

Minister's Message: An Important Anniversary

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I'm writing this message on the eve of our Leadership Workshop at Mayslake (June 20) and in anticipation of attending the Franciscan Spirituality Workshop at St. Francis University in Loretto, PA (June 25-28). I'll report on both in the August *SFO News*.

Our Regional Councilor for Fraternal Life, Chris Bruhnke, SFO, has an article on page 2 about our annual Franciscan Gathering, this year on August 1 (Saturday), which is going to be wonderful! As Sr. Madge Karecki, SSF-TOSF recently said, this 800th anniversary of the first Rule of the Order of Friars Minor is very important for all of us. It is literally the celebration of the birth of the Franciscan Order. Without that first Rule, none of us would be here today.

The anniversary was officially celebrated

this year at the Chapter of Mats, held April 15-18 in Assisi. I thought you might enjoy some of the highlights of that meeting. I've put together the following synopsis based on the May 2009 Special Edition of *Fraternitas*, the newsletter of the Order of Friars Minor. Do read the entire newsletter (which includes pictures) online at www.ofm.org/fraternitas/2009pdf/2009eng.pdf.

The First Order of Friars Minor, Conventuals, Capuchins and the Third Order Regular (TOR), delegates from the male and female Institutes, the SFO, YouFra and Franciscans from other Christian confessions participated; about 2,000 Franciscans from 65 countries. Fr. Jose R. Carballo, OFM, current Minister General, welcomed those present and said, "It is the first time in history that our Franciscan

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Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Fr. Don Blaeser, OFM

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

If I said, "I'll bet you a dollar you can't tell me what I wrote about in this column last month," would you have to pay, or would I? Well, all bets are off – you're pretty smart, and I suspect the Mother Cabrini Region would break my bank.

The answer is that for the last two months I've explored with you two of the four major components of the typical SFO fraternity meeting: *prayer*, and *ongoing formation*. This month I want to continue with a look at the *business matters* and *social time*.

Business matters are best kept to a minimum. Why? Because we are not a business or corporation. We share information about fraternity members who might be ill or in need in some way, and news from other levels of the Franciscan family. Most business can be handled at the council meeting. If there are

major decisions to make they need to be brought to the whole fraternity. Likewise, the fraternity deserves to be kept "in the loop" about anything that pertains to the Order as a whole, or anything that impacts the fraternity or its members personally.

Since we are not running a business or major corporation, and since we do not exist for the purpose of doing some kind of work, *business* should not ordinarily take much time. However, I have attended some fraternity gatherings at which the *business matters* seem to go on painfully long. This can cause some members to wonder why they are there, or even wish they could "escape". We don't need to create pain at fraternity meetings. Again, the council can handle most matters and organize the things they bring to the whole fraternity so they may be handled with ease.

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Council Members

Minister:

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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:

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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
20th of each month.**

Professions

- **Lyz Amarillo**, SFO,
- **Rosemary Lotarski**, SFO, and
- **Chuck Oliveri**, SFO of Brother Jacoba Community (Chicago) made their Professions on May 19.
- **Mary Hobbs**, SFO of St. Juliana Fraternity (Chicago) made her Profession on June 14.
- **Heidi Berkthold**, SFO,
- **Marilyn Ciaramitaro-K** [sic], SFO,
- **Carol Coorlim**, SFO,
- **Diane Jacobson**, SFO,
- **Randy Jacobson**, SFO, and
- **Cecilia Skrzypek**, SFO of St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity (Libertyville) made their Professions on June 14.

Rest in Peace

- **Thomas Crowley**, SFO of St. Paschal Satellite (Chicago) died June 12.
- **Elsy Giacomuzzi**, SFO of St. Juliana Fraternity (Chicago) died February 4.
- **Bernice Green**, SFO of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Fox Valley) died May 30.

Local Elections

Best wishes and prayers for the newly-elected officers of **Wellspring Community (Chicago)**:

- **Minister:**
Barbe Creagh, SFO
- **Vice-Minister:**
Mary Hufnagl, SFO
- **Formation Director:**
Liza Ann Acosta, SFO
- **Secretary:**
Diane Broeker, SFO
- **Treasurer:**
Helen Henry Hartman, SFO

Directory Updates

Page 3: Regional Secretary: ZIP code for Monica Marko, SFO has changed.

Pages 4 & 8: Regional Councilor for Communications/PR and NW Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine): Delete the work phone number for Lisa Wathen, SFO.

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Regional Gathering in August

by Chris Bruhnke, SFO; Regional Councilor for Fraternal Life

Every year we look forward to our annual Regional Gathering, 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!**

- **Date:** August 1 (Saturday)
- **Location:** Mayslake Village
1801 35th St., Oak Brook
- **Time:** 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
– 8 a.m.: Registration
– 9 a.m.: Mass (Chapel)
- **Cost:** Lunch is \$15 per person; however, you're welcome to bring your own lunch.
- **RSVP By:** July 23 (Thursday)

Fraternity ministers: Please email me at fratlif@ilsfo.org with the total number of attendees from your fraternity no later than July 24 (Friday). It would be helpful if each fraternity minister or a delegate would make one call or email for the entire fraternity, as calls from individual attendees can become quite overwhelming.

Our featured morning guest speakers will be Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, OFM and Sr. Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF. We look forward to their presentation on the 800th Anniversary of the Franciscan Order. In the afternoon, we look forward to experiencing a touch of Korean culture: Elisabeth Shin, SFO, our Regional Councilor At-Large, has graciously arranged for us to view a performance by the

Korean Dance Group. Let's have a great turnout and show our support.

About the Speakers

■ **Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, OFM** is a member of the Assumption Province. He has served the Church as a seminary professor; founder of the inner-city Gospel Family intentional community (1969); professor at the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University; and missionary in South Africa for 21 years, where he co-founded the Franciscan Institute of Southern Africa. He is a retreat director, popular preacher and Franciscan lecturer, and instructor in biblical studies and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Fr. Wroblewski was the founder of the St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity (Wayne) and served as the National Spiritual Assistant in South Africa.

■ **Sr. Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF** is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis and has worked extensively in formation with Secular Franciscans, sisters, and friars. A graduate of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, she holds a doctorate in Missiology from the University of South Africa and has taught Missiology and Franciscan Spirituality there. She co-founded the Franciscan Institute of Southern Africa, and served as a consultant to the Association of English-speaking Poor Clare monasteries in Africa. Sr. Karecki is currently the director of the Catholic Missions Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago. ☒

Grounded in Love

by Sandra Kisel, SFO; Regional Formation Director

"We are many parts, we are all one body, and the gifts we have we are given to share..."

With elections a few months away for our Region, there is much focus on servant leadership. We've just celebrated the feasts of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and the feast of Corpus Christi, the Body of Christ.

Servant leadership of any kind must always be grounded in love stemming from the love we have first received from God and the

Gospels. It must be reciprocal; the soul attempting to return to God with joy, gratitude for the so many gifts one has received in such abundance.

In the light of the feast of Corpus Christi, I've reflected much on Chapter 1 of our Rule:

"The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church [the mystical

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Our Franciscan Family – Celebrating 800 Years

Excerpts from multiple articles; see footnotes.

Pope Benedict XVI¹

April 18 marked the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Franciscan order. Pope Benedict XVI celebrated the occasion at his summer residence of Castel Gandolfo, along with nearly two thousand religious and lay Franciscans.

... If all of its branches are counted together, the Franciscans today comprise the largest religious order in the Church. Those numbers are eloquent testimony to the enduring legacy of St. Francis of Assisi to the Church. Like other famous saints, through his holiness and charism, St. Francis helped the Church of his day to renew its Christian identity.

And contemporary Franciscans such as Father Benedict Groeschel, co-founder of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, continue to draw on that same charism and holiness to renew the Church today.

Speaking to the Franciscans assembled Saturday at Castel Gandolfo, “The Pope recalled how St. Francis heard God’s voice telling him, ‘Repair my house,’ and he urged today’s Franciscans to continue those efforts of fixing the serious ‘ruins’ in society and mankind,” CNS reported.

“Like Francis, always begin with yourself,” Benedict said. “We are the first homes that God wants restored.”

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Body of Christ], unites all members of the people of God ... In various ways and forms but in **life-giving union** with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.” [emphasis added]

“Life-giving union” – these are powerful words that we skim over so often as we consider our Rule. Each spiritual family has a specific gift for the Church, and we as Secular Franciscans are called to live as Gospel people and evangelists; as mothers who mirror and carry Christ, the Bread of Life, within us to all; to be leaven in the world.

The Gospels tell us that we cannot all be the same – all hands, all feet, all legs or necks – because what would the body be in this case? However, we all have gifts that we bring into this union and each of us in our capacity or giftedness bring life to this body/wholeness to this union with Jesus as our head. Each person has an important role. The proportion that we serve is in direct proportion to *love*. I know that among us there are those pondering, wondering whether God is calling them into greater service for His Kingdom. I pray these souls will respond with great generosity to that call, as “It is in giving that we receive.”

At Profession, we consecrate ourselves for the Kingdom

SFO News / www.ilsfo.org

Moving Forward²

Franciscans around the world will continue to be on the ground in places marked by violence and extreme poverty, [Minister General] Father Jose Rodriguez Carballo said at a press conference ... in Rome [on] June 22.

The press conference was called to announce some of the proposals and conclusions that came out of the order’s 187th general chapter ... During the chapter, members also celebrated the 800th anniversary of the founding of their order.

... Franciscans affirmed their desire “to be bridges between cultures and religions, bridge-builders of reconciliation, justice and peace, messengers of the culture of life and custodians of hope,” [said Father Carballo].

He said the 152 representatives of the order at the Assisi meeting reconfirmed their mission in the Holy Land and in Morocco and approved new missionary projects in Europe, which is heavily secularized, and in the Amazon, where the ecological system is seriously at risk. ■

¹ “Happy 800th Birthday, Franciscans!” by Tom McFeely, *NCRRegister.com*, April 20, 2009.

² “Franciscans affirm role as bridge-builders, messengers of hope”, by Carol Glatz, *Catholic News Service*, June 23, 2009.

of God; with Jesus we offer our lives in the spirit of the beatitudes to our Heavenly Father. We must consider this with regard to our fraternal life in the Order. We are many members with Christ at the Head of this Body; one member among many; one fraternity among many throughout the world, called together by the Holy Spirit in life-giving union. Our immersion into one cell of the Order immerses us into the entire body of the Order. And we are called to live our lives and contribute according to our callings, as Secular Franciscans, as Gospel people, with Jesus, Mary, Francis, and Clare as our models. We are all living stones with Jesus the Cornerstone supporting us all.

Formation News

■ **Leadership Workshop.** It was great to see so many at the Leadership Workshop – there were brothers and sisters I hadn’t seen in a very long time, I’m happy you were there.

■ **Newly-Professed.** We have been blessed with several Professions in our Region; please see the “Professions” sidebar on page 2 for information. Peace and every good to all our newly-Professed as you continue your journey into God in the way of Francis and Clare! May your days be filled with joyful service and God’s peace which the world cannot give. ■

Calendar

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

July

18: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

August

01: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

October

09-11: Regional Retreat, Marytown, Libertyville
17: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

November

15: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration (location TBD)

December

12: Regional Elections (to be confirmed with NAFRA)

Directory Updates

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Page 8: NW Franciscan Community of the IHM (Palatine): Gathering time has changed: 7:30 p.m. Phone number for Patti Depa, SFO has changed.

Page 13: St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Joliet): Phone number for Fr. John Dombrowski, OFM has changed.

Page 14: St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Oak Lawn): Area code for Patrick Mendés, SFO has changed.

Page 22: St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Crystal Lake): Gathering time has changed: 1:30 p.m. Delete "Loras Hall".

Page 23: St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Fox Valley): Address for Fr. Jonathan Foster, OFM (phone and email are the same) has changed.

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Family finds itself gathered together before the [Portiuncula] in Assisi where it all began that we may give thanks to God for the great gift of the charism which St. Francis left to the Church."

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM CAP., Preacher to the Papal Household, said, "We are being offered a unique opportunity this year of 2009 to go back to the purest state of the Franciscan charism in the very place where it sprang forth. This is a 'Kairos' for both the whole Order and the Franciscan Movement which we cannot let pass by in vain."

The second day of the Chapter was dedicated to "witness" of Franciscans scattered throughout the world. The third day was a day of fasting and pilgrimage. At 3 p.m., all the Friars reassembled before the Portiuncula. Led by the Ministers General, they set out on a silent journey in procession toward the tomb of St. Francis where they received anew the Rule they promised to observe.

On the last day, the Chapter moved to the Apostolic Courtyard of Castel Gandolfo. Fr. Carballo, OFM greeted Pope Benedict XVI, saying, "Holy Father, it is with a joyful heart that all the Franciscan Family today gathers around you to celebrate in and with the Church the [800th] centenary of the

foundation of the Order of Friars Minor. Convinced of this truth, we have left Assisi to come to you, Holy Father, as St. Francis did with his first companions. We ask that you confirm once again this holy way of life, so that—as our rule states—'always submissive and subject at the feet of the same Holy Church, solid in the Catholic Faith, we may observe the poverty, humility, and Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ we have firmly promised."

The Holy Father responded by first recalling Francis' conversion story, and then saying, "Every brother and sister should safeguard a simple and joyful contemplative spirit. Be inspired by Christ as Francis was inspired both by the gaze of the Crucifix of St. Damian and the encounter with the leper, so that you may see the face of Christ in those who suffer and bring his peace to them."

He concluded, "Thank you for coming. Now go and bring to everyone the peace and love of Christ, the Savior. May Mary Immaculate, the 'Virgin made Church,' be with you! May you also be strengthened by my Apostolic Blessing which I impart from my heart to all who are present and to the whole Franciscan family!"

Brothers and Sisters, we are a part of this! Come learn more on August 1! Summer blessings! ☒

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For us Franciscans, *social time* is in some ways the high point of the gathering. We truly enjoy one another's company, and relish the opportunity to deepen our relationship with each other—to celebrate fraternity. So, this is not "down time". This is really important time—an opportunity to be family in a relaxed atmosphere. And unless we are really pressed for time, we should not leave early, or feel that the meeting is now "over". (If I seem to be implying that the *social time* comes last, I want to add that it needn't be so. Sometimes it's good to shift things around for variety sake.)

We call one another "sisters and brothers". That implies a very special kind of kinship between us. We might ask ourselves how well we really know each other. One way is to spend our *social time* fruitfully. We can engage in an exercise now and then to provide opportunities for this,

such as talking in groups of 2, 3, or 4 in which we share something significant. What a delight it can be to share with each other the reason why we became Franciscans, or how our calling has changed us over the years, or what we feel is most significant about our vocation today. Also, we need times to celebrate together—professions, birthdays, anniversaries, our special Church feasts, etc.

By way of conclusion, the fraternity gathering should be life-giving, stimulating, and engage us personally. And the four components of the typical gathering should be handled in such a way that they contribute to this. It is definitely not a matter of "getting the job done" or having just the "same ol' same ol' ", but rather we need to foster our vocations, nourishing, supporting, and challenging one another. When we do, we will be truly alive and filled with the Holy Spirit, and that attracts new members! God bless you all. ☒