

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity  
of the  
Secular Franciscan Order

# SFO NEWS

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## Minister's Message

### New Beginnings!

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Blessings as we all embrace this New Year! I am full of hope and anticipation as our new Council and I begin our service to all of you in the Region.

First, I thank the Region's local ministers for their vote of confidence in me. I guarantee to you, I will do my very best for you! Some have noted that I had not originally intended to run for Regional Minister – and that is true. Several unexpected events and the encouragement of some people for whom I have a great deal of respect, changed my mind. I assure you, I have not accepted this position reluctantly. I believe I can make a contribution and I'm anxious to get started!

Thank you also for electing such a strong Council, with whom I am really looking forward to working! You may recall that we are now appointing all the councilors, except the Councilor-at-Large. Appointed or elected, I believe we will be a very strong team. They are:

Javier Orozco, SFO (Br. Jacoba), Vice Minister  
Monica Marko, SFO (Br. Jacoba), Secretary  
Bob Spinozzi, SFO (St. Elizabeth of Hungary), Treasurer  
Rosemary Zimmerman, SFO (St. Francis-Crystal Lake), Formation Director  
Elisabeth Shin, SFO (St. Thomas More), Councilor-at-Large  
Nancy McKenna, SFO (St. Anthony-Joliet), Councilor for Apostolates  
Lisa Wathen, SFO (Northwest Franciscans IHM), Councilor for Communications/Public Relations  
Chris Bruhnke, SFO (St. Francis-Fox Valley), Councilor for Fraternal Life  
Jacqueline Leo, SFO (Northwest Franciscans IHM), Councilor for Visitations  
Norman Mosk, SFO (St. Francis-St. Louis), Councilor for Vocations  
Sandra Kisel, SFO (St. Maximilian Kolbe), Councilor for Youth/Young Adults  
Fr. Donald Blaeser, OFM, continues to guide us as our wonderful Regional Spiritual Assistant.

Several members of the Regional Executive Council concluded their service and the new Council and I would like to express our deepest gratitude to them for their many years of service. They played an important part in making us who we are today.

First, of course, is Patrick Mendés, SFO, who has served either on or with the Regional Executive Council since the beginning of the Mother Cabrini Region, most recently as our Regional Minister from 2000 until his election as National Minister in October 2006. He has laid an incredible foundation for us, on which we will build to the best of our ability.

Jim Skulski, SFO, has served as Treasurer of the Region since 2000 while also serving as Minister of his fraternity (St. Clare-Oak Brook). He has always done a splendid job, not only in keeping the books in good order and communicating our financial status in a timely manner, but in always being available at a moment's notice to issue that needed check. He has just been elected Formation Director of his fraternity.

Gloria Huerta, SFO, served as the Region's Secretary from 2000 to 2003 and as the Councilor for Communications/Public Relations from 2003-2006 – two huge jobs, both done extremely well. She has just been elected Secretary of her fraternity (St. Francis-Fox Valley).

Vickie Klick, SFO, another member of St. Francis-Fox Valley, has served the Region as Vice Minister 1994-1997, Councilor for Spiritual Life & Liturgy from 2000-2003, and as Formation Director from 2003-2006 during which time the position of Councilor for Spiritual Life & Liturgy was merged into the Formation Director position. Vickie is also the Chairperson of the Computer Committee of the National Fraternity. Vickie obviously has very diverse talents!

Pat Williams, SFO, is another who has served the Region since its beginning, first as Secretary, and then as the Councilor for Apostolates. Pat began *Apostolic News* which often has been distributed with the monthly *SFO News* and also was instrumental in beginning the Apostolate Workshops held each year since 2001. Pat concluded her time as Councilor for Apostolates in 2003, but when Dianne Kronika, SFO had to step down from that position for family reasons, Pat stepped up and finished Dianne's term. She is a great witness for social justice!

Our current Council has 7 members returning, two (including me) in a new position. I am so glad Javier

Orozco was elected Vice Minister! His gifts are huge – a peacemaker personified, and the ability to identify the issues that really need addressing – not to mention his bilingual abilities. We also welcome back in their same positions our Secretary, Monica Marko, and Councilors Chris Bruhnke, Jackie Leo, Norman Mosk and Sandy Kisel. New to the Council are Bob Spinozzi, Elisabeth Shin (Minister of our newly canonically established Korean fraternity St. Thomas More), Nancy McKenna (who has served on the National's Ecology Commission) and Lisa Wathen (who served as our Nominations Chair for our Regional Elections).

The new Regional Executive Council meets in January, so my message in February will include our plans for the future. In the meantime, may this New Year, this new beginning, be filled with the grace and guidance of our Lord, that we may grow in our Franciscan vocations and be the presence in the world we are called to be.

Peace and all good,

Stephanie Sormane, SFO  
Regional Minister

### Fr. Don's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,  
Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a Blessed and Merry Christmas. And now it's time to make New Year's resolutions, right? Like time to quit smoking. OK, so hardly anybody smokes anyway. Forget that one. This is the year to spend more time in prayer every day. Hmm, well surely you're all doing that already. So that's not helpful. Time to give to the poor and needy this year. Right, you're doing that, too.

Well, it sounds like you folks have got most of the bases covered. You don't NEED New Year's resolutions! Fantastic! And, what a relief!

Is anybody out there like me? I don't really care for the idea of New Year's resolutions – never have – and never will, I suspect. And I never make any – kinda follows, doesn't it?

But what they remind me of is our call to live a life of conversion. And I think that's different. New Year's resolutions – at least in my opinion – are kind of self-serving: like losing weight, quitting smoking, keeping the house cleaner on a regular basis. But conversion of life is not about ourselves, it's about living the Gospel more fully. Conversion of life is all about embracing Jesus more and more, and living as he did. And that's why we as Franciscans have such an outstanding model in St. Francis, who did just that...and did it so well.

So the closest I might come to a New Year's resolution is to say: this year I want to be a better Catholic Christian, and to do so with a spirit of Franciscan joy. I want to live my entire life in a more Christo-centric

way, by striving to see Christ in each and every person I encounter, and to embrace the Christ I meet in them — to take a stand for justice and peace in our world—and to take quality time with the One who loved me into life and who sustains and forgives and heals and nourishes me in more ways than I can ever count or even be aware of.

So, as the New Year dawns, I wish you many blessings. But I also hope that you become more and more aware of the ways you are blessed, and give thanks to God for it all. I encourage you to live the Gospel with hearts filled with love and gratitude, and to give of what God has blessed you with and not count the cost.

And at the end of the year, rather than patting ourselves on the back for anything we have done, I encourage you to thank God for another wonderful year of life, and then to look ahead, and say, with St. Francis, "Let us begin, for up to now we have done nothing."

God bless you abundantly in 2007 and always.

Your brother in Christ and St. Francis,  
Fr. Don Blaeser, ofm

### \*\*\*\*\*ANNOUNCEMENTS\*\*\*\*\*

#### Regional Calendar:

Regional Executive Council meeting on Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at Mayslake.

#### Local Fraternity Elections

Congratulations to the newly elected officers of St. Clare Fraternity, Oak Brook:

<b>Minister:</b>	Irene Figlio, SFO
<b>Vice Minister:</b>	Jean Kearney, SFO
<b>Formation Director:</b>	James Skulski, SFO
<b>Secretary:</b>	Mary Seymour, SFO
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Marge Herrero, SFO

#### Regional Directory Updates:

In addition to the announcement of new REC members and St. Clare Oak Brook new officers there is one more announcement. Please note:

Peggy Esposito, SFO, St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, has been appointed as Vice Minister to replace Joe Popelka, SFO. Joe had to step down due to a serious illness and subsequently died. See "Rest in Peace" for more details

Directory updates will be mailed to directory recipients. All REC members will receive fully-updated directories at the January REC meeting.

#### Rest in Peace

*From Gospel to Life—From Life to Gospel*

Joseph Popelka, SFO, Vice Minister, St. Maximillian Kolbe on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Joe was professed and a member of the fraternity for 18 years. He was elected their Vice Minister July 6, 2005 and because of his illness had to step-down from office this past October. Joe was very active in the fraternity, always helping whenever needed. He was a very spiritual, loving, humble, good and a beautiful gentle man. A true Franciscan. He will be sorely missed.

Malgina Song Tak, SFO, St. Thomas More Fraternity on December 1, 2006. She was the mother of a former minister of Living Waters Fraternity, Agatha Song, SFO. Needless to say, the example of Malgina played an important role in the decision of Agnes to follow in her mother's footsteps.

Fred M. Ambre, SFO, St. Francis, Fox Valley Fraternity on Tuesday, December 5, 2006 at his home in Naperville. Fred was a member of SS Peter & Paul Catholic Church since 1959. He served as a eucharistic minister and as a member of the funeral choir. Fred was 98 years old!

Mary Arballo, SFO, also of St. Francis Fox Valley Fraternity, on December 19, 2006 at the age of 96. Her obituary is impressive. Here's the portion that speaks of her years in the Secular Franciscan Order.

For 48 years, Mary was a member of Secular Franciscan in the Third Order of St. Francis. In 1975, Mary saw a need and responded by organizing a missions program and recruiting volunteers to gather medical supplies, making clothes of all sizes, knitting leper socks, using sheets to make bandages, sending prayer books and a myriad of items for missions primarily in India, but to Red Cloud Indian Mission and St. Francis Indian Mission, both in South Dakota, Sacred Heart Southern Missions in Mississippi as well as the Christian Appalachian Project in Kentucky. Mary has kept meticulous, typed records of every item sent as well as the costs involved, which were paid by the Third Order of St. Francis of Aurora, IL. (St. Francis Fox Valley)

In 1986, she was awarded the Spiritus Francis Canus Award for outstanding layperson in the State of Illinois, for living the "Gospel way of life" in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

As a rule, not much is posted about our members who have died and that is usually because there is not much information available. This time there was ample information or testimonials given and we celebrate the lives and achievements of our brother and sisters who have passed on to their eternal reward. May their examples inspire and challenge us as we move forward into the New Year! And may God grant them light, eternal happiness and abundant joy. Amen!

### The Litany of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Protector, Third Order Franciscan

Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

O Christ, hear us.  
*O Christ, graciously hear us.*

O God the Father, of heaven:  
*have mercy upon us.*  
O God the Son, Redeemer of the world:  
O God, the Holy Ghost:  
O Holy Trinity, one God:  
*have mercy upon us.*

Holy Mary:  
*Pray for us.*  
Immaculate Virgin:  
Mother and Mistress of our Order:  
*Pray for us.*

St. Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary:  
*Pray for us.*  
St. Elizabeth, Duchess of Thuringia:  
St. Elizabeth, mother in Israel:  
St. Elizabeth, queen in the Kingdom of God:  
St. Elizabeth, consoler of sinners:  
St. Elizabeth, nurse of lepers:  
St. Elizabeth, devoted wife of Louis the Good:  
St. Elizabeth, famous exemplar of Christian widowhood:  
St. Elizabeth, fervent spouse of the Son of God:  
St. Elizabeth, humble in prosperity:  
St. Elizabeth, patient in adversity:  
St. Elizabeth, mighty in penance:  
St. Elizabeth, wondrous in prayer:  
St. Elizabeth, first-born of the tertiaries regular:  
St. Elizabeth, protectress of our Order:  
St. Elizabeth, the "dear saint" of Holy Church:  
*Pray for us.*

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:  
*spare us, O Lord.*  
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:  
*graciously hear us, O Lord.*  
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:  
*have mercy on us.*

V. Pray for us, O blessed Elizabeth. Alleluia.  
R. That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.  
Alleluia.

*Let us pray.*

Merciful Lord, we pray Thee to pour the bright beams of Thy grace into our hearts: that, by the glorious prayers of Thy Saint Elizabeth, we may learn to despise all worldly prosperity, and ever to rejoice in all Heavenly consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

### The Extra Mile

[Editor's Note: I want to publicly thank the Poor Clares for their faithful contributions to nourish our spiritual growth. May God bless them abundantly for all the ways they spiritually support us!]

Stones to haul, mortar to mix, lamps to fill—the amount of work needing to be done was almost overwhelming. So it must have seemed to Francis of Assisi as he began the arduous work of repairing the neglected church of San Damiano.

*Francis, go and repair My house, which, as you see, is falling into ruin.* So spoke Christ Crucified to Francis that memorable spring morning in 1206. The meaning of the command seemed obvious enough to the merchant's son. He only needed to look around to see the evident ruin which had come upon the little country chapel—its stone walls pocked with gaping holes, its sanctuary lamp unlit, its sanctuary bare and dusty.

With typical generosity, Francis launched into the unknown realm of church repair. The pampered young man was transformed into a humble manual laborer. Lack of experience did not stop him and neither did the lack of funds. Having renounced his earthly wealth, the Little Poor Man took the Lord at His Word: *Ask, and you shall receive.* So using a unique blend of Gospel trust and business acumen, he asked the Assisi townfolk for help by calling out: *One stone, -one blessing! Two stones, -two blessings!*

Yet when all the stones were hauled and all the mortar mixed, Francis' commission did not come to an end. *If someone asks you to walk one mile with Him, walk two.* He saw another church in need of repair and then another. Diligent and dedicated, Francis set to work. The Holy Spirit then gradually revealed to the Seraphic Father that Christ had not called him simply to repair neglected country chapels. No, the Crucified had commissioned the Little Poor Man to repair the great building of the Church which, at that time and in many places, was falling into ruin through neglect, heresy, sin and scandal.

What lessons can we glean from Francis' "extra mile?" First, we can admire the promptness and the generosity of his response. Christ spoke and that was enough to make Francis act. He did not question *why* San Damiano was in the condition it was in or whose fault it was. Jesus said, *Repair My house*, and Francis did, without counting the cost.

Secondly, Francis' labors were sustained by love. His early biographers underline how pivotal this encounter with the Crucified was on his spiritual pilgrimage. *From then on, he could not hold back his tears, even weeping loudly over the Passion of Christ, as if it were constantly before his eyes.* (2Cel. 6) Once Francis had experienced Jesus' love in such a deeply personal way, he had to make a return of love. And Jesus gave him the key: *Repair My house.*

Finally these events remind us that God's plans are usually much larger than our own. The future saint

certainly had no idea that the Lord's call to *repair My house* meant the house of the whole Church. God used Francis' generous good will in responding to what he thought was the divine call to prepare him to fulfill the whole of the divine plan.

So it is for us. It takes faith to hear the voice of Christ speaking in and through the circumstances of everyday life. To recognize that it is Jesus speaking through a person's request for help, for time, for service is of great importance. To remember Jesus' generous love, particularly in the sufferings He endured, sustains us on our journey of generosity. Then we are open to seeing the largeness of God's plan and ready to go the extra mile—even before He asks!

The Poor Clare Nuns, Belleville, IL

### Signing Off

It has been my privilege to serve as the Editor of the *SFO News*. We have many talented people in our Region who have submitted articles for the newsletter and I thank them all for their contributions. I'd like to recognize, in particular, Patrick Mendes, SFO, Fr. Larry Dreffein, OFM and Fr. Don Blaesar, OFM who have consistently provided solid food for thought over the months and years. Lisa Wathen, SFO, of the Northwest Franciscan Fraternity of IHM will be your new Editor and you can expect really good things from her starting with the February issue. May God bless us all with a happy, joyful, grace-filled, productive and peaceful New Year. Farewell for now until we meet again.

Gloria Huerta, SFO  
Editor

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### Mother of God



Father,  
source of light in every age,  
who is called Wonderful God,  
Prince of Peace.  
May her prayer,  
the gift of a mother's love,  
be your people's joy  
through all ages.  
May her response,  
born of a humble heart,  
draw your Spirit to rest  
on your people.  
Grant this through  
Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Prayer from the Mass for January 1  
The Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God

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