

## Minister's Message: 2007 NAFRA Chapter

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The 2007 National Chapter was my first. It was wonderful to gather with other Regional Ministers from throughout the United States to share our successes and concerns. We are greatly blessed to have such capable and committed leadership!

While the Chapter is NAFRA's "annual meeting" — just as the Regional Chapter is for us — the gathering was definitely not all business. We prayed together every morning, and shared the Eucharist every day. We had two extraordinary formation sessions, celebrated Transitus and the Feast Day together, and remembered our brothers and sisters who passed away over the last year in a beautiful memorial service within the Feast Day mass.

Important business was discussed, discerned

and decided. Here are the highlights:

■ **Liability Insurance.** NAFRA has taken out event liability insurance which became effective on October 15. This insurance covers NAFRA, all the regional fraternities, and all the local fraternities. NAFRA is paying the premium (\$2,500) the first year.

■ **Book on SFO History.** William Wicks, SFO, NAFRA Historian and former National Minister, has published *A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, Volume I, 1917-1942*. It is a very scholarly work — 437 pages — and I think a needed addition to every fraternity's library. Cost is \$5 plus shipping and can be ordered through NAFRA.

■ **Franciscan Action Network.** By a vote of 34 in favor, 3 opposed, NAFRA will join the Franciscan Action Network (FAN).

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## Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Peace and everything good to you! Since we are celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and since her feast day is on November 17, this seems like a good occasion to give some attention to her.

Elizabeth is one of those saints about whom I can only marvel. When we consider that she died at the age of 24, an age at which some are only starting to "grow up," we might easily dismiss her as unimportant, or as having been too young to know what life is all about.

But all we have to know is a few facts about Elizabeth to learn how wrong-headed such assumptions would be. Imagine what it was like to be promised in marriage at the age of 4 and then taken from her home in Hungary to the court of Landgrave Hermann I of Thuringia, Germany, there to be raised together with her

husband-to-be. Imagine too what it was like for her to be separated from her family and homeland, and then to learn that her mother was murdered when she was only 6 years old. Imagine further that as the young man whom she was to marry died when she was only 9 years old, she was then betrothed to the next eldest son, Ludwig, who proved to be very kind to her. In fact, as she was rebuked by members of the court for her piety and penitential practices, Ludwig defended her.

Following their marriage in 1221, the groom being 21 and Elizabeth only 14 years old, they had three children. Six years later Ludwig died while on a Crusade, and since they had loved each other deeply, Elizabeth is quoted as having said, "The world with all its joys is now dead to me."

But back in 1221 the followers of St. Francis of

*continued on p. 4 ...*

## Council Members

*Minister:*

Stephanie Sormane, SFO

*Vice-Minister:*

Javier Orozco, SFO

*Formation Director:*

To be appointed

*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

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The SFO 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.**

### Professions

- **Ligaya Guevara Buado**, SFO,
- **Susanne Marsala**, SFO, and
- **Judy Smith**, SFO of St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (Wayne) made their Professions on October 4.

### Rest in Peace

- **John Rohan**, SFO of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Evergreen Park) died September 22.

### Local Elections

Best wishes and prayers for the newly-elected officers of the following fraternities:

#### Br. Jacoba Community (Chicago):

- *Minister:*  
Javier Orozco, SFO
- *Vice-Minister:*  
Araceli Ramos, SFO
- *Formation Director:*  
Estrella Hernandez, SFO
- *Secretary:*  
Monica Marko, SFO
- *Treasurer:*  
Connie Tiglao, SFO

#### Living Water (Chicago):

- *Minister:*  
Peter J. Lee, SFO
- *Vice-Minister:*  
Young Ki Lee, SFO
- *Formation Director:*  
Soo Beom Rosaria Huh, SFO
- *Secretary:*  
Jong Ok Lee, SFO
- *Treasurer:*  
Hyang Lim Lee, SFO

#### St. Francis of Assisi (Steger):

- *Minister:*  
Rose Scofield, SFO
- *Vice-Minister:*  
Jeanette Dargert, SFO
- *Formation Director:*  
Kendra Duncan, SFO
- *Secretary:*  
Marie Okeefe, SFO
- *Treasurer:*  
Joseph Czajka, SFO

## Around the Region

■ **Br. Jacoba Community (Chicago).** At the end of the fraternity's third quarter, members sent \$50 to Franciscan Outreach and \$50 to The Port Ministries.

■ **Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine).** At their August gathering, fraternity minister Patti Depa, SFO gave a presentation on "Death from a Franciscan Viewpoint and Lessons from the Dying", followed by a group discussion on dying.

■ **St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Evergreen Park).** Fraternity members held their traditional Jubilee Celebration at their September gathering. This year's jubilarian, Rich Whooley, SFO, celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Profession.

■ **St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Fox Valley).** In August, the fraternity celebrated its Annual Outdoor Mass (held indoors due to the weather) and Potluck at a member's home. In

September, members introduced themselves to the parishioners of St. Patrick Parish (St. Charles) by serving coffee, juice, and doughnuts at the parish's Donut Day. Wearing SFO nametags, members used the opportunity to place Franciscan materials on all tables before parishioners arrived, and "circulated and served with a smile".

Also in September, members took a field trip to the Wasco Sanitary District Water Reclamation Center where they learned the mechanics of how water is purified.

■ **St. Juliana Fraternity (Chicago).** In October, fraternity members participated in the St. Juliana Parish Open House, which featured a ministry fair. In addition, fraternity members had two tables at the St. Thecla Women's Council Craft Show in October, where they distributed promotional materials as well as sold crafts and baked goods. ■

## Mother Cabrini Award: Nominees Announced

As part of our annual Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration, we are pleased to announce the **nominees for the 2007 Mother Cabrini Award:**

■ **Mary Licata**, SFO of St. Francis - St. Louis Fraternity (Chicago). Professed in 1951, Mary is an active member of her fraternity, joining in field trips, serving on committees, and greeting newcomers, and has served several terms as council secretary. In February 2005, Dolores Madlener profiled Mary in the "Church Clips" column of *The Catholic New World*, saying that the "title 'Christian professional' fits her". She was named "Archdiocese Woman of the Year" in May 2007 by the Council of Catholic Women.

■ **Ruth Meylor**, SFO of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Rockford). Professed in 1993, Ruth serves as the Friday captain for Perpetual Adoration at her parish, assists her parish priest by taking dictation for his homilies, brings Holy Communion to the sick and homebound, attends daily Mass, and leads the daily Rosary. In addition, Ruth is the caregiver for her husband, Bill, who was diagnosed with ASP. In 1996,

Ruth was named "Woman of the Year" by the Rockford Diocese Women's league.

■ **Lorraine Schuch**, SFO of St. Clare Fraternity (Oak Brook). Professed in 1941, Lorraine is a resident at Mayslake Village, Oak Brook, and actively participates in community life. She helps with mailings in the Development Office, delivers items to residents, and is a member of the "Kast n Krew" club and chorus. For several years, she has co-chaired the Tons of Treasure booth at Mayslake's annual bazaar. Lorraine also serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and sacristan.

The award will recipient will be announced at the **Mother Cabrini Celebration:**

- **Date:** November 11 (Sunday)
- **Time:** 2:00 p.m. Mass, with reception after
- **Location:** St. Patrick Parish  
6N491 Crane Rd., St. Charles

For more information on the Mother Cabrini Celebration, email Chris Bruhnke, SFO, Regional Councilor for Fraternal Life. ■

## Pro-Life Think Tank Follow-up

On October 13, Daniel and Susan Willenborg, SFO (St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Joliet), hosted a Pro-Life Think Tank in New Lenox, which was open to all Secular Franciscans within the Region.

The purpose of the Think Tank was to provide an opportunity for discussion and brainstorming over how we as Franciscans can better live the gospel of life within our Region. Participants met with Susan Davinger, President of PASS Pregnancy Care Centers of Tinley Park, South Holland, and Crete, who gave an overview of the numerous services PASS provides and ways in which we can support their pro-life work.

Among the ideas proposed was holding a walk-through of the PASS center in Tinley Park in order to see first-hand how a crisis pregnancy center operates. As a result, all are welcome to attend a planning meeting for the tour, during

which the first meeting's brainstorming will also be continued.

- **Event:** Follow-up Session & Planning for PASS Tour
- **Date:** December 1 (Saturday)
- **Time:** 10:30 a.m.
- **Location:** Billy's Pancake House  
440 W. Northwest Hwy.  
Palatine

The tour itself is scheduled for:

- **Event:** Tour of PASS Center
- **Date:** December 8 (Saturday)
- **Time:** TBD
- **Location:** 17214 S. Oak Park Ave.  
Tinley Park

For more information or to attend the planning session or tour, contact Daniel and Susan Willenborg, SFO. 📧

## Beatification of Franz Jägerstätter, Secular Franciscan



An Austrian whose conscientious objection to the Nazi draft led to his beheading in 1943 at age 36, Secular Franciscan **Franz Jägerstätter** was beatified on October 26, 2007 in Linz, Austria.

Born on May 20, 1907, Franz grew up in the small Austrian village of St. Radegund. He had a wild and rebellious youth and early adulthood, but experienced a religious conversion in 1934 while working in the Stienmark iron mines. He began attending Mass frequently and was drawn to deep prayer and reading of scripture. Returning to St. Radegund, those who knew him during his wild days were astonished at his conversion.

In 1936, Franz married a prayerful and devout woman named Franziska, with whom he had three daughters. Soon after their marriage, Franz became a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and was an active participant in the village parish, working as a church sexton whenever he was not farming the family fields. His daily life included fasting until noon each

day, and, although he and his wife were not well-off, he gave generously to the poor. Franz began to earn a reputation as a fanatic, and those who had denounced his wild youth denounced his conversion to Gospel living.

At Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938, Jägerstätter openly opposed the takeover and the ideology of National Socialism, which he described as a "shining train going to hell". Drafted in 1940, he reported for six months training in the motor corps, after which he vowed to refuse future conscription. In March 1943, Franz presented himself to the military and stated that under no circumstances would he fight and kill, offering instead to serve as a medical orderly. He was sentenced to death for sedition; the courts never responded to his offer.

On August 9, 1943, Franz was beheaded lying on his back facing the guillotine. "Just as a man who thinks only of this world does everything possible to make life here easier and better," he had written, "so must we, too, who believe in the eternal Kingdom, risk everything in order to receive a great reward there. Our struggle is for the eternal Kingdom." 📖

## Living the Gospel of Life

"Adopting a consistent ethic of life, the Catholic Church promotes a broad spectrum of issues ... Catholic public officials are obliged to address each of these issues as they seek to build consistent policies which promote respect for the human person at all stages of life. *But being 'right' in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life.* Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the 'rightness' of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community."

~ U.S. Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 23

"The Gospel of Life must be proclaimed, and human life defended, in all places and all times. The arena for moral responsibility includes not only the halls of government, but the voting booth as well. Laws that permit abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide are profoundly unjust, and we should work peacefully and tirelessly to oppose and change them. Because they are unjust they cannot bind citizens in conscience, be supported, acquiesced in, or recognized as valid."

~ U.S. Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 33

"The Holy Father speaks of the protection of life as the fundamental realization and respect for human rights. Without that realization, without that respect for the right to life, no other discussion of human rights can continue; it must be based upon the foundation of human dignity and the right to life."

~ Renato Cardinal Martino, President, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

## Calendar

*Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all events are at Mayslake Village (Oak Brook).*

### 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

### January

- 12:** Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

### March

- 01:** Per Capita, Census, and Fraternity Annual Reports due  
**15:** Apostolic Action Workshop  
**29:** Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

### April

- 05:** Candidates' Retreat, Day 1

### May

- 03:** Candidates' Retreat, Day 2  
**17:** Chapter of Ministers and National Visitation

### June

- 21:** Leadership Workshop

### July

- 19:** Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

### August

- 02:** Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

### September

- 12-14:** Regional Retreat, St. Francis Woods, Frankfort

### October

- 25:** Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

### November

- 16:** Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration (*location TBD*)

**Minister** *continued from p. 1 ...*

■ **National Commissions.** By unanimous vote, the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Commissions were accepted, which are summarized as follows:

*The current structure of the Apostolic Commissions will cease in its current form. In its place will be a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) team (up to 4 persons) with a keen awareness of Articles 14-19 of the SFO Rule and of the social issues before the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops. This change in title and structure will give the SFO a closer partnering with other entities in the Franciscan family and the Church.*

This restructuring will not lessen, but should increase our apostolic action as Secular Franciscans. The focus, however, will be in living the *Rule*, of which apostolic actions are a part, rather than looking at the Commissions as something separate and apart.

Other important matters were discussed which will be covered in future articles. It was a very exciting time and much was accomplished!

Happy Thanksgiving everyone – enjoy a wonderful holiday with family and friends! 🇺🇸

**Assistant** *continued from p. 1 ...*

Assisi made their first permanent settlement in Germany, and Elizabeth came under their influence. She made use of her position to help the poor and the sick. In the summer of 1228 Elizabeth built the Franciscan hospital at Marburg and on its completion devoted herself entirely to the care of the sick, especially those afflicted with the most loathsome diseases. Constant in her devotion to God, Elizabeth's strength was consumed by her charitable labors, and she died in 1231.

Here was a woman of strength, of deep conviction, who knew terrible suffering and tragic losses. Here was one who could have allowed herself to be pampered in the royal court and live a life of luxury, but who had the maturity and deep spirituality to look beyond personal comfort and attend to the needs of the neediest ones. I marvel at Elizabeth's ability to endure the ridicule of others in the court and her resiliency to rise above the repeated losses she experienced.

Since there are so many saints in our calendar who are priests and celibate religious, I am pleased that here we honor a married woman, a mother, a widow, who can offer us an example of life which, while it is certainly quite different from that of most Secular Franciscans, is still one to which many of you can relate.

Can we learn from Elizabeth that although we suffer losses we need not be devastated? That when we are ridiculed and feel rejected we find a strength and loving acceptance from God that no one can take from us or diminish? That when we have means at our disposal we are called to give of ourselves and our possessions for the good of those who have little, or are suffering? I believe we can learn these and many other lessons from Elizabeth, patroness of the Secular Franciscan Order, and "greatest woman of the German Middle Ages," as she was called by Gregory IX, who canonized her in 1235.

During this month of November as we celebrate the Feast of All Saints and Thanksgiving Day, as well as the feast of St. Elizabeth, it is a good month for us to give thanks for Elizabeth and for all the saints who offer us examples of living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart.

May God bless you abundantly. 🇺🇸