

June 2018 • Vol. 24, No.7

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and may or may not reflect the collective view of the Region.

## Minister's Message for June 2018 Lorna Miressi, OFS

Happy Birthday to our Church! Today, May 20<sup>th</sup>, is the Feast of Pentecost. It is considered the birthday of the Church.

During the last 50 days, we have "experienced" sorrow over Jesus' suffering and death, and we have expressed joy over his resurrection and his ascension into the heavens to take his place forever as King over all creation. Today we welcome the Holy Spirit pouring God's love and mercy into our hearts. Oh, what an awesome feeling! What a Happy Birthday it is! Not only is Jesus breathing His Spirit into us, He is also giving us a job to do. He is sending us out to the world forgiven, filled with his love and equipped to share that love with everyone we encounter daily.

Yesterday, May 19<sup>th</sup> all the fraternity ministers, along with the Regional Council, gathered for our annual Chapter of Ministers. What a delightful day! Great food, inspiring ongoing formation, and a loving community. After we took care of the necessary business items, we shared the good news of our fraternities. The ministers present were invited to tell us about all what their respective fraternity has been doing.

We were all encouraged and excited about what has been going on in our region.

One of the items of "good news" that I heard from a few of the ministers was their fraternity's reaching out to the youth and young adults in our region.

I was very encouraged to hear about the reaching out to two of our university's populations inviting them to "come and see" what St. Francis and Franciscan Spirituality is all about.

With that said, I have decided to invite every local fraternity to "share the good news" with the region. By **JUNE 15<sup>th</sup>** I would like to hear, from whomever has news to share, about what's going on in our region. Don't be shy to brag. Perhaps a fraternity is looking for an apostolate to take on and what you are doing is just the one they are looking for.

Next month, in June, we will begin to request nominations for the Regional Executive Council election taking place this coming December. Please talk about this at your upcoming fraternity gatherings.

There will be a formal request going out soon.

Stay tuned.

Peace.

Lorna 

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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 2018

All events are at Mayslake Village unless otherwise noted

~~Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>—Regional Executive Council Meeting ?Per Capita/Census/Fraternity reports due~~

~~Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup>—Regional Executive Council Meeting~~

~~Sat./Sun. March 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Candidates' Retreat~~

~~Saturday May 19<sup>th</sup>—Chapter of Ministers/ Election of New REC~~

*Summer Seminar, Loretto PA (Date TBA)*

Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Executive Council Meeting

Saturday August 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Gathering - Feast of the Portiuncula

Saturday September 15 Formation Leadership Workshop

*NAFRA Chapter - Date and Location TBA*

Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Executive Council Meeting

Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup> Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration – Location TBA

December Chapter of Elections (Date TBA)

## **Spiritual Assistant Message Bro. Marc Scheckells ofm**

One of the many joys of being the regional spiritual assistant is the task of regional visitations. Although the council has decided to share the role of fraternal visitation with the various councilors on the council, I generally try my best to fulfill the role of the pastoral visitor when I can. Occasionally, that is not possible and someone else is delegated to visit the fraternity. I try to keep these occasions when I do not have the opportunity to be there to a minimum for several reasons. Despite all of the reasons, the most significant reason is that I greatly enjoy getting to see the various fraternities and almost always walk away from my time of pastorally visiting the fraternity with great awe and inspiration. The Secular Franciscans are a tremendous group of people and I am so humbled to align my Franciscan journey with yours.

One the flip side, one of the most common struggles I encounter when I visit a fraternity is a lack of growth, otherwise known among the friars as "diminishment." Although there are a few shining examples of growing fraternities, most fraternities struggle with vocations. I am here to share that the first order is not any different. As a matter of fact, the lack of growth and the shrinking of the number of friars are a serious concern of the Franciscan friars of the United States. If your fraternity has recently been in need of a spiritual assistant, you know how difficult it is to find a friar who is able and willing to share themselves. This coming week, from May 29<sup>th</sup> through

May 31<sup>st</sup>, six of the seven provinces of the United States will be meeting at the same time, but in different locations, to discuss the possibility of coming together to create one province. Despite the fact that there has been a lot of time to think about this and many discussions concerning frustrations, concerns, and hopes, the time spent together has vocalized a variety of good and healthy reasons for voting either way. In short, the chapter is a particularly thorny one that will result in a decision that has serious consequences for the future of friar life in the United States. Additionally, the decision will be painful for many – regardless of what decision is reached.

Generally, I do not write about the first order in this column. I try to keep this column open for advice, inspiration, and the occasional light-hearted admonishment. Additionally, I try to provide my humble support to the fraternities who have given me such generous love and inspiration. This meeting and the next few months may be a time that is difficult for the OFM friars. It is for these reasons that I am reaching out to the Secular Franciscan communities to humbly ask for your prayers and support. I ask you to pray to Mary, Patroness of the Franciscan Order and Queen of the Universe, and ask her to continue to keep the friars under her protection. Additionally, I ask that you pray to the Most Holy Trinity and ask the Holy Spirit to blow through the six separate chapters that are taking place at the same time.

Thank you for being the joyful presence that you are in my life and in the life of so many friars; Your witness inspires more than just me!

May God bless all of us as we continue to journey on the Franciscan path!

Veni, Sancte Spiritus! 

## IN-FORMATION

June 2018

Peace and Joy to you my brothers and sisters as we bid farewell to this very merry month of May and enter into the joys of June!

I write to you following a wonderful Chapter of Ministers this past weekend. The day was complete with much fellowship, formalities, and formation. It is clear how critical initial Formation is prior to our profession, but even more critical is our focus of on-going formation!



How lucky we are to have electronic access to many formation materials including the FUN Manual, and its supplemental documents, the writings of St. Francis, commentary and wisdom of many other saints like Sts. Bonaventure and Thomas of Celano, and Bl. John Duns Scotus, members of our national, regional and local fraternities (and so many more!). Be sure you are using a variety of resources within your individual fraternities to support your formation activities.

Speaking of electronic resources, the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order – USA has a new website! It can be found at [www.secularFranciscansUSA.org](http://www.secularFranciscansUSA.org). The new site is still in transition (with content being moved over from the old site) and we can look forward to all the wonderful news, resources, calendars and other information it has to offer. Along with a new site, we also have a new logo. Check it out!

While we are focused on continually being formed, we thank our local councils for all the hard work they do within their fraternities.

Barbara Elkins, OFS reminded ministers this past weekend to remember to care for the health of the local council and shared a terrific resource ‘the Care and Feeding of Fraternity Councils’. A Healthy Council makes for a vibrant fraternity!

Another useful formation resource includes a series of weekly ‘cards’ being published by our international organization (CIOFS) to help celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Rule. Each week a new card will be published at <http://secularfranciscansusa.org/category/celebrate-the-rule-cards/>.

Oh happy Spring, and many blessings as we look toward to summer days!

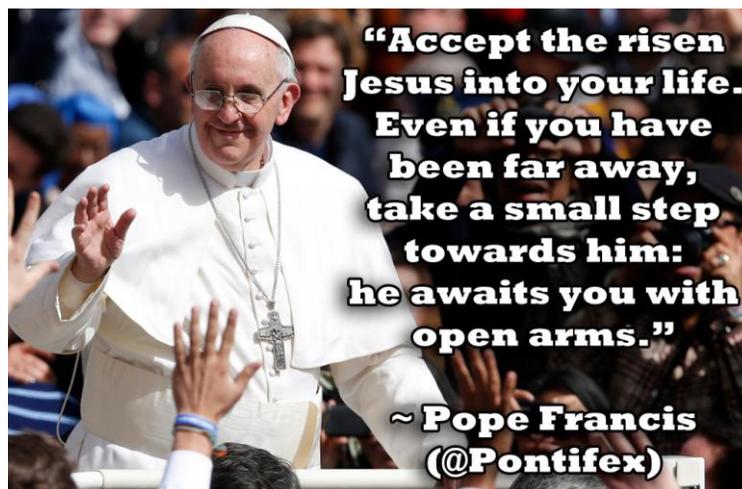
The [Lord](#) bless you and keep you.

May He show His face to you and have mercy.

May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.

The [Lord](#) bless you!

Kristi Loar, OFS 



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

Luana Lienhart of

"[Religious] freedom remains one of America's most precious possessions. And, as my brothers, the United States Bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it." - Pope Francis

Grace and peace to you, brothers and sisters! The USCCB has celebrated the "Fortnight for Freedom" in years past as a way to get the faithful engaged in prayer and concrete actions to protect religious freedom. Now they're doing something different, and this year will be the first annual Religious Freedom Week: Serving Others in God's Love.

Like the Fortnight, Religious Freedom Week will begin on June 22nd, the feast of Sts John Fisher and Thomas More. Instead of a fortnight (two weeks), it will be one week, ending on June 29th, the Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul. It also includes the Solemnity of the Nativity of St John the Baptist, who like John Fisher and Thomas More, was martyred for calling out a monarch's infidelity and encouraging his conversion.

The bishops have selected seven particular topics related to religious freedom and Catholic Social Teaching for each day of the week. With articles for reflection and understanding, there will also be specific prayer intentions and activities for each topic. They're all consistent with Catholic Social Teaching, which is an organic response to the Gospel and how it's lived in everyday life. It's also the heart and soul of JPIC.

As a reminder, here are the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching:  
Life and dignity of the human person: ***This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.***

Call to family, community, and participation:  
Seeking the common good and well-being of all.

Rights and Responsibilities: we have a fundamental right to life and to those things required for human decency; with those rights comes the responsibility to ensure them for all.  
Option for the poor and vulnerable: The needs of the poor and vulnerable must come first.

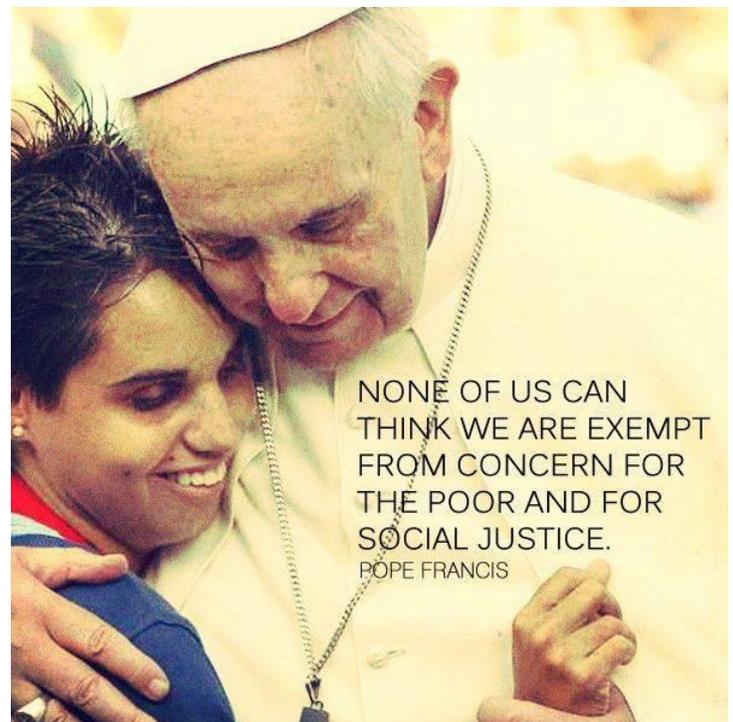
The dignity of work and the rights of workers.  
Solidarity: We are each other's keepers, globally, as well as locally.

Care for God's Creation.

Many of us may organically live in one of these principles, but be inactive or worse, indifferent to others. Let's change that.

Please join me in participating in Religious Freedom Week, and may our prayers always move us to conversion and action to make our world more fraternal. In the words of my patron and friend: "The things that we pray for, good Lord, give us grace to labour for. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Amen. 🙏



## Youth and Young Adults

By Bob Burnham OFS

May the Lord give you peace!

This coming October, a Synod of Bishops will meet to discuss young people([www.synod2018.va](http://www.synod2018.va)). Pope Francis called this synod to discern how the Church can accompany young people in their faith and in their lives. Young people, Pope Francis realized, have something to say to the Church, and the Church needs to listen: "The Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls. St. Benedict urged the abbots to consult, even the young, before any important decision, because 'the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best.'

(Rule of St. Benedict, III, 3)." (Letter of Pope Francis to Young People, 13 January 2017)

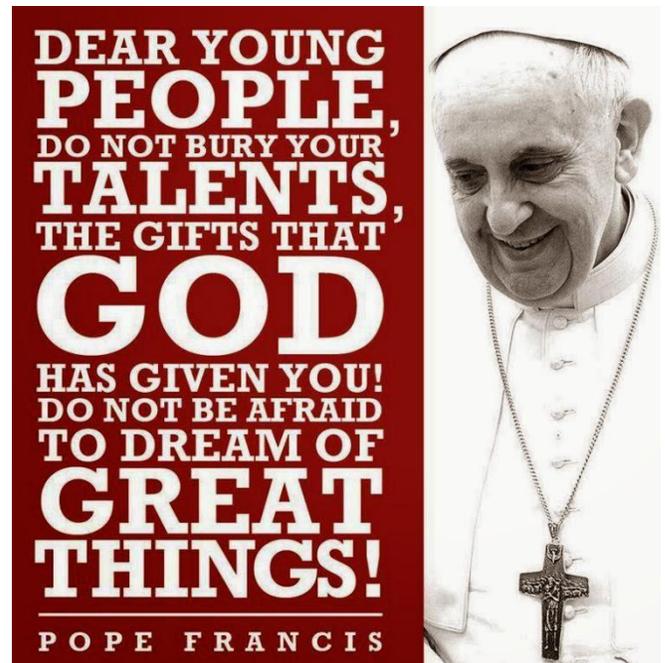
We Secular Franciscans need to listen to young people as well. Article 24 of our rule calls us to foster communion with youth; we can only do this if we accompany young people in their questioning. Young people are not looking to us to provide answers; they are looking to us to be companions on their journey.

Over the next few months, I will highlight parts of the pre-synodal document, which synthesizes the thoughts and experiences of more than 300 young people who convened in Rome back in March and more than 15,000 young people who participated through Facebook groups. As we discern together how Secular Franciscans can serve young people, take some time to discuss any or all of the following questions in fraternity:

- Where do you encounter young people?
- What do you think young people want to tell the Church?
- How might your fraternity accompany young people?

And let us all find time in fraternity to pray for young people: People: Lord Jesus, may the Secular Franciscan Order accompany young people as they learn to be witnesses to your Resurrection. May we generously offer them wisdom and compassion as they discern a plan for their lives, a plan that leads to the happiness and joy that can only be found in you.

Amen. 



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED  
TO ATTEND  
THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF  
*St. Frances Xavier Cabrini's*  
ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2018

Please join us as we honor the legacy of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini  
by celebrating the lives and contributions of Chicago immigrants.

Café Brauer  
2021 N. Stockton Drive  
Chicago, IL 60614

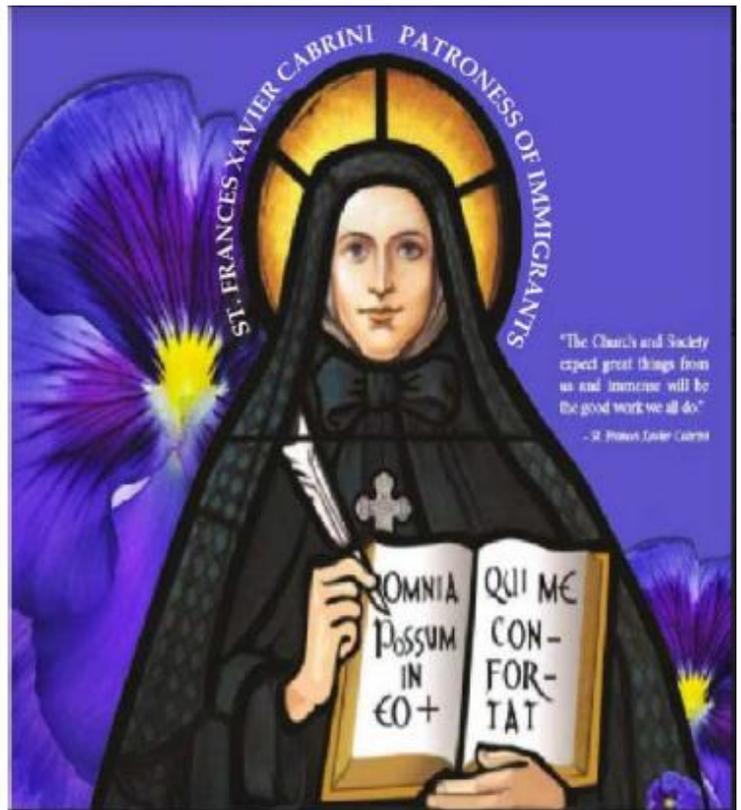
6:00PM: Cocktails and Silent Auction  
7:00PM: Dinner and Live Auction

Tickets: \$175.00 per person  
Business Attire

Kindly RSVP by July 1

For additional information and to purchase tickets, visit:  
<https://www.cabrinationalshrine.org/2018-benefit-dinner>

Complimentary Valet Parking is available



SAVE THE DATE FOR:

OUR REGIONAL GATHERING FOR THE FEAST OF THE PORTIUNCULA.

On Saturday, August 4th at Mayslake in Oak Brook. Our speaker will be Fr. Bob Hutmacher.

Remember, The Portiuncula, or Little Portion, is the cradle of our Franciscan family.

St. Francis of Assisi persuaded Pope Honorius III to grant a plenary indulgence to all those who visited the Portiuncula on Aug. 2nd, connected with the celebration of sacramental Confession, Holy Communion and prayers for the intentions of the Pope, and reciting at least the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

Pope Sixtus IV extended the Indulgence from the Portiuncula to all churches of the Franciscans (1481). Since then the Indulgence has been renewed and expanded several times.

Pope Paul VI confirmed the permanence of Indulgence for Aug 2nd at Franciscan churches worldwide.

We have celebrated this feast day the Saturday, closest to Aug. 2.

In Oak Brook, at the Peabody Estate is a replica of the Portiuncula. I would be willing to take those of you who might be interested, over to this replica as part of our retreat (at lunch time).

So come....enjoy this Franciscan celebration with your whole family...the Mother Cabrini Region. Let's make this an awesome day of retreat.

More details will be in the July OFS newsletter.