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

## Minister's Message for July 2018

Lorna Miressi, ofsf

Sisters and Brothers,

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. The Rule of 1978 is also called the Pauline Rule because it was approved by Pope Paul VI, who was the Pope at the time of this approval. This Rule of 1978 is the most recent version of our Rule and is the one that most of us strive to live by each day.

To celebrate this Rule of 1978, CIOFS (the International Fraternity) is sending out, via the internet, weekly "Rule" cards. These cards are being published in four official languages: English, Spanish, Italian and French. In addition, CIOFS has also produced a video on the Celebration, which has been linked to our national website. The "Rule" cards can be found on our National website which is [www.secularfranciscansusa.org](http://www.secularfranciscansusa.org). The video on the Celebration can be found by going to <https://secularfranciscans.usa.org/2018/06/14/celebrate-the-rule-with-this-new-ciofs-video/>

Each month, for next several months, I will be reflecting on one or two of the articles of the Rule. The Articles I reflect on will not necessarily be in numerical order. I also intend on informing the region of the work being done by many of our fraternities who are living our Rule. (I plan on doing this for as long as I remain regional minister - which may or may not be the case after our Chapter

of Elections in December).

I will be starting with Article 5. St. Francis's words, in this article, read "I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood". The challenge set forth by CIOFS is this: Do I receive the Body and Blood of Jesus? Now, if you will, answer this question by choosing one of the following: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Sometimes, 4. Often, 5. Always. Next, let us look at Article 4. In this article St. Francis says (in part) "Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him". The challenge set forth for this article is "Do I love the Lord?" The choices to use to answer this question are the same as the previous choices,

Just a reminder: On August 4<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating the Feast of the Portiuncula at Mayslake Village. If you have not already done so, please contact our Fraternal Life Councilor, Susan Gribbon, and let her know if you will or will not be attending.

Even if you cannot attend, please let her know.

See you soon.

God's 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**

At a recent presentation on Saint Francis to a group of young individuals, one person stopped to ask me, "Saint Francis founded the Franciscans 800 years ago and worked with lepers, but what does 'Franciscanism' look like today?" Although I tried to explain that we still care for the poor, the student pointed out that many groups care for the poor. For him, this action is not merely one valued by Franciscans. When I further explained that the friars minister to those who are found on the margins and have no voice, the student once again countered this ministry is not exclusive to the Franciscans. As I kept explaining what we do, the young individual finally (and with some exasperation) belted out "I do not what to know what you do, I want to know who you are!"

This encounter left me both speechless and humbled. Although Franciscans do many great things, Franciscans are more than what we "do." It can be easy to get caught up in the ministry aspect of our fraternal lives, but if all we do is provide social services and minister, we fail to fully embrace the unique blend of fraternity, prayer, and ministry of Francis. Each aspect of this unique blend not only serves to enrich our Franciscan experience, but they also act as a support to each other.

Prayer seeks to strengthen our experience of ministry; Fraternity works to embolden our prayer; Ministry helps us work toward the goal of our prayer. To quote Pope Francis, "First you pray for the hungry, then you feed them. That's how prayer works." However, without prayer, ministry becomes a social service. Without ministry, our fraternity becomes a social get-together. Without fraternity, we risk the chance of burning out and exhausting ourselves. Each of these, together, helps build the kingdom and help define the Franciscan experience.

Turning to Francis, he was able to sum all of this up in one simple phrase; "Live the Gospel." My sisters and brothers, I bring this question this young person brought to me and leave it as a source of reflection for you: What does "Franciscanism" look like today? Are we focusing on all three aspects and giving them their proper due? Do you make time for prayer, pray in your fraternities, and joyfully invite others to pray with you? Do you take time outside of fraternity gatherings to share time with one another and enjoy the company of other Franciscan brothers and sisters? Do you work with your fraternity to build the kingdom around you? Each of these things individually leaves the Franciscan experience lacking, but together has the power to transform the world. As I was recently reminded, It is not what we do, but who we are that makes us Franciscan. Living the Gospel is complex, but together we work for something greater than ourselves. May God bless you and everyone you encounter! **✠**

## IN-FORMATION

### In-Formation

Nicholas Noe OFS

#### The Fourth Order

*But one not need to be a Franciscan friar or sister to be Franciscan. The vast majority of Franciscans have always been and will continue to be ordinary men and women inspired by the poor man of Assisi. Some lay men and women formally affiliate by becoming Secular Franciscans, but most simply look to him as an example. These are sometimes called "the fourth order." Anyone can become a Franciscan simply by following Francis' way of following Jesus; one need not join a vowed community to express his ecological vision of spirituality. (Keith Douglas Warner OFM)*

The above sentences are from an article, *Get Him Out of the Birdbath*, written by Br. Keith Warner OFM several years ago. Br. Keith is an environmentalist, and is making the point that St. Francis is and can be an inspiration for those who are actively involved with ecological issues. But I believe the idea of a "fourth order" extends beyond an "ecological vision of spirituality." I have met (and I'm sure you have) men and women who are inspired by the way St. Francis of Assisi followed the footsteps of Jesus, and they live the gospel life in their own way. But typically they are busy with raising a family, work, and other commitments, and they don't have time for more meetings and events. They often find community with like-minded people at informal gatherings, which may include prayer, discussion, and perhaps a little wine.

My wife, Marie, who recently died after a three-year relationship with sister cancer, was a fourth order Franciscan. She was a spirited and compassionate person who was first exposed to St. Francis while attending St. Gabriel's School of Nursing in Minnesota. She cherished her three years of living with the guidance, expectations, and teachings of the

Franciscan Sisters. She was committed to her nursing profession and worked in a variety of positions. When she retired, she knew she was called to do more. After a period of discernment, she went to Guatemala to serve the Mayan poor in San Lucas Toliman and surrounding mountain villages. After 15 years of living in Guatemala, she moved back to Illinois for cancer treatment, but continued to make frequent trips back to Guatemala and I went with her. Marie preached the gospel at all times, but seldom used words.

I initially thought about writing this article, not because of Marie, but because of a speech given by Joan Chittester OSB to Benedictine Oblates. She told the Oblates, rather pointedly, that given the decline in the numbers of Benedictine monks and sisters, it would be up to the Oblates to carry on the Benedictine traditions in the future. So I thought, what about the Franciscans? The numbers of Franciscan friars and sisters also are declining, although the Franciscan Family is still rather large. But is it, and will it be, the responsibility of Secular Franciscans to not only help rebuild God's house, but to ensure the Franciscan charism remains an appealing spiritual path both within and outside the Church? If so, and I think it is, it seems to me we need to become more visible by going outside our fraternities and begin to evangelize, just as Pope Francis asked all Christians to do in *The Joy of the Gospel*. For Secular Franciscans to evangelize simply means to live our Rule, and that means all of it.

Article 6 of our Rule states specifically, "they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her (the Church) mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. If we really become witnesses of our faith in Jesus and our Franciscan charism, we may begin to attract those actual and potential fourth order Franciscans to our fraternities.

They may never profess, but they become affiliates. And if not affiliates, they may still come to our meetings occasionally and remain friends of Francis.

Peace to all ☩

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

Luana Lienhart of

Grace and peace to you, sisters and brothers!  
Today, June 19<sup>th</sup>, is one of my favorite days of the year. It's "Juneteenth" or "Emancipation Day". President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863, but it wasn't until this day in 1865, TWO YEARS later, that all slaves in our country were granted their freedom. It's generally considered a 'Black holiday', but it's one that we can and should all acknowledge with pride as Americans. So, why don't we?

I will let Bishop Braxton elaborate. Below is an excerpt from his letter, *Racial Divide*.

"I would like to begin by asking you to use your imagination to enter into the role reversal presented in the narrative that follows. The narrative portrays an imagined Catholic Church in the United States in which most American Catholics are People of Color and White Catholics are members of a "minority group."

Imagine yourself as a White American teenager living in a poor urban area with few opportunities for you to get a good education and find meaningful employment. Imagine that some of your friends are trouble makers and when the African-American police come around they often intimidate them.

This frightens you because another White friend of yours was shot and killed by African-American police when he reached into his pocket for his wallet which they thought was a gun. Since you were very young, your parents have cautioned you to avoid contact with the police because they may suspect you of wrongdoing. You and your friends, whose families are struggling to make ends meet, live near the neighborhood Catholic Church. You and your family are not members of the Catholic Church, which some of your relatives call a "Black racist institution" which has not shown much interest in inviting White people to join.

You feel you need a church that will be at your side, engaged in the struggle, helping you find a God of the oppressed and an angel of freedom and justice.

Now imagine that an African-American acquaintance persuades you to go with him to this very church, St. Charles Lwanga, for Mass. You enter the church and all images of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and all the saints are as People of Color (African, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American). God the Father Himself is painted on the ceiling of the church as a distinguished older Black gentleman.

You wonder if the Catholic Church believes that only people of African ancestry are in heaven. You notice that even the angels in the church have African features. If angels have no bodies and no gender, if they are pure spirits, why are they not represented in all races? Just think of the impact it would have on un-churched White people, like you, if they encountered the image of a magnificent White angel with blond hair and blue eyes when they entered a Catholic Church.

You ask your African-American acquaintance, "Wouldn't the Catholic Church be more truly universal and welcoming if the holy men and women of the Bible were pictured as people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds?"

He responds, "People who are White should realize that the Afro-centric art represents them as well. Afro-centric art is universal. Even though a few churches have added a White saint here and there, for the most part the few White Catholics we have in the church have simply accepted the fact that the majority of churches have few or no images of the citizens of Heaven who look like them."

"There are a few churches in big cities with a large number of 'minorities' where they have painted White angels and saints.

In many countries where all of the people are European, the people almost never complain about the all-African religious art."

"But," you ask, "what about here in the United States? What a powerful statement the Church would make if she mandated all future churches to have racially diverse images of God, Jesus, Mary, saints, and angels? Wouldn't it convey a more authentically universal image of heaven?"

Your African-American acquaintance answers, "I think I understand the point you are trying to make. But, I really don't think that is ever going to happen." "Why not?" you ask. "Why not?" ❏

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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. 

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The Mary-Frances and Bill Veeck Art Gallery at the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago announces a juried exhibition: **Prayer and Devotion: Franciscan Art, Franciscan Artists.**

From the tradition of the Christmas crèche to art inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* which quoted St. Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Creatures, there has been a longstanding relationship between Franciscans, Franciscan spirituality, and the arts. This exhibit seeks to bring together work by contemporary Franciscan artists without regard to its content, and work from artists that use Franciscan themes.

Mounted in conjunction with the school's 50th anniversary, acknowledging the Franciscans (Sacred Heart Province) as one of the three founding religious communities of the school, and enhancing an October symposium focused on Franciscan lifelong formation, the show's title comes from the Franciscan rule of 1223. Its 5th chapter states the friars are to "work faithfully and devotedly so that...they do not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all temporal things must contribute."

Our goal is to mount a show that records and celebrates contemporary artists' efforts to work "faithfully and devotedly," filled with the "Spirit of holy prayer and devotion."

Artists who belong to any branch of the Franciscan family or who work with Franciscan themes in all media are invited to submit up to 3 original works for consideration by July 10, 2018. There is a \$25 application fee.

Submit work at: <https://ctu.edu/event/prayer-and-devotion-franciscan-art-franciscan-artists/>

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

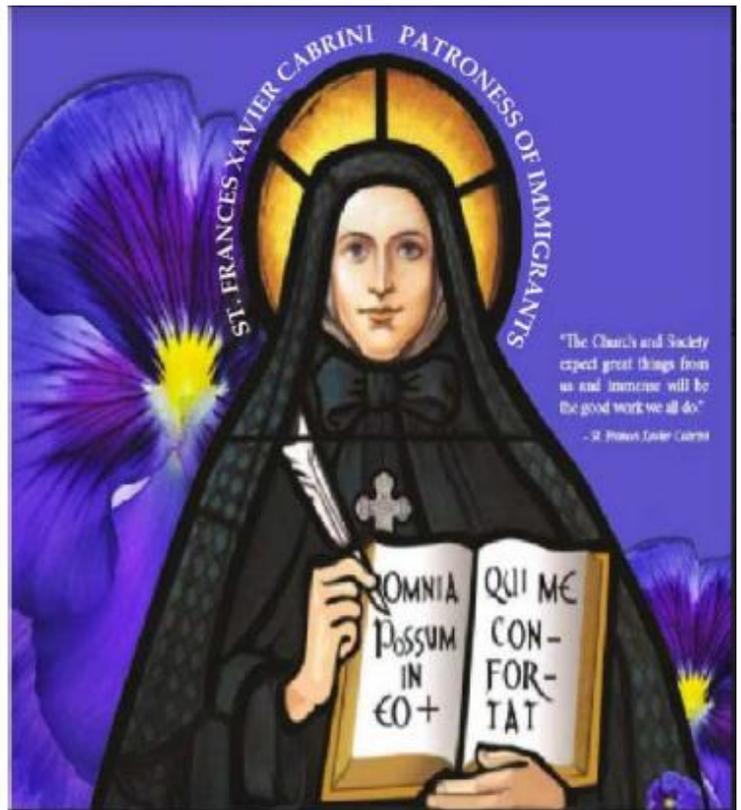
6:00PM: Cocktails and Silent Auction  
7:00PM: Dinner and Live Auction

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.