our annual fraternity reports and send it on to our Regional (or National) fraternity.

And it's time to contribute our fair share. It seems that every year I receive one or two inquiries from local fraternity ministers or treasurers regarding fair share.

Now I am not complaining, as I appreciate when someone asks a question rather than being confused or frustrated and not doing anything. However, this year I thought I would be proactive and put information out there before people run into problems. So, rather than "reinvent the wheel" as they say, I am going to borrow pieces from Vickie Klick's (former Regional Minister) article that was published in the January 2006 Fraternity Newsletter.

Fair share "is not 'dues' owed by each member of the fraternity. Paying the fair share/per capita does not mean that you are automatically an active member in good standing. The overall amount assessed at each level of fraternity is based on the number of professed members at the end of the calendar year. Article 25 of the rule states: "Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity and the needs of worship, of the apostolate, and of charity, all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means."

"Article 18.7 of the National Statutes states: 'The Local Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the Regional Fraternity on a fair share basis from its common fund to underwrite the costs of that fraternity [cf. General Constitutions, article #30.3]. A fair share contribution is made based on the number of active and excused brothers and sisters, but not for those who are deemed lapsed.' "

"An active fraternity member is one who participates both by attending fraternity meetings and by providing financial support to the community, or whom the fraternity has excused from such obligations."

"Those brothers and sisters who neither attend meetings, support the community financially, nor have valid reasons due to health, family, work or distance, and who, after personal invitations to return to the fraternity, consciously and deliberately reject or ignore the invitation, will be termed 'lapsed' and will not be carried on the fraternity membership roll nor be reported as a member to higher fraternity Councils [cf. General Constitutions, article #53.3]."

Questions? Comments? Email me at minister@ilsfo.org
God's Peace to all!
Lorna 

Council Members Minister

Lorna Miressi, OFS
▪ minister@ilsfo.org

Vice-Minister

Barbara Elkins OFS,
▪ viceminister@ilsfo.org

Formation Director

Kristi Loar, OFS
▪ formation@ilsfo.org

Secretary

Liza Ann Acosta OFS,
▪ secretary@ilsfo.org

Treasurer

Connie D. Tiglao, OFS
▪ treasurer@ilsfo.org

Councilor At-Large

LeAnneTjelle, OFS
▪ atlarge@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Communications/Public Relations

Marc Golab, OFS
▪ pr@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Fraternal Life

Sue Gribbon, OFS
▪ fratlife@ilsfo.org

Councilor for JPIC

Luana Leinhart OFS,
▪ jplic@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Visitations

Cecilia Schneider OFS
▪ visitations@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Vocations

Norman Mosk, OFS
▪ vocations@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Youth/Young Adults

Bob Burnham OFS
▪ youth@ilsfo.org

Spiritual Assistant

Bro. Marc Sheckells OFM
▪ spiritualassistant@ilsfo.org

Newsletter Editor

Marc Golab, OFS
▪ 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 20th of each month.

REGIONAL CALENDAR 2018

All events are at Mayslake Village unless otherwise noted

Saturday, January 20th Regional Executive Council Meeting ?Per Capita/Census/Fraternity reports due

Saturday March 10th Regional Executive Council Meeting

Sat./Sun. March 17th/18th Candidates' Retreat

Saturday May 19th Chapter of Ministers/ Election of New REC

Summer Seminar, Loretto PA (Date TBA)

Saturday July 14th Regional Executive Council Meeting

Saturday August 4th Regional Gathering - Feast of the Portiuncula

Saturday September 15 Formation Leadership Workshop

NAFRA Chapter - Date and Location TBA

Saturday October 6th Regional Executive Council Meeting

Sunday November 11th Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration - Location TBA

Saturday December Chapter of Elections (Date TBA)

Spiritual Assistant Message Bro. Marc Scheckells ofm

"For, as he [Saint Francis] said, the sight of lepers was so bitter to him, that he refused not only to look at them, but even to approach their dwellings. If he happened to come near their houses or to see them, even though he was moved by piety to give them alms through an intermediary, he always turned away his face and held his nose. With the help of God's grace, he became such a servant and friend of the lepers, that, as he testified in his Testament, he stayed among them and served them with humility."

-The Legend of the Three Companions

I cannot imagine that embracing the leper was easy for Saint Francis. Not only were lepers tough to look at, but the prevailing concerns about contagion filled most people with both paranoia and anxiety.

This paranoia and fear eventually required lepers to wear a bell, or similar noise-making device, in order to warn anyone nearby. When Saint Francis embraces the leper, he is not only making a conscious choice to embrace Jesus and the Gospel, he is also choosing to turn away from prevailing social norms and attitudes.

Furthermore, as the Legend of the Three Companions points out, Francis did not come to this action easily. It was through personal interaction with lepers that Francis was able to accept his call and open himself to conversion.

Francis was not merely ministering to the leper, he fully embraced the leper and allowed himself to become Christ to the lepers he encountered. Why is this significant? Our world remains filled with lepers who need our loving embrace.

Now I am not merely speaking about people who suffer from leprosy, although the disease does still exist in parts of the world today. I am speaking of those who find themselves in hopeless situations and do not have the voice or means to rectify the problem.

I am speaking about those individuals who find themselves victims of our nation's current immigration policy. I am speaking of those who struggle with health problems and are victims of our nation's broken health system. I am speaking of people who are victims of trafficking, people who are victims of sexual abuse, people who find their loved ones at the wrong end of a gun while attending school, a party, or even a large festival.

There are countless modern lepers and these examples illustrate just a few models of our modern lepers whom we, as followers of Saint Francis, have committed ourselves to embrace. I am certain that if you took the time, you could come up with additional powerful examples of a modern leper among us.

Additionally, we are called to go to the fringes and be with those on the margins. However, as Francis clearly demonstrates for us as he interacts with the leper, being present is not enough. One must encounter, engage with, and form relationships among those who need our love. Additionally, my experience tells me that we do not have to go very far. In my visits to fraternities, I find that every fraternity has members who are hurting, who need our support, and who are yearning for a loving embrace. My brothers and sisters, I encourage you to take the time at your next gathering to minister to those around you and build solid relationships with your fraternity members. It is vital that we build each other up and become beacons of the Gospel for one another. Francis shows us that it is not simply through the power of prayer and self-giving, but when we encounter the powerful experience of relationship that true conversion and genuine gospel living occur. If we cannot be Christ for one another, how can we honestly expect to be the face of Christ for the stranger outside?

May God grant us the grace, courage, and understanding to always be Christ to everyone we meet! 

IN-FORMATION

Kristi Loar OFS – Regional Formation Council

Love of my love
Happy New Year dear brothers and sisters! I hope the new year brings you much hope and joy, and love....there must be love. This year we plan to focus on the OFS Rule in various communications, how fitting to begin with the topic of love!

Did you know that the word 'Love' appears 14 times in the OFS Rule? The very first sentence in the Prologue "Exhortation of St. Francis to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance" reads:

*All who love the Lord with their whole heart,
with their whole soul and mind, with all their
strength (cf. Mk 12:30),
and love their neighbors as themselves (cf. Mt 22:39)*

...



Throughout the Rule Francis references many different kinds of love including the community of love, a divine love, being a beloved, a mother's love, passionate love, the freedom to love, and the power of love. He seems to have thought a lot about love; in a very different way than that of his early years as a young 'troubadour'.

Francis gives us the message that to live the Gospel means living in brother/sisterhood with all people and with all creation, in continual conversion, in a life of prayer, as instruments of peace, and in communion with Christ in the love of God.

We must find ourselves on both the giving, and the receiving side of many different kinds of love. To fully enter into a communal life with Christ we must willingly open our hearts and expose ourselves to a more intimate union with creation.

"Christ is the gift of the Father's love, it is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly". (Chapter two of the OFS Rule).

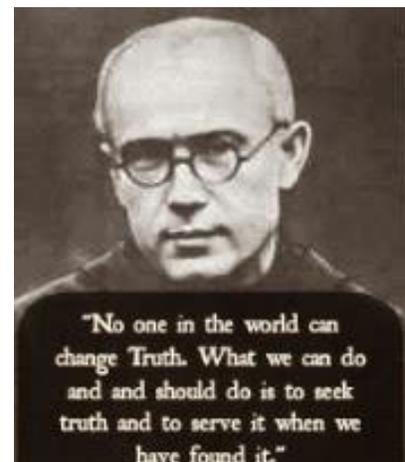
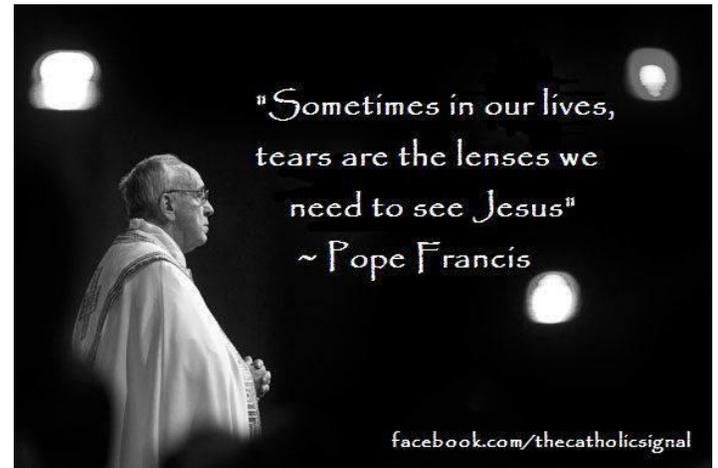
According to the translation and references from St. Bernardine of Siena (and Ubertino da Casale) we are fortunate to have a love letter from St. Francis. A prayer to obtain Divine Love:

I beseech Thee, O Lord, that the fiery and sweet strength of Thy love may absorb my soul from all things that are under heaven, that I may die for love of Thy love as Thou didst deign to die for love of my love.

— [Francis of Assisi](#)

Love seems scary when we allow ourselves the vulnerability of human love and its particular fragility. Yet nothing compares to the love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

With love,
Kristi ☒



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

By Luana Lienhart, OFS

Grace and peace to you, brothers and sisters! I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land four years ago, and one of my favorite places to visit was the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth. The façade is stunning and says, in large letters, 'Verbum caro *hic* factum est, et habitat in nobis'. 'The Word was made flesh here and dwelt among us'.

Something about the 'hic' really touched me, but I didn't understand why until I met with my spiritual director upon my return. She suggested I had a powerful reaction to the Incarnation, not only 2000 years ago in Nazareth, but in me and all the baptized. "The Word was made flesh here," she said, pointing to my heart.

I'm often asked what, exactly, is JPIC? I'll do my best to answer this question here. The JPIC mission statement says:

The mission of JPIC is to assist the 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.

What does this mean? JPIC is our Rule in action. It's the organic, natural expression of living our Rule in its fullness.

If we live as if Jesus dwells within us and our neighbors, that should be evident by the witness of our everyday life, and we must be open to conversion when our daily lives are inconsistent with what we profess. This will sometimes put us at odds with our secular culture or our political parties, but none of that matters. We are not partisan people. We are people of the Gospel.

As Lent approaches, please make time to reflect on or learn about an issue related to JPIC that makes you uncomfortable, or one you don't understand or agree with.

Get out of your media echo chamber and expose yourself to media outlets that will challenge you to think critically. Let Jesus meet you there, and guide your conversion. The Word was made flesh in you, and dwells among us; blessed are we. 🙏

