

Minister's Message: Calling All Ministers to Chapter!

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Since the time of Francis, the Franciscan Order, in all its branches, has held chapters. Our Region's Chapter of Ministers – which is really our Region's "annual meeting" – will take place on **May 19 (Saturday)** at Mayslake Village.

Each year, the ministers from all our Region's fraternities and the Regional Executive Council gather together to report on their accomplishments of the previous year and share their visions and concerns. We've always tried to schedule our chapter close to Pentecost to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles – and to us. May that Holy Spirit bless our gathering this year!

The importance of the chapter cannot be overemphasized! This is where we determine if we're "on track", and if not, how to get back on. Every fraternity *must* be represented, or we don't have full representation of our

Region. If a minister cannot attend, he or she *must* delegate someone else to represent the fraternity – we need 100% representation!

I recently sent a letter to all fraternity ministers asking them to come prepared to share: 1) their suggestions for improvement, and 2) where they particularly need help from the Region. I invite everyone in the Region to communicate any ideas they have to their ministers, who in turn will share them at the chapter.

Once we've learned your needs, we want to address them at the Ministers/Formation Directors/Leadership Workshop in June.

The focus of that workshop is being substantially broadened. Even at this point – and planning is far from finished – we have seven workshops planned that cover a number of new topics such as communications,

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Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

What's a word that begins with a "Q," has 12 letters and means "occurring every five years"? Of course you all know – it's quinquennial. And we're all familiar with it because it's the fancy word we use to refer to our SFO Congress that's held every five years.

This year, as you know, the "Q," as we've dubbed it, is being held in Pittsburgh. If you've never been to Pittsburgh you have something to look forward to. I've been to Pittsburgh a number of times and find it to be an intriguing city with beautiful hills, three majestic rivers and a delightful downtown.

But the Q, of course, is what's got our primary attention. I have to say that I'm most impressed with our national leadership for choosing the theme "*Many Cultures – Through Francis – In Christ*". It just so happens that Sacred Heart Province, the province to which

I belong, is also focusing on multiculturalism, since we find ourselves ministering to people of many different cultures, and we have friars who come to us from a variety of races, cultures and nations.

In short, our world is shrinking and it is up to all of us to become aware, sensitized and appreciative of each other, and not expect that everyone should just become like us ... whoever the dominant us may be.

So the Q promises to be educational, informative, and I suspect and hope, *stretching*. We need to be tugged out of our comfort zone in order to deal with the realities of people in our world who are different from ourselves. And as I look at the brochure in front of me I see that we have some wonderful speakers, including our own Javier Orozco, SFO,

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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.**

Local Elections

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

- *Minister:*
Norman Mosk, SFO
- *Vice-Minister:*
Michael Nunes, SFO
- *Formation Director:*
Rita Prenavo, SFO
- *Secretary:*
Mary Peters, SFO
- *Treasurer:*
Virginia Carrera, SFO

Events of Interest

May 12: The Archdiocese of Chicago is holding a social justice conference, “Justice Day 2007: The Challenge of Christian Faith and Social Justice, Globally & Locally”, from 8 a.m.–3p.m. at St. Giles Parish, 1101 Columbian Ave., Oak Park. Cost is \$10 per person, which covers lunch. For more information or to register, call 312.751.8390.

May 15: The Franciscan Outreach Association is holding a fundraiser at the Chicago Yacht Club. Cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m.; activities include a raffle and silent auction. Cost is \$100 per person before May 10, \$125 after. For more information or to RSVP, call 773.278.6724.

Living the Gospel of Life

“The common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights—for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture—is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination.”

~ Pope John Paul II,
Christifideles Laici (1988)

Around the Region

Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine). On March 31, members held a Holy Week reflection with spiritual assistant Fr. Kieran Kemner, OFM. Fr. Kemner spoke of Francis' love for Christ Crucified and guided participants through several reflections on the Passion, followed by silent time and sharing.

St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Crystal Lake). Members delivered 13 Easter baskets to the Santa Teresita Child Development Center on March 30. Each basket held a plastic Easter pail/bucket filled with candy, crayons, coloring book, toothbrush, and toothpaste. Various stuffed animals and other toys were also placed in the baskets.

St. Juliana Fraternity (Chicago). At their April gathering, members took a field trip to St. Francis of Assisi church, where they

prayed the Liturgy of the Hours, Franciscan Crown, and Litany of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, followed by all Professed renewing their profession promises. The event ended with Benediction.

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. ☒

Celebrate May, Month of Our Blessed Mother

by Lisa Wathen, SFO

As May (along with October) is dedicated to our Blessed Mother, it's the perfect time to incorporate praying the Rosary in your daily routine if you haven't already done so. If staying focused is something you struggle with, a helpful aid is *Praying the Rosary Without Distractions*, priced at just \$1.50 and produced by the Dominican Fathers of The Rosary Center.

Recently updated to include the Luminous Mysteries, the booklet's divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Our Lady's Favorite Prayer. Basic description of the Rosary and its purpose.

Section 2: Difficulties That Some Experience. Discusses the two most common problems people have when praying the Rosary and ways to counter them.

First difficulty: “Some persons find praying the Rosary difficult, because they do not understand the manner in which the **vocal** and **mental** prayer of the Rosary are to be combined. ... We are not meant to focus our attention on the Hail Marys. The ten Hail Marys are only a measuring device to determine the length of time to reflect on [a

particular incident] in the [life] of Jesus.”

Second difficulty: “Other people have difficulty in keeping their mind on the mystery of the Rosary they are praying. The mind tends to wander, and distracting thoughts enter in. **To help solve that problem is the precise purpose of this booklet.**”

Section 3: Why These Particular Mysteries?

Explains why, out of all the events in the Lord's life, we focus on the particular 20 mysteries.

Section 4: How to Pray the Rosary. Clear illustration of the Rosary, with prayers.

Main Body: The 20 Mysteries & Reflections.

Includes color art for each of the 20 mysteries; for each mystery, there are 10 brief points of reflection to go with each Hail Mary.

Ending sections include a description of the Rosary Confraternity, and the 15 promises of the Blessed Virgin to Christians who faithfully pray the Rosary.

For more information or to order copies, visit The Rosary Center's web site at www.rosary-center.org or write to PO Box 3617, Portland, OR 97208. ☒

On the Habits and Spirit of Dissent

by Fr. Philip N. Powell, OP (<http://hancaquam.blogspot.com>) Reprinted with permission from the author.

When we talk about a “Spirit of This” or a “Spirit of That,” I think we mean to point out a deeply seated habit of assenting to and doing This and That. A Spirit of Charity points out a habit of assenting to the call to charity, being charitable, and doing charitable works. The Spirit of Disobedience points out a habit of assenting to the temptation of rebellion, being rebellious, and actually rebelling. To say then that a person or institution is “possessed of a Spirit of X” is to say that this person or institution is habitually assenting to, being, and doing X.

If all of this is true, then I think we can learn something about the Spirit of Dissent by looking at the Habits of Dissent among those charged with teaching the faith in the Church. This includes both clerical and lay teachers, elementary-secondary teachers, and teachers in college, seminary, and schools of theology.

Habitually, dissent looks like ...

- *anger*: a consuming frustration, disappointment, rage toward the Truth
- *hatred*: a self-defining loathing for the apostolic faith
- *willful ignorance*: a refusal to learn, a refusal to be disciplined (to be a student)
- *pride*: an utter failure to be humble in the face of 2,000 years of teaching
- *arrogance*: an expression of pride that manifests as dismissiveness of authority
- *entitlement*: an obsessive assertion of prerogative/privilege over service
- *idolatry*: the raising up of Novelty and Trendiness as final ends
- *rebelliousness*: revolting against legitimate authority in favor of private choice

What feeds the Spirit of Dissent? (*NOT a comprehensive list*)

1. The hermeneutics of suspicion. This is a method of reading texts that requires the reader to approach the text suspiciously, that is, to be deeply skeptical of the text’s author, his/her intent, his/her credentials, any and everything about the text: origin, timing of publication, method of publication, drafts, editions, private/public comments of the author – all of the “histories of production” – every possible scrape of information that could add to the interpretation of the text.

Reading the text is a matter of holding in perpetual suspension all of this info, one’s own socio-political

identity/agenda, and all of one’s deeply held prejudices against anything that looks/sounds like Truth. This method is especially popular among dissenters because it varnishes their dissent with the very thin veneer of academic respectability.

Typical suspicious statement about an authoritative text: “We need time to look at the document in its fullest possible context and ask questions about how it applies to our current situation ...”

2. Identity Politics. This complex network of self-serving nastiness allows the reader of authoritative texts to “read through” his/her “social location” and come to an understanding of the text that best assists in the creation and advancement of his/her identity.

Circular? You bet. But that doesn’t matter at all because dissenters celebrate the ...

3. Death of Reason as a metanarrative. This is an important move for the Habit and Spirit of Dissent in that it allows the reader of authority and tradition to discard the pesky habits of rational discourse and rely totally on affectivity. Assertions of personal need, experience, and “hurt” overwhelm rational argument by sheer force of emotionalism and the fear of causing additional “hurt.”

Typical affective statement about an authoritative text: “I am deeply wounded by this document. It fails to understand me.” End of discussion.

4. Failure of humility, triumph of pride. The Habit and Spirit of Dissent is fundamentally about the failure to understand and accept the necessity of authority in defining and teaching the faith. Pride tells us that we are basically independent creatures, freed from any and all obligation, beholding to none (including and especially God!).

Humility in teaching the faith means that we begin by assuming the authenticity of the witness we’ve received. In other words, we start this whole project by trusting the Holy Spirit to do what He said He would do: to guide His church, to keep Her free from error though the apostolic tradition.

The Habit and Spirit of Dissent begins by assuming that the apostolic tradition as received is deeply flawed, in desperate need of repair, and that he/she is the One to accomplish this healing through radical reformation and revolution.

The model for this reformation/revolution is almost always secular in origin: ecclesial democracy, spiritualized psychotherapy, fetishization of various secular or non-Christian philosophies (Marxism, feminism, Eastern thought), *ad. nau.*

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Calendar

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

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,
hosted by St. Francis of Assisi
Fraternity (Fox Valley) at St. Patrick
Parish, 6N491 Crane Rd., St. Charles

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youth/young adults, Liturgy of the Hours, formation focused on St. Elizabeth of Hungary (since we are currently celebrating the Eighth Centenary of her birth), to name a few. We'll have more information at the Chapter.

Finally, let's talk about community. Community is an integral part of the Franciscan charism, and just as it's imperative for each of us to come together in community with our local fraternities, it's also important that we come together as a Region and as a National fraternity. It helps us remember that we're not just a small, local group, but part of a worldwide Order! Coming together in community helps the SFO to be all it can be – all it is called to be! The wisdom to do this lies within all of us; the needed inspiration will arise out of our sharing.

Blessings to all of you as we continue to celebrate our Resurrected Lord this Easter Season! Ministers (and formation directors and spiritual assistants who can attend), looking forward to seeing you May 19! 📖

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Regional Vice-Minister and Minister of Brother Jacoba Fraternity (Chicago). There will be Masses celebrated, prayer time together, sessions for youth and young adults, sessions for Spiritual Assistants, and many thought-provoking workshops as well as time to enjoy one another's company and make some new friends from other parts of the country and other cultures!

In short, I'm very much looking forward to attending the Quinquennial Congress, July 3 to 8, and I hope you are too. I would like to encourage everyone to strongly consider attending the Q. It is not an obligation, of course, but is certainly an excellent opportunity for us to learn and grow. Our Faith formation is something we cannot take for granted and our Franciscan continuing formation is the same. Growing as Franciscans contributes to our formation as Christians, and is essential for all of us who take our Faith seriously. The Q is our special opportunity, then, to grow deeper and stronger as Franciscan disciples of Jesus Christ – "Many Cultures – Through Francis – In Christ".

I look forward to seeing a great many of you in Pittsburg at the Q. Don't miss it! 📖

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Typical prideful statement about an authoritative text: "Most Catholic theologians disagree with Dogma X. The latest research indicates that Dogma X is an outdated assertion of _____ [insert Current Dissenter Object of Derision, e.g. papal authority, institutional identity, gender domination, etc.]."

Teaching the faith means teaching with the mind of the Church.

A failure to dissent is not a failure to question. As a Dominican, I am trained to question. The Catechism recognizes a legitimate form of doubt (nn. 157-159). But notice where the burden of assent and belief rests: on the student, not the teacher. We can legitimately fail to understand, fail to "get it," and in that failure, doubt.

This is why we need faithful teachers, power masters of the faith who begin by trusting God, putting their own agendas and issues behind them, and putting forward the clearest picture of our apostolic faith that their gifts allow.

At its root, public dissent on the part of Catholic teachers is quite simply the spirit of entitled narcissism, the habit of petulant self-worship. 📖