

Minister's Message: One Voice for Advocacy

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The following was mostly prepared by the Holy Name Province (New York, NY) and gives an excellent summary of the Franciscan Family Structure for the National Action meeting in March. Easter blessings to you all as we approach the High Holy Days of our faith and celebrate the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

More than 130 members of the Franciscan Family – representatives from 69 provinces, congregations, Secular Franciscan regions, and ecumenical partners from throughout the US – met in Baltimore this March to discuss and discern ways to bring a more visible and effective Franciscan presence to the effort of repairing relationships to establish justice in the world.

In this meeting, Franciscan friars, sisters,

seculars, and ecumenicals called for themselves and the larger US Franciscan Family to “speak with one Franciscan Voice in order to effect the transformation of national social policy.” The gathering represented the largest US Franciscan group ever assembled in the US solely to discuss ways to be better advocates with the poor, marginalized, and victims of injustice.

Prayer was woven throughout the proceedings, which included presentations from Fr. Michael Perry, OFM, councilor for the Sacred Heart (OFM) Province; Sr. Meg Guider, OSF, professor of Missiology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology; and Marie Dennis, SFO, director for the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. In connection with the presentations, Br. Rodrigo Peret, OFM of

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Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

From black and white and shades of gray, we move to the brilliance of multi-color. Muted sounds give way to myriad instruments and trumpet blasts playing in joyful collaboration. Voices are raised in shouts of joy, singing and announcing Good News. As the death of winter slowly responds to the sun's strong invitation, springtime bursts forth with new life. All are accompaniments, symbols, reminders of what we celebrate as we progress from the penance of Lent and the sadness of Good Friday, through the silence of Holy Saturday, and into the explosion of limitless joy – the singular, most unique and profound joy of Easter.

We can race to the tomb as Peter and John did, or we can stay right where we are and simply trust in the report of Mary of Magdala, who

found that the tomb of Jesus is empty, because He is risen. Indeed, the empty tomb is not where we place our Faith. Rather, our Faith is in Jesus' words to us – the promise which he fulfilled – that he would rise from the dead.

The empty tomb is only a shadow, not the reality. And the reality is that Jesus, arisen from the dead is with us always, everywhere, forever. His resurrection was more than a single event on a single day. It is an event that is present, active and alive for all time – for us who are his disciples, who call ourselves by his very name, Christians.

The resurrection is far more than a matter of history. And Easter is far more than the marking of an event in the past. We celebrate the continual presence and power of the Risen Christ, who is just as real and just as present

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Council Members

Minister:

Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Vice-Minister:

Javier Orozco, SFO

Formation Director:

Rosemary Zimmerman, SFO

Secretary:

Monica Marko, SFO

Treasurer:

Bob Spinozzi, SFO

Councilor At-Large:

Elisabeth Shin, SFO

Councilor for Apostolates:

Nancy McKenna, SFO

Councilor for Communications/

Public Relations:

Lisa Wathen, SFO

Councilor for Fraternal Life:

Chris Bruhnke, SFO

Councilor for Visitations:

Jacqueline Leo, SFO

Councilor for Vocations:

Norman Mosk, SFO

Councilor for Youth/

Young Adult:

Sandra Kisel, SFO

Spiritual Assistant

Fr. Donald Blaeser, OFM

Newsletter Editor

Lisa Wathen, SFO

The SFO News is the official publication of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order.

**Submission deadline is the
20th of each month.**

Professions

- **Alan Amann, SFO,**
- **David Dalaly, SFO,** and
- **Lindysue Luster-Bartz, SFO** of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity (Frankfort) made their Professions on January 7.

Rest in Peace

- **Oh Kyung Ja (Rosa), SFO,** died February 11, and
- **Suk Yang Kym (Veronica), SFO,** died January 12; both of the Living Water Korean Fraternity (Chicago).

Local Elections

Best wishes and prayers for the newly-elected officers of **St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity (Chicago):**

- *Minister:*
Dorothy Balicki, SFO
- *Vice-Minister:*
Javier Pineda, SFO
- *Formation Director:*
Bea Hogan, SFO
- *Secretary:*
Laura Rybski, SFO
- *Treasurer:*
Martha Gilbert, SFO

In Our Prayers

In mid-March, three young adults were killed in a tragic accident on Lower Wacker Drive in Chicago, one of whom was Tommy Choi, nephew of Anthony Yung Sun Choi, Vice-Minister of St. Thomas More Fraternity (Des Plaines). Please keep Tommy and the entire Choi family in your prayers.

Corrections & Clarifications

In the March 2007 *SFO News*, the dates listed in the “Events of Interest” for the “Words Incarnate” workshop and Evanston Parish Vocation Fair were incorrectly listed as taking place on May 24 and May 25, respectively. The correct dates were March 24 and March 25.

We apologize for the errors.

Around the Region

Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine). Back in November, members started a perpetual collection of loose change, which is brought to their monthly gatherings and placed in a house-shaped replica of Franciscan Outreach.

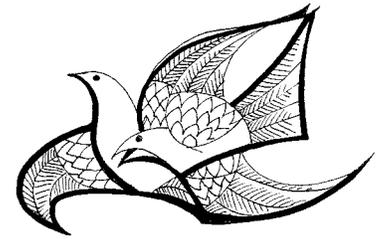
At their January gathering, the container was full and ready for the first donation to Franciscan Outreach. Fr. Kieran Kemner, OFM, Spiritual Assistant, led the fraternity in prayer over the change, which was later counted up at \$184.99.

St. Juliana Fraternity (Chicago). At their March gathering, members participated in the St. Joseph’s Table celebration at St. Juliana Parish, during which they held an Easter box collection for Franciscan Outreach. Items gathered included socks and underwear, new/used clothing, toiletries, CTA cards, etc.

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity (Libertyville). All are invited to attend the fraternity’s 25th anniversary celebration, which will include Mass, followed by a reception.

- **Date:** August 12 (Sunday)
- **Location:** Marytown
1600 W. Park Ave.
Libertyville
- **RSVP By:** July 1 (Saturday)

For more information or to RSVP, contact Muriel Baum, SFO. ☒



For Fraternities: Prayer Request, Email Availability

Prayer for Peace in the Middle East

The National Fraternity has requested that those fraternities that choose to do so, pray together at each of their gatherings the Peace Prayer of St. Francis with the intention of peace in the Middle East.

Also, the National Fraternity would like to know which fraternities are doing this. You can either contact Carolyn Colburn, SFO, National Councilor for Peace and Justice, or you can notify Stephanie Sormane, SFO, who will then share the information with Carolyn.

Email Availability for Every Fraternity

At the Franciscan Family meeting in Baltimore, it was made clear that in order to keep everyone up-to-date on the Franciscan Voice for Advocacy’s progress, email capability was simply required. This has become increasingly true in our Region, too – we often receive important news that we just can’t get to you quickly enough unless it’s sent by email.

Therefore, at the Chapter of Ministers in May, we’ll be asking every fraternity to provide us with an email contact, who will have the responsibility of forwarding

Regional news to the remainder of the fraternity. To some extent this is happening now with the *SFO News*, but we need to ensure that we have at least one email contact for every fraternity.

In addition, we’ll be addressing communication issues at the Ministers/Formation Directors Workshop in June. ☒

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We are members of the Body of Christ, dwelling in the bright beauty of his Kingdom, which is our real home. And so Easter is the time for us to celebrate with all the energy and verve that we can muster. In word and song, with food and drink, complete with baskets of colored eggs and perhaps even a new dress or suit or hat.

St. Francis knew this joy, the joy of Easter. He was known as a man of joy, and it was because he was on fire with the love of Christ, ecstatic with the gifts of the Spirit, overflowing with the presence of the Risen Christ Who animated his entire life. Let us imitate Francis by celebrating the wonder of Easter. And let us, like Francis, respond generously to the Spirit of Christ Risen, moving us to witness to him in all we say and do. Have a blessed and very Happy Easter! ☒

Excerpts from “True and False Reform”

by Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ; from his McGinley Lecture delivered at Fordham on April 23, 2003

“At many times in her history the Church has been threatened by false reforms that, if accepted, would have denatured her.

“... Since Vatican II reform movements have proliferated, but some of them have been ambiguous or misconceived. On the left we find initiatives that seek to make the Church more tolerant, more liberal, and more democratic. Some progressivist reformers aim to dissolve the Church’s hierarchical structure and transform her into an egalitarian democracy. Bishops have now and again criticized or condemned liberalizing groups such as the ‘We Are Church’ movement, which originated in Austria, and the ‘Call to Action’ here in the United States.

“... At the extreme right the Church is confronted by movements that seek to undo the work of the Council itself, restoring what they venerate as Tridentine Catholicism.

“... To reform is to give new and better form to a preexistent reality, while preserving the essentials. Unlike innovation, reform implies organic continuity; it does not add something foreign or extrinsic. ... The point of departure for reform is always an idea or institution that is affirmed but considered to have been imperfectly or defectively realized. The goal is to make persons or institutions more faithful to an ideal already accepted.

“... Anyone seeking to reform the Church must share the Church’s faith and accept the essentials of her mission. The Church cannot take seriously the reforms advocated by those who deny that Christ was Son of God and Redeemer, who assert that the Scriptures teach error, or who hold that the Church should not require orthodoxy on the part of her members. Proposals coming from a perspective alien to Christian faith should be treated with the utmost suspicion if not dismissed as unworthy of consideration.

“... In our day the prevailing climate of agnosticism, relativism, and subjectivism is frequently taken as having the kind of normative value that belongs by right to the word of God. We must energetically oppose

reformers who contend that the Church must abandon her claims to absolute truth, must allow dissent from her own doctrines, and must be governed according to the principles of liberal democracy.

“False reforms ... are those that fail to respect the imperatives of the gospel and the divinely given traditions and structures of the Church, or which impair ecclesial communion and tend rather toward schism. Would-be reformers often proclaim themselves to be prophets, but show their true colors by their lack of humility, their impatience, and their disregard for the Sacred Scripture and tradition.

“... Dissent is rampant, not only on secondary and reformable teachings but even on central doctrines of the faith. Catholics should be trained to have greater confidence in the Magisterium, which enjoys a special assistance from the Holy Spirit. They should willingly conform their private judgment to its teaching, even when no dogmatic definition has been made.

“... The immoral behavior of Catholics, both lay and clergy, is a cause of scandal and defections. Under this heading I would include not only sexual abuse of minors, which has been so extensively publicized in recent years, but sex outside of marriage, abortion, divorce, alcoholism, the use and marketing of drugs, domestic violence, defamation, and financial scandals such as falsification of records and embezzlement. The morality of Catholics all too often sinks below the standards commonly observed by Protestants and unbelievers.

“... Reform is by definition a good thing, and frequently is needed both on the personal and on the institutional level. But history teaches that reform can be misconceived and indiscreet. The only kind of reform that the Church should consider is one based on authentically Christian and Catholic principles. Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition give the necessary parameters. All who propose ecclesial reform should make it clear at the outset that they sincerely embrace these principles. Otherwise they should not be invited to participate in the process.” ■

Living the Gospel of Life

“The right to life flows from the very fact that *we are human*, not from the fact that other humans want to give it to us.

“The philosophy behind abortion says that *others set the criteria for our right for life*. Those criteria may be legal (*‘Roe v. Wade is the law of the land’*), philosophical (*‘The unborn are not persons because they can’t talk or think’*), or theological (*‘I don’t know when the child receives a soul’*). Whatever the criteria, if someone’s right to life depends on *what somebody else says or thinks*, then *every right is in danger*. The foundations have been destroyed, and no human right can ever be guaranteed again.

“The reason is simple. Either human rights flow from the fact that you are human or from some other fact. If the former, then you can never lose them, because you can never become non-human. But if your rights flow from some other circumstance, then you can lose them as soon as that circumstance changes — or someone makes it change.

“... For this reason, abortion is not merely an ‘issue’. It is, rather, a major crisis of the very foundations of civilization. Ending it is our number one priority, as a nation and as individuals.”
~ Fr. Frank Pavone, “The Number One Priority” (*Lay Witness*, Jan./Feb. 2004)

Since the start of the Iraq War, **5,198,418** American children have died from abortion.

“The conviction that human life is sacred and that each person has inherent dignity that must be respected in society lies at the heart of Catholic social teaching. Calls to advance human rights are illusions if the right to life itself is subject to attack.”
~ US Bishops, *Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium*, 1999

Calendar

Note: The NAFRA General Chapter will be held in September or October; TBD.

April

- 14:** Candidates' Retreat, Day 1
Mayslake Village

May

- 05:** Candidates' Retreat, Day 2
Mayslake Village
- 19:** Chapter of Ministers,
Mayslake Village

June

- 16:** Ministers and Formation Directors
Workshop, Mayslake Village

July

- 1:** RSVPs due for 25th Anniversary
Celebration of St. Maximilian
Kolbe Fraternity
- 3-8:** National Quinquennial Congress
Radisson-Green Tree, Pittsburgh, PA
- 14:** Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.,
Mayslake Village

August

- 04:** Regional Gathering, Feast of the
Portiuncula, Mayslake Village
- 12:** 25th Anniversary Celebration of St.
Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, 12 p.m.
Marytown, Libertyville

October

- 12-14:** Regional Retreat, Marytown
- 20:** Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.,
Mayslake Village

November

- 11:** Mother Cabrini Feast Day
Celebration

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Brazil, Mary Mwangi, SFO of Kenya, and Sr. Sheila Kinsey, OSF of Wheaton, IL shared personal stories to help make clear the connections between our experiences in the world and our rich Franciscan charism.

Participants then discussed how to establish an organized “Franciscan Voice for Advocacy” and wrote a vision statement calling the Family to work together for social transformation:

“We Franciscan brothers and sisters, Religious and Secular, from throughout the United States, gathered together in Baltimore, MD to discern the possibility of a unified Franciscan Voice for justice. With great concern for dehumanizing issues in our society, we recognized trends contrary to our calling as followers of Christ. We see that we have the power to effectively advocate for the redistribution of resources, the responsible care for creation, and the healing of relationships within the Franciscan Family, the Church, and society. To these ends, we commit ourselves and call all members of the Family to speak with one Franciscan Voice to effect the transformation of national social policy. By walking with our brothers and sisters who are poor and marginalized, we intend to advocate for peace and to reaffirm the dignity of all creation.” (Adopted March 9, 2007)

From this, participants committed themselves to having further dialogue and finding the resources to establish a broad-based Franciscan Family Commission for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation, as well as a Center for Action based in Washington, DC. These two structures will be launched in the next six to twelve months.

Franciscans from the Chicago area who participated in this historic meeting included Patrick Mendés, SFO, National Minister; our Regional Minister and Councilor for Apostolates, Stephanie Sormane, SFO and Nancy McKenna, SFO; Fr. Jim Hoffman, OFM and Sr. Dorothy Pagosa, SSJ-TOSF, Spiritual Assistants to fraternities in our Region; representatives from the Felician Sisters; Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration; School Sisters of St. Francis; and Wheaton Franciscans; and Craig Robert Miller, of the non-Catholic Order of Ecumenical Franciscans, from Plainfield, IL. ☒

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as he was when he lived his human life in this world. He made it clear when he said, “I am with you always, until the end of the world.”

All of this means that we are changed. We go through life with our attention on all the work and responsibilities, all the suffering and pain, the many anxieties and doubts that plague us, well, yes, and the joys and wonders in life, and need to remember that it is all only a shadow of reality. Since we are changed, nothing is what it seems on the surface. We are filled with the Spirit of the Risen Christ. We are never alone in coping with those struggles and fears. We may forget that we are changed; we may feel that we are alone, but such is never the case.

Even those who had abandoned their Faith, who had wandered away from Christ, are never abandoned by him. I have heard stories, and probably you have too, of folks who have experienced a profound awakening of Faith after many years of emptiness, who discovered in a whole new way the depth of meaning that God *is* with them. That is the action of the Spirit – the Spirit of the Risen Christ, Who dwells in us in spite of ourselves, and who never gives up on us, and who is always reaching out to draw us from solipsistic struggle to the richness of coming home.

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