

SFO News

Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order

www.ilsfo.org

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Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, SFO

Dear brothers and sisters,

As I write this, I am eagerly anticipating my vacation (10 days away). Summer is a time when we tend to live life at a more relaxed pace, when longer days and warmer weather encourage us to get outdoors, and family schedules change. We no longer have to wonder if weather will make it difficult for our members to attend our monthly meetings, but our numbers can be depleted by vacations. How does a fraternity relax and enjoy summer?

First, we don't take the summer off, as sometimes happened in times past. Article 24 of the Rule prescribes "regular and frequent meetings of the community." Yes, members will miss one meeting or another - but if I'm on vacation when the fraternity meets this month and available next month when the fraternity doesn't meet, I've just missed two months in a row instead of one! That gets to be a long time to be apart, and we don't want to do that.

However, we can take advantage of the summer months and put some variety into our fraternity meetings. Picnics are a common fraternity activity in the summer. St. Anthony's feast day in June is a common time of celebration for many fraternities, especially those named for him.

What about a Franciscan-flavored field trip? Marytown is a great place to visit - between the many indoor and outdoor shrines and the Kolbe/ Holocaust Museum, there are great opportunities for devotion and for learning. At Chapter of Ministers, we heard about the increased need for volunteers at both the Port and Franciscan Outreach during the summer months; maybe you have a group that could help out for an evening. I've been part of groups that visited the Poor Clares in both Lemont and Rockford; that would be a nice way to reinforce ties with that part of our Franciscan family.

Speaking of family ties, attending another fraternity's monthly meeting would be a good way to get to know people better while experiencing the way another fraternity does things. See the Regional website www.ilsfo.org for meeting times and locations. Of course, you could also attend the August Portiuncula Gathering.

Experiencing God in creation is always high on my list; maybe your fraternity could visit a beautiful park, read the Cantic of the Creatures, then just sit quietly and be aware of God's presence. (After all, we are to "let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all [we] are and do" (Rule 8).) Many people think of sitting on the beach in the summer; just a few tweaks turns that experience into a Franciscan morning of reflection.

Let's remember that one of the most important things we do when we gather is be TOGETHER - what we do is less important. However, we do want to include specifically Franciscan aspects at each event, as much as possible - and *especially* when we have guests. Summer picnics are a natural place to include guests; perhaps a couple of members could share their stories of how they came to the SFO after (or over) dessert. Not only are such stories uplifting for us to hear, but they may trigger a thought, "That sounds like what I've been looking for!" in one of our guests! We never know what it is we do or say that will help someone else recognize God's call, so we should make a point of making it easy to hear.

Whatever you do this summer, I hope that it brings you refreshment in body, mind, and spirit. Let's be creative in providing that same refreshment for our fraternities!

Peace and all good, Vickie ☺

Council Members

Minister

Vickie Klick, SFO
minister@ilsfo.org

Vice-Minister

Lorna Miressi, SFO
viceminister@ilsfo.org

Formation Director

J. Patrick Mendés, SFO
formation@ilsfo.org

Secretary

Monica Marko, SFO
secretary@ilsfo.org

Treasurer

Stephen Lanterman, SFO
treasurer@ilsfo.org

Councilor At-Large

Elisabeth Shin, SFO
atlarge@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Communications/

Public Relations

Gloria J. Huerta, SFO
pr@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Fraternal Life

Bonnie Michels, SFO
fratlife@ilsfo.org

Councilor for JPIC

Stephanie Sormane, SFO
jplic@ilsfo.org

Councilor for Vocations

Norman Mosk, SFO
vocations@ilsfo.org

Spiritual Assistant

Br. Joe Middleton, OFM
spiritualassistant@ilsfo.org

Newsletter Editor

Gloria J. Huerta, SFO
sfonews@ilsfo.org

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.

CALENDAR

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

* Election & Visitation dates subject to change.

February

14: Elections, St. Bernardine Siena

March

- 01: Fair Share, Census, and Annual Reports due
- 07: Elections St. Mary of the Angels at the Port
- 14: Visitation, St. Maximillian Kolbe
- 27: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

April

- 10: Candidates' Retreat, Day 1
- 11: Elections St. Francis St. Louis
- 18: Visitation, St. Anthony of Padua, East Side

May

- 01: Candidates' Retreat, Day 2
- 15: Chapter of Ministers
- 16: Visitation, Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe

June

26: Elections, St. Clare Kankakee

July

- 10: Leadership Workshop
- 17: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 18: Elections, St. Francis Assisi Crystal Lake
- 25: Elections, St. Anthony of Padua, Rockford
- 25: Visitation, St. Anthony Padua, Oak Lawn

August

07: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

September

- 11: Elections, St. Anthony Padua, Joliet
- 17-19: Regional Retreat, The Port, Frankfort
- 26: Elections, St. Francis of Assisi, Steger

October

- 3: Elections, Living Waters Korean Fraternity
- 16: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 26-31: NAFRA Meeting

November

13: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration (St. Peter's Church in the Loop)

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There is no question concerning which Franciscan to present and to inspire this month's feature. It's Anthony of Padua the former Augustinian who was originally from Lisbon, Portugal, whose feast is June 13th. He became a follower of St Francis soon after the papal approval of the Rule, sometime after 1223. Anthony was intellectually brilliant, articulate and passionate; a perfect teacher. Here are a few of his words from a sermon. *"The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience and obedience; we speak in those languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others. Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak. We are full of words but empty of actions, and therefore cursed by the Lord, since he himself cursed the fig tree when he found no fruit but only leaves. Gregory says: "A law is laid upon the preacher to practice what he preaches." It is useless for a man to flaunt his knowledge of the law if he undermines its teaching by his actions."*

Even though Anthony was enlightened beyond his peers he was humble and true to the ideals and standards set by Jesus and Francis, so much so that before he accepted the invitation to teach the brothers he appealed to Francis for his approval. And this is what St Francis said to him in a letter. *"Brother Francis sends greetings to Brother Anthony, my Bishop. I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers providing that, as is contained in the Rule, you "do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion" during study of this kind."*

Now, this little burning bush idea of St Francis could be the masthead of a future feature, day of reflection, or a retreat. It is the spirit of prayer and devotion that is, "The First Priority."

Here's a little follow-up on the idea of our own Fioretti (little flowers) which I proposed to you in last month's *SFO News*. The original idea was an exercise for us as individuals to explore our own Franciscan experience examined in light of the accounts of the early followers of Francis. I thought it could be a productive experience to help each of us to recognize ourselves as modern day followers of Francis and Clare following onward as a part of the movement of the Franciscan Spirit. I further proposed in that article that you share your reflection.

Now, after further thought, I would like to encourage you to not only compose your thoughts, your little flowers, but to send them to me. Then depending on the response it is my intention to gather them all into a little composition of the Fioretti of the Brothers and Sisters of the Mother Cabrini Region, perhaps to be distributed at the Mother Cabrini Celebration on November 13, 2010.

Reach me at spiritualassistant@ilsfo.org or c/o St Peter's Church, 110 W Madison, Chicago, IL 60602.

Announcements:

Sunday, June 27, 2010 - St. Thomas More Korean Fraternity will have its first profession of new members on **at Mayslake Chapel in Oak Brook at 11:30 a.m.** You are encouraged to join the fraternity in this joyous celebration. Please contact Elizabeth Shin (atlarge@ilsfo.org) for further details.

Saturday, July 10, 2010 - Leadership Conference at Mayslake, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This year's workshop will focus on new directions in SFO Formation. Details will be forthcoming.

In-Formation

By Patrick Mendes, SFO
Regional Formation Director

As you receive this issue of SFO NEWS, we enter the month of June, a month traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose feast day we will celebrate on June 11th, so I begin with a prayer for you that the Sacred Heart of Jesus will surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has always been of singular importance to Franciscans. A certain “specialness” exists in our Mother Cabrini Region. Our patroness, as we all know, was a Secular Franciscan before she founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. The majority of the fraternities of our Region are bonded to the friar Province of the Sacred Heart. Reaching back even further, the German Province of the Holy Cross, from which the Province of the Sacred Heart was founded, was very instrumental in fostering the devotion to the Sacred Heart in Germany, following the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary. Though I haven’t seen any documentation, it is reasonable to assume that is why they placed their new daughter province under the patronage of the Sacred Heart.

We also know of the great love of our holy father, Francis, for Jesus and his heart was so intimately united with the Heart of Jesus that he was given the stigmata.

What lessons do we learn from our long Franciscan history of devotion to the Sacred Heart? What is expected of us? What can we expect?

Let’s start by looking at article 12 of our Holy Rule: “Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.”

Purity of heart, simply stated, is living our lives in a manner that is compatible with presenting ourselves before the Lord.

In practical terms, we live our lives in fraternity as article 30 of the General Constitutions directs us: “The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity... this means we put ourselves at the service of our brothers and sisters in accord with the gifts the Lord has given us.” We participate in planning events for our fraternity; we accept

nomination for offices for which we have the necessary talents; in general, we do as the article continues to direct us “The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires **personal presence, witness, prayer and active collaboration, in accord with each one’s situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity.**”

Our fraternal lives are a concrete expression of our love for God and for one another. Let’s make a sincere effort to contribute to the life of our fraternity in these very concrete ways that make us a source of joy and peace for one another.

Let us make our hearts reflections of the love of the Heart of Jesus.

I wish you all a very blessed, holy and happy feast day!

JPIC

by Stephanie Sormane, SFO
Councilor for JPIC

Here are my plans for articles for the next several months: This month I’d like to share my ideas regarding the transition from Apostolic Commissions model to JPIC model as we live the Rule in the areas of family, work, ecology and peace and justice. Next month we’ll summarize the articles Pat Brandwein-Ball has had in *Tau-USA* for the last 2½ years – a good review for me as well as you as I’ll be writing the article just before going to the SFO Workshop in Loretto, PA at which Pat will be presenting. **(On that note, if any of you are still interested in going, please contact me ASAP. As of yesterday, there is still room at Loretto, but they will not accept any registrations after June 12.)** Finally, in July, I will report on the Loretto workshop.

Here are my thoughts concerning the transition from Commissions to JPIC model. Bear in mind that first and foremost is our Rule – this is what we profess to, this is our way of life as Secular Franciscans. Our current Rule, approved by Pope Paul VI on June 24, 1978, has not changed since its approval – it is exactly the same as it was the day Pope Paul approved it.

JPIC (continued from page 3)

Therefore, nothing really has changed. What has changed, hopefully, is our better understanding of our call as Secular Franciscans.

We are called to apostolic action because we are called “to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Article 4 of the Rule). Perhaps the Gospel of Jesus can be briefly summarized by the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40): *[Jesus] said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”*

The Apostolic Commissions came six years after the approval of our current Rule and were developed by Fr. Matthew Gaskin, OFM of Holy Name Province. William Wicks had an excellent article in the Winter 2007 issue of *Tau-USA* explaining how the Commissions came about. He said, in part: “The intention of the formation of these commissions was to encourage transition from the Leonine Rule (of 1883) that *did not* call the Tertiaries to apostolic activity, but directed them mainly toward the devotional; the goal, then was self sanctification. The Apostolic Commissions called attention to actively living out our SFO calling in the world, through participation.”

Unfortunately, as time went on, at least in some areas, the concentration on the Commissions became exaggerated; thinking and activities became project-oriented, and the spirit of the Rule got lost in the shuffle. This needed to be corrected, and that was acknowledged before Franciscan Action Network (FAN) or Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) entered our lives. Nothing really happened, however, until those two acronyms did come along, and a lot of confusion came with them – so let’s try to clarify that confusion.

First, **FAN does not replace the Commissions.** FAN is an activity in which the SFO participates with the rest of the Franciscan Family under JPIC – but only one activity, not the whole thing!

JPIC is a term used by the other branches of the Franciscan Family. The Friars and Sisters have had JPIC Committees, Coordinators, Chairpersons, etc. for years. Our using that term as well was for communication purposes – so we would all be referring to the same activities with the same words, a good thing as the various branches of the Franciscan Family work together more and more. This is something that happens within FAN – but that’s not the only place it happens. Right here in our Chicago area Friars, Sisters, and seculars work together in various ministries. This is, thanks be to God, becoming more and more common, but not as common as it should or could be – but hopefully that will come with time!

So – if JPIC is simply a new name for the same activity, and FAN is simply one of the activities under JPIC, then what has changed? It’s more a renewed awareness than change. We must be clear on why do we do what we do and how do we do it, and it must be not out of obligation but out of love. We must be people of peace and reconciliation, not just some of the time, but all of the time and that is very hard to do. But with God’s grace, we can do it – perhaps not perfectly, but well enough to make a difference in our world. What we’re called to do is rebuild God’s house – to bring about God’s kingdom!

In Memoriam

Please pray for Ron Drum, SFO from St. Clare Kankakee Fraternity who died on April 23, 2010. Ron was a humble, quiet, loving person deeply motivated by a love for God and for his fellow human beings. He touched the people he knew with his depth of spirituality and gentleness of spirit.

May God grant him abundant joy for his faithful service. Amen.