

## Minister's Message: Bonaventure!

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It's July – and on the 15<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the feast day of St. Bonaventure. Of course, we are familiar with him because he wrote two biographies of St. Francis which are included in the Omnibus of Sources. But are we aware of the important role Bonaventure played in articulating Franciscan spirituality? I certainly was not, but I had a wonderful opportunity to learn at least a little bit about St. Bonaventure and his vision while I was in Portland, Oregon to preside on behalf of the National Minister at a regional election there.

### ■ New National Formation Director.

Troubadours of Peace Region in the Pacific Northwest is the home region of our new National Formation Director, Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO. I was very concerned

when I learned that Teresa Baker, SFO was stepping down as National Formation Director. Her six years of service to us have been phenomenal, but the last thing Teresa would want is for everything to fall apart once she completed her term of service. Happily, that is not going to happen! Her successor is going to do an incredible job.

Bob has prepared for his region a 3-part presentation entitled "Understanding the Franciscan Spirit" and, happily, he gave me a copy. He actually did the third presentation during my visit with the fraternity, and the other two were on DVDs included in the package. Included in that presentation is a beautiful image – and explanation – of the Trinity. Those of you who were present at our Chapter in May

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## Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

Peace and everything good to you. I'm in the middle ... in between ... on the way. I'm at the conclusion of a retreat for religious sisters and a few lay women at the Portiuncula Center for Prayer in Frankfort, IL, and in a few days will start a whole new retreat for the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus in Wauwatosa, WI. As I write this I am aware of many of you gathered this very day at Mayslake for your Leadership Workshop, which I had to miss. I hope it went well.

Being engaged in the ministry of giving retreats offers me profound blessings. It is overwhelming to observe the deep faith of participants wherever I go. They may not think they are any particular blessing at all for me. I'm sure the expectation is that I am to be the "giver," the inspiration for them. And especially when folks share their

struggles, their faults, their doubts, even their sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, they would most probably object that they are providing me with anything but inspiration. But inspire they do. Because I am witness to their desire to improve, to grow, to live their faith more deeply.

As they share their pain, I can see that it is the result of the disparity they experience between what they see in themselves and what they know is possible. The difference between what is and what is not, and that they want more. Who am I to be privileged to catch a glimpse of another's love for God, a love that aches because it is not yet complete, and because that gift of Faith is burning so strongly that they perceive that so much more is possible?

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## Council Members

*Minister:*

Stephanie Sormane, SFO  
*minister@ilsfo.org*

*Vice-Minister:*

Javier Orozco, SFO

*Formation Director:*

Sandra Kisel, SFO

*Secretary:*

Monica Marko, SFO

*Treasurer:*

Stephen Lanterman, SFO

*Councilor At-Large:*

Elisabeth Shin, SFO

*Councilor for Apostolates:*

To be appointed

*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

## Spiritual Assistant

Fr. Donald Blaeser, OFM

**Newsletter Editor**

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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

- **Julie Cooper**, SFO of St. Junipero Serra Satellite Fraternity (Northbrook) made her Profession on June 20.

### Local Elections

Best wishes and prayers for the newly-elected officers of **St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (East Side)**:

- *Minister & Formation Director*: Dorothea Alfini, SFO
- *Vice-Minister*: Marie Szymanski, SFO
- *Secretary*: Gloria Chavez, SFO
- *Treasurer*: Karen Castro, SFO

### Events of Interest

**September 12-14**: Daniel and Susan Willenborg, SFO (St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Joliet) invite and encourage all Secular Franciscans in our Region to join with them for this year's interfaith ShareFest, an annual event bringing churches and organizations in the New Lenox area together to visibly demonstrate love of one another through tangible acts of service, which include community service projects, gathering donated items (food, coats, etc.), health care testing and screenings, ecological action, and more. For more information visit [www.sharefestnewlenox.com](http://www.sharefestnewlenox.com), or contact Daniel & Susan.

### Living the Gospel of Life

For a brief resource that lists 5 non-negotiable issues Catholics need to use when evaluating and voting on candidates and policy proposals, see the *Voter's Guide for Serious Catholics* at [www.caaction.com](http://www.caaction.com). Produced by Catholic Answers Action, the guide is faithful to Church teaching and will help you vote in an informed manner consistent with Catholic moral teaching and fundamental human rights.

## Around the Region

■ **Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine)**. In February, the fraternity began an apostolate, "Youth Prayer Partners", in which members are matched up with children preparing for First Communion or Confirmation—in this case, Confirmation—and daily pray for their assigned students.

Members were told the first names and ages of their assigned students and kept informed of what their students were studying each month, their chosen confirmation names and why they picked them, and who their sponsors were. Upon the students' confirmations on May 4, members sent their students notes of encouragement and cards, which the students were excited to receive.

In September, members will begin praying for a new group of students preparing for Confirmation, whose course of study will last for two years.

■ **St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (Wayne)**. All are invited to attend the fraternity's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, which will include Mass followed by a reception.

During Mass, Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, OFM, the fraternity's first Spiritual Assistant, will give the homily. Fraternity members will provide a potluck dinner and dessert at the reception.

## Regional Gathering in August

by Chris Bruhnke, SFO; Regional Councilor for Fraternal Life

Our annual Regional Gathering is fast approaching, and you and your family, friends, and any interested individuals are cordially invited to attend our celebration of the **Feast of Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula!**

This is our time to be *family* and to bring friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Secular Franciscans. Fraternity ministers, make sure you invite all Aspirants, Inquirers, and Candidates to experience and *be* with the extended Franciscan family of our region; you should

- **Date:** August 16 (Saturday)
- **Time:** 5 p.m. Mass; reception after
- **Location:** Resurrection Catholic Community  
30W 350 Army Trail Rd.  
Wayne
- **RSVP By:** August 3 (Sunday)

For more information or to RSVP, contact Lorna Miressi, SFO.

■ **St. Francis Fraternity (Fox Valley)**. Members helped out at the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) in St. Charles on June 7. NIFB provides fresh and packaged food to more than 520 food assistance sites, including soup kitchens, pantries, childcare agencies, shelters, and after-school snack programs. Collectively, they are the food safety net for hundreds of thousands of poor people in the 13 counties northern Illinois served by NIFB—from urban and suburban areas to very rural areas. Staff and volunteers receive, weigh, sort and even repackage food donations so they can be used to serve families in need.

■ **St. Juliana Fraternity (Chicago)**. In May, members visited the Felician Sisters Provincialate in Chicago, where they learned about the congregation's history (they're part of the Third Order Regular) and toured the archives. Following a buffet dinner, the fraternity held special liturgical services for those in their formation program, ending with the recitation of the Franciscan Crown. ☒

have already received flyers for the event.

- **Date:** August 2 (Saturday)
- **Location:** Mayslake Village  
1801 35th St., Oak Brook
- **Times:** 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
- **Cost:** Lunch is \$15 per person; however, you're welcome to bring your own lunch.
- **RSVP By:** July 23 (Wednesday)

*Fraternity ministers:* Please email me at [fratlife@ilsfo.org](mailto:fratlife@ilsfo.org) with the total number of

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attendees from your fraternity no later than July 23 (Wednesday).

### Schedule Overview

- 8:30 a.m.: Registration
- 9:00 a.m.: Morning Prayer (Chapel)
- 10:00 a.m.: Continental Breakfast
- 10:30 a.m.: Fr. Charles Faso, OFM
- 11:45 a.m.: Lunch
- 1:15 p.m.: Fr. Charles Faso, OFM
- 2:30 p.m.: Mass (Chapel)

### About the Speaker

- “BIBLE: B.I.B.L.E. — Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth”
- “How are you? Fine = Fouled, Insecure, Neurotic, Empty”
- “Jesus never said to count the sheep, just feed them.”

These are just a few “-isms” from the inspiring and uplifting Fr. Charles Faso, OFM, Itinerant Preacher, who will be our guest speaker and homilist.

Born in 1941, Fr. Faso joined the Franciscan Friars of the

Sacred Heart Province of St. Louis, MO in 1960 and was ordained a priest in 1967. Since 2001, his full-time ministry has been preaching the Word of God through parish missions, retreats, and days of recollection, and leading groups on pilgrimages to Australia, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Palestine, Russia, and Turkey.

His studies at the seminary in Teutopolis, IL, at DePaul University in Chicago, and at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN have earned Fr. Faso degrees in theology, music, and liturgy.

He taught in the Franciscan High School Seminary in Oak Brook, IL and at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. For 20 years, Fr. Faso was at St. Peter’s Church in the Loop of Chicago as musician, liturgist, confessor, teacher, pastor, and fundraiser.

Fr. Faso’s hometown of Chicago Heights, IL is still home to many of his family members, and he is blessed with several sisters-in-law, nieces, a nephew, great nieces, and a great nephew, plus aunts, uncles, and cousins by the dozens.

For more information, see [www.frchuckofm.org](http://www.frchuckofm.org). ■

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## Excerpts from How Would St. Francis Vote?

by Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM CAP.; more at [www.ncregister.com/site/article/712](http://www.ncregister.com/site/article/712) (from Nov. 5-11, 2006 Issue)

The following is excerpted from the Red Mass Archbishop Chaput celebrated for public officials in Harrisburg, PA.

Anger is easy. The world is an unjust place. Lawyers, judges and public officials are easy to blame for that, and too often they deserve it. The same can be said about sin and indifference in the Church. Priests and bishops are easy to blame — and too often, we deserve it. But simply admitting that doesn’t change anything. And anger only makes it worse.

St. Francis of Assisi lived in a world very much like our own. His lifetime coincided with wars, political corruption, big gaps between the rich and the poor, and deep conflicts in the Church and in society. And yet, the anchor of his life was always his love for the Church and his unwillingness to criticize her. Instead of tearing the Church down because of the sins of her leaders, Francis chose to love the Church and to serve her — and because of that love and by his simple living of the Gospel without compromise, he became the means God used for the renewal of a whole society.

... Throughout his life, Francis had a deep dislike for anything that glossed over the hard parts of the Gospel. In the Middle Ages, a “gloss” was an interpretation of Scripture that softened the meaning of a passage and made it easier to live. Francis wanted to live the Gospel *sine glossa* — in other words, “without alibis” or excuses.

In this, he was simply following Jesus. Christ spoke, again and again, against those who “glossed away” the law of

God in Israel — the Jews who declared their property *korban* (dedicated to God), so that they wouldn’t have to support their parents, and thus dishonored the Fourth Commandment; or those who turned the Temple sacrifice into an excuse for making money without seeing how this corrupted true worship.

Francis knew that it isn’t enough to say, “Lord, Lord” to enter the Kingdom of heaven. Words mean nothing without the actions that back them up. We need to actually *do and live* the will of God in our daily choices, or we’re liars.

When people claim they’re Catholic but do nothing in the public square to advance the Christian understanding of each human person’s dignity, they’re deceiving themselves and other people — but they’re not fooling God. The sanctity of the human person begins at conception. It continues through every tick on the clock until natural death.

Embryonic stem-cell research, abortion, assisted suicide — these are fundamental, inexcusable violations of human dignity. So is trying to change the meaning of marriage. So is exploiting the disabled and the poor. So is bigotry against immigrants. And if somewhere in your hearts a little voice is whispering “I agree, but” — that’s exactly the kind of gloss Francis and Jesus both warned against.

We need to drill it into our heads that defending the sanctity of the human person and serving the common good can’t be separated. Stuffing our Catholic faith in a closet when we

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**Calendar**

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

**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)

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know that Fr. Lester Bach, OFM CAP. focused much of his talk on the Trinity and the love which binds the persons of the Trinity together. Here's the image of that Trinitarian love from Bonaventure: *The picture of the fountain is possibly the best way to understand the life of the Trinity in Bonaventure's work; Trinity is a community of perfect loving relationship so intense that it is an ever-flowing fountain or spring, constantly drenching creation with sustaining love.* What a beautiful image!

There's every indication that Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO will have much to share with us as National Formation Director. I'm sure the presentation mentioned above is only the beginning of all the gifts he will be sharing with us.

■ **Updated FAN Web Site.** The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) has updated its web

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And this is precisely what I witness in you, my Franciscan sisters and brothers. This is the reason I love my ministry with you. You enliven me with your faith and your desire to do more than the minimum – to come closer to our Lord Jesus, to live the Gospel after the manner of St. Francis of Assisi. And that's a pretty hefty order! That's taking things seriously, and saying I'm not satisfied until I have given more of myself, indeed, all of myself to the Lord.

And yes, we fall short. All of us do. And when we get discouraged, when we feel that we are far from perfect, we need to recall the words of St. Francis, who said, "Brothers [and sisters], let us begin, for up to now we have done nothing." So he too experienced his incompleteness, his falling far short of the

**Vote** *continued from p. 3 ...*

enter the public square or join a public debate isn't good manners, and it isn't political courtesy. It's cowardice. And we'll be judged for that cowardice by the God who created us.

... It's always easier to talk about social justice or political reform when the target of the reform is "out there," rather than "in here." ... Today, just like 800 years ago, the structures of government and the Church are so much

site and it's really worth a visit: [www.franciscanaction.org](http://www.franciscanaction.org). Lots of information, the ability to register (for free!) as an individual member in order to receive notification of important issues, and a YouTube clip of Fr. Mike Perry, OFM giving his talk at the official launch of FAN in March 2008. Fr. Perry has just been elected Provincial Minister of Sacred Heart Province.

■ **Upcoming Events.** Here in our Region, we have important and fun events coming up – the annual Gathering on August 2 (see page 2), our retreat in September with Fr. Chuck Faso, OFM, and the Mother Cabrini Celebration in November – and then another year is over – where does the time go! In the meantime, I hope all of you are having a fun and restful summer. Take time to thank God for all his blessings, and remember in prayer all those who have lost so much through the floods in Iowa and along the Mississippi. ■

goal of living the Gospel with his whole heart. And we need to fight the temptation of getting discouraged, since that can lead us to give up altogether. We need to be reminded that awareness of falling short simply means that we still have our eyes on the goal. If we didn't we wouldn't be in touch with the disparity between what is and what isn't – or what is and what is *not yet*.

So may our founders, Sts. Francis and Clare, continue to inspire us so that we may continue to inspire each other. We can never discount the inspiration that we are and need to be to each other – and that includes our struggles, our faults and failings, and our attempts to pick ourselves up and to begin again, because, "up to now we have done nothing." God bless you always. ■

easier to tinker with than a stubborn heart or personal ambition or an empty hole where our Catholic faith should be. Renewing society – in a truly Catholic sense – begins with our own repentance and conversion, our own humility and willingness to serve – and that's the really hard work, which is why so little of it seems to get done.

But it can be done. Francis showed us how. It's up to us to do something about it. ■