

Minister's Message: Franciscan Feast Days

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In our desire to share with you the tremendous success of the Quinquennial Congress, both Fr. Don and I wrote about it last month. I think it was important that both of us shared our experiences with you, but it disallowed us an opportunity to talk about the two special feast days we celebrated in August. So, I'm going to do that now!

First, let's talk about **Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula**, August 2. The Portiuncula, of course, is very important to us as the birthplace of the Franciscan Order. It remains in the valley below Assisi, but now is housed within the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, constructed specifically to protect the little chapel and other important sites in the life of St. Francis. However, the 1996 earthquake in Assisi and surrounds cracked

the dome of the Basilica, and it was feared it would crash down on the Portiuncula. Thanks be to God, that didn't happen and the Basilica is now completely repaired, but it was closed for almost a year while those repairs took place.

I was asked at our Gathering this year (which celebrates this feast) about the Portiuncula Indulgence. In the summer of 1216 while praying in the Portiuncula, St. Francis was inspired to travel to Rome to ask the Pope for an unheard-of privilege: the granting of a plenary indulgence. Pope Honorius III granted the indulgence as a sign of the greatness of God's love for humanity. August 2 was established as the date to receive the "Great Pardon of Assisi." Eventually, the Church expanded the

continued on p. 4 ...

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I can't help it. My attention lately is on the immense amount of tragedy going on in our world. The coal miners in Utah who have never been found and who surely have not survived the mine's collapse. The horrible earthquake in Peru with thousands dead and many others injured. Hurricane Dean that slammed into Mexico. The Iraq War that drones on and at this point seems interminable. And as I write this, a terrible thunderstorm going on outside my window — only one of many which have been creating havoc, property loss, injury, and even death in recent weeks all around us.

What is our response to this and so much more? What do we do? What can we do?

On the one hand, we feel powerless in the face of the immensity of the tragedy and

suffering. But on the other hand, there is always something that we *can* do. We long to fix it, to make it all better, and perhaps we are paralyzed by the awareness that such is impossible. It is beyond our grasp to handle even a fraction of the needs that cry out to us.

And yet they do indeed cry out to us. It is the voices of other people like ourselves crying out to us, people in need. It is people, not just property, homes, land, possessions, as important as these may be, but human lives, persons with human faces, in desperate need.

St. Francis, I believe, gave us an example, a sterling example. When he saw that leper in the plane, he overcame his abhorrence of the stench, and embraced and kissed that suffering human being. And that was only the beginning. He went further, much

continued on p. 4 ...

Council Members

Minister:

Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Vice-Minister:

Javier Orozco, SFO

Formation Director:

Rosemary Zimmerman, SFO

Secretary:

Monica Marko, SFO

Treasurer:

Stephen Lanterman, 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

- **Marilyn Infante**, SFO and
- **Fe Villanueva**, SFO of Brother Jacoba Community (Chicago) made their Professions on August 21.

Rest in Peace

- **Virginia Hurter**, SFO of St. Francis - St. Louis Fraternity (Chicago) died August 8.
- **Robert LaForge**, SFO of St. Junipero Serra Satellite (Northbrook) died August 5.
- **Dorothea Stojkic**, SFO of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (East Side) died July 23.

Living the Gospel of Life

In Georgia, there's an effort underway to introduce and explain the proposed *Georgia Paramount Right to Life Amendment*, HR-536, whose intent is to define and establish the "personhood" of all GA citizens from fertilization until natural death.

The adoption of HR-536 and its positive pro-life effect is not limited to the issue of abortion, but would restore respect and effective legal protection for all human beings from the moment of fertilization until natural death. This would include the elderly, infirm, disabled, and all other stages of human dependency and vulnerability.

It's anticipated that HR-536 may be the legal stepping-stone used to challenge and possibly overturn *Roe vs. Wade*. This strategic approach was even disclosed in the *Roe vs. Wade* decision: Justice Harry Blackmun wrote that, "(If the) suggestion of personhood [of the preborn] is established, the [abortion rights] case, of course collapses, for the fetus' right to life is then guaranteed specifically by the [14th] Amendment."

Please share this information widely with others, and:

- visit www.letthemlive.us and www.personhood.net
- voice your support of HR-536 at: www.legis.ga.us

Regional Pro-Life "Think Tank" Update

Following up from last month's article in the *SFO News*, locations have been finalized:

- **Date:** October 13 (Saturday)
- **Times:** 8:00 a.m.: Frat. Gathering
11:15 a.m.: Think Tank
- **Gathering:** St. John the Baptist Parish
404 N. Hickory St., Joliet

- **Think Tank:** Beggars Pizza
640 W. Maple (US 30)

- **RSVP By:** September 15 (Saturday)

For more information or to RSVP, contact Daniel and Susan Willenborg, SFO. ☒

How Are We Doing?

by Rosemary Zimmerman, SFO; Regional Formation Director

Brothers and Sisters, I am sure you're familiar with the term "rollover". It's a popular word you hear frequently, not in reference to a trick performed by Lassie, but rather in referencing your IRA, vacation time, cell phone minutes, etc. The idea of rolling over is that you can bank what you don't use and save it for the proverbial rainy day.

Unfortunately, life doesn't work that way. You get 24 hours in each day, 7 days a week. And if you live your Franciscan life to the fullest each and every day, well you certainly are blessed!

If not, well you can try again tomorrow.

Unfortunately, you won't get to cash in any wasted hours to be reclaimed in the future.

Time – cell phone minutes notwithstanding – operates on a strict "use it or lose it" policy.

The good news is, you've got another chance to make the most of the time you've been given. It's called "Today"! What have you been putting off? Have you or has your fraternity actively participated in sending its members to attend the apostolic commission workshops, candidates' retreats, leadership workshops, Quinquennial, Regional Gathering, Regional Retreat, and Mother Cabrini Feast Day? If not, why not make a strong effort to do so NOW?

We may not attain the status of the woman who "never wastes her time" (Prv. 31), but it can't hurt to be more intentional about how we use our time. After all, as Eccl. 3:1 reminds us, "There is a time for everything, and everything on earth has its special season." And so, the season for an annual checkup of how we're doing as fraternities is now.

The Regional Council is here to serve you. But in order to best serve you, we need your

input. **Please take the time NOW to complete the survey on page 3 with your fraternity and send it back to me** within a week of your next fraternity meeting. Ministers and formation directors, please coordinate its completion and send replies to me (see the contact information in the survey).

This is the season, brothers and sisters. Keep the flame from extinguishing. Take the time today to reflect on and complete your annual checkup. There is a wealth of resources at our disposal. We have been blessed! Share the grace. ☒

----- clip and save -----

Yearlong Novena for Darfur

As mentioned in the March 2007 SFO News, the SFO in the US is praying a novena for Darfur. It's again our Region's turn to pray during the 3rd week of September, starting on Sunday.



Merciful Father, Prince of Peace, Spirit of Wisdom and Compassion, please look upon our brothers and sisters in Darfur. We humbly pray:

For those who have been subjected to violence: women, children, young and old men,

–We ask for healing, consolation, and relief of further suffering.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

For those who have done violence,

–We ask for healing, forgiveness, and the grace of conversion.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

For those in authority throughout the world,

–We ask for wisdom, creativity, compassion, and courage in addressing this situation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

Lord Jesus, Your Sacred Heart burns for love of all Your people. Please place in our hearts that same love and inspire us to have the courage, wisdom, and ingenuity to take what measures we can personally to relieve the suffering in Darfur. We pray this in the Name of Jesus, our Lord, through the intercession of the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Conclude with the Memorare.

Mother Cabrini Award Nominations

As part of our annual **Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration** (see the *Calendar* on page 4 for event details), the Region is currently soliciting nominations for the **Mother Cabrini Award**. Letters requesting nominations, which included submission rules, were sent to all fraternity ministers via email and postal mail in early August.

We all know SFOs who consistently go above and beyond in what they do, and their contributions and efforts should be recognized. But the real purpose of this award is to celebrate

the authentic witness of our way of life. Please take time to make this a discussion point in your fraternity gatherings, and send in your fraternity's nomination on or before the deadline of **September 30 (Sunday)** to:

Chris Bruhnke, SFO
Regional Councilor for Fraternal Life ☒

Formation Survey for Fraternities

See "How Are We Doing?" on page 2 for background information.

1. Have the minister and formation director shared with the council the recently-distributed *Regional Formation Manual*? Are you using it? Have you discussed with the council and shared with the fraternity the "Nature of the SFO" (Lino), "The Three Dimensions of Formation" (Bach), and the "Paraphrase of the Our Father"?
2. Is your fraternity using the Formation Program given to us by the CIOFS for the Biennial Celebration of the 8th Centenary of the Birth of our SFO Patron Saint, Elizabeth of Hungary? This is a two-year celebration that began on November 17, 2006; we're in our 10th month.
3. Do you always include Franciscan prayer experiences for your gatherings/meetings? As pilgrims of the Gospel, are you as a fraternity praying and sharing scripture?
4. Do you have formation at your regular gatherings?
5. Do you ask the involvement of everyone in planning the formation experience?
6. What are you using for initial and going formation? There are suggestions for resources in the *Minister's Manual* for all stages of formation.
7. How do you assess and use the gifts and talents of your brothers and sisters in presenting formation? Do you take turns facilitating the formation experience?
8. Do you consider different ways of presenting materials? Such as videos, DVDs, audio tapes, outside presenters, small group discussions, panel presentations, Q& A, Franciscan books/magazines, *TAU-USA*, etc. (Please provide examples of what you're using.)
9. Do you have special formation for the newly-Professed?
10. Do you have a long-term vision for formation?
11. Do you use a variety of formational resources to enhance your formation experiences?
12. Have you or has your fraternity actively participated in sending its members to attend the Regional retreats and workshops? Or do you keep your activities within your own fraternity and miss the fraternal experiences within the Franciscan Family at large? In keeping in continuity with our fraternal brothers and sisters and "Life-giving union with our Franciscan Family", we need to annually reflect on our "status", system of government and belonging, and our relationships with the Franciscan religious, and their giving the SFO spiritual assistance, and our over all participation in the wellbeing of our Franciscan Family.
13. Do you annually review the *Rule, Constitutions*, and structure of the SFO? These are beautifully written and need to be reviewed annually in order to better keep our focus on our way of life and the renewal of our professions. After reviewing the *Rule* and *Constitutions*, we should renew our profession of the *Rule*.
14. How do you engage learners? See the suggestions in the *Regional Formation Manual*.
15. Do you have sponsors for formation?
16. What are you doing to grow your fraternity? Would you like a workshop for this purpose?
17. Do you use an interview guide as suggested in your *Formation Manual* for prospective members? As well as reviewing the signs that a person may or may not have a call to the SFO?
18. Would you like to have available a regional training and sharing program for formation directors, ministers, and other servant leaders? This could possibly be a combination of correspondence and quarterly or semiannual meetings with instructors and participants.
19. Are you interested in having Regional or Cluster "Days of Recollection" for study and sharing for the newly-Professed?
20. Are you interested in having, at the Cluster level, a team to share newsletters from the respective fraternities, coordinate a Cluster Day of Recollection, or schedule Cluster fraternities to attend an annual resource-sharing meeting? (Perhaps we could post on the Regional web site a Cluster newsletter!)
21. Does a member of your fraternity with access to a computer share with the fraternity information posted on the National and International SFO web sites?
22. Do your fraternities implement discernment through fraternity retreats and days of recollection and dialogue?
23. What are your greatest successes? Concerns?
24. In what way can I and the Regional Council be of greater assistance to you?

Please return completed surveys to:

Rosemary Zimmerman, SFO
Regional Formation Director ☒

Calendar

September

- 09: Registration due for Regional Retreat at Marytown
- 15: RSVPs due for Regional Pro-Life “Think Tank” Meeting
- 30: Deadline for Mother Cabrini Award Nominations

October

- 2-7: National Chapter, Belleville, IL
- 12-14: Regional Retreat, Marytown
- 13: Regional Pro-Life “Think Tank” Meeting, hosted by St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Joliet
8:00 a.m., Frat. Gathering;
11:15 a.m., Think Tank
- 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

Minister continued from p. 1 ...

conditions and said the faithful could obtain the indulgence either on August 2 or on the following Sunday by visiting any Franciscan parish or chapel throughout the world. The conditions for gaining the indulgence include praying the Our Father and the Creed, receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father.

In this day and age we rarely hear about indulgences, but what I think is so special about this story is Francis’ concern for all of us! It’s a wonderful example of how *he* lived the Gospel!

The other feast day we celebrated in August was that of **St. Clare**, August 11. I don’t pretend to be a great scholar of the life of St. Clare – I wish I were. It is a true blessing that the 8th Centenary of the Birth of St. Clare awakened in us all a better appreciation of the important part she played in the founding of the Franciscan Order. She was not simply a follower of Francis’ Gospel way of life, but a true partner with him. One hopes that our celebration of the 8th Centenary of the Birth of St. Elizabeth of Hungary will have the same effect of broadening our appreciation of another important person who laid the foundation for the Franciscan Order.

May all their examples inspire us all to do and be what we are called to do and be today! ☒

Assistant continued from p. 1 ...

further, as he ministered to many lepers, feeding and bathing them, bandaging their wounds, and staying with them. And when he was repulsed by the carnage of the Crusades, the very war waged by the Church, Francis determined to do his part by waging peace. If the Church would not listen to him and stop the insanity of war against the Muslims, well, why not talk with the Muslims? And you know the rest.

We, like Francis, may not be able to fix it all, to make it all better, but we can each do our part. We can reach out a helping hand. We can do our part to wage peace. We can “hang in there” with others, including those we find abhorrent. And in the process we may find, with Francis, that what had seemed bitter to us is turned to sweetness.

Now if this seems like a real downer of an article, we would do well to recall that Francis was not depressed, not down-in-the-mouth, not angry and mean-spirited. He was a man of joy. He rubbed two sticks together and acted as if he were playing a violin. He sang, composed a song praising the God of all creation, savoring the wonder of all that exists. He talked to birds! He thanked God for the gift of brothers and for all God’s goodness to him. And he prayed. Francis constantly talked with God, knowing that he was never acting on his own, but only – always – in communion with the God who was the Center, the very core of his being.

And we can do the same. Indeed, the more we give of ourselves to others, both corporally and spiritually, the more we experience the joy of living. The more we sacrifice our own needs in ministering to others’ needs, the more we will savor the sweetness of our God who satisfies all our real needs.

As we strive to be the best Christians and Franciscans we can be, let’s reach out unselfishly to those in need. And, knowing that all is in God’s hands, let us say together with St. Francis, “My God and My All.” ☒