

Minister's Message

by Vickie Klick, SFO

Dear sisters and brothers,

This month, I invite you to join me in a slightly different kind of meditation on the many gifts that our loving Father has bestowed on us.

Sit quietly and think about the events of the past year. In particular, focus on an event or a period in your life that was particularly difficult. (No, this is not a variation of Francis' perfect joy!) First, think about what made it so difficult for you. Would it have been difficult for anyone, or was this a challenge uniquely yours?

Next, consider why this challenge was given to you and not to someone else. Did something make you the "right" person to deal with this challenge? Yes, you may have been the only person around...but that doesn't mean you weren't there for a reason.

Perhaps your challenge doesn't fit the previous question well (e.g., an illness that affects you personally). No matter what the circumstances, now consider what experiences and unique gifts you have that helped you deal with the challenge. Spend some time thinking about this; you may want to make a list. After you finish, go back to the previous question and reconsider how you came to be in the "right" place at the right time. You may find that you have unique gifts that made you the "right" person to deal with the challenge.

Move on to how you were helped to cope with the challenge. Did prayer - your own and/or that of others - sustain you? What did other people do help? What acts of God in nature gave you hope? How were you encouraged to persevere? I hope you will find that your brothers and sisters in fraternity were a support to you; if not, were they aware of the situation? In order for us to help one another, we have to share our needs with each other.

Next, consider the consequences of the challenge. How has it changed you? How has it changed others around you? Whether the changes are improvements or not from a purely human perspective is not the point. As

St. Paul said he came to willingly boast of his weaknesses in order that the power of Christ might dwell in him (*cf. 2 Cor 12: 9*). If we believe that all things work for good for those who love God (*Romans 8:28*), we have faith that somehow even the losses of our lives will benefit us and others, even if we don't understand right now.

Now you've considered the circumstances leading up to the challenge, the unique talents and experiences that were given to you to prepare for the challenge, the encouragement and support you received, and the consequences in your life and the lives of others. I am confident that as all of us are striving to follow Christ more closely in the spirit of Francis and Clare, you have recognized something for which you are ready to give thanks. I hope that this reflection has helped you to see many ways in which you were prepared and sustained in your time of trial.

Now, imagine that you are called before the Father. He tells you that you, his servant, were entrusted with the things you needed to do His work in the world - His work of handling this difficult situation. He points out how you made good use of His gifts, while perhaps gently reminding you of other gifts you didn't use. He reviews the results, including many things you had no idea came about as a consequence of the situation and your actions. Finally, he says to you, "Well done, my good and faithful servant" (*Matthew 25:23*).

Let us give thanks for all the blessings the Lord has given us, especially for those that come to us in times of trouble. Pray for eyes to see these blessings!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Mother Cabrini Celebration, and I wish you all a blessed Thanksgiving.

Peace and goodVickie ☒

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The SFO News is the official publication of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order.

CALENDAR

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

- **Election & Visitation dates subject to change.**
(E=Election/V=Visitation)

January

- 15: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 17: San Jose Fraternity (E)

February

- 15: St. Junipero Serra (V)
- 26: Apostolates Workshop

March

- 01: Fair Share, Census, and Annual Reports due
- 14: NW Franciscan Community (V)
- 19: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

April

- 2: Candidates' Retreat, Day 1
- 17: St. Thomas More (E)

May

- 07: Candidates' Retreat, Day 2
- 12-15: National Formation Workshop, Belleville, IL
- 21: Chapter of Ministers - Fraternal & Pastoral Visitation

June

- 07: St. Clare Fraternity (Oak Brook) (V)
- 12: St. Juliana Fraternity (V)
- 23/ Summer Seminar - "Fraternity"
- 26: Loretto, PA
- 26: St. Anthony Padua (East Side) (E)

July

- 10: St. Elizabeth of Hungary (V)
- 10: St. Maximillian Kolbe (E)
- 16: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 23: St. Francis of Assisi Fox Valley (V)

August

- 06: Regional Gathering, Feast of the Portiuncula

September

- 17-18: Regional Formation Workshop for Ministers/ Formation Directors
- 18: St. Mary of the Angels (V)

October

- 02: St. Francis/St. Louis (V)
- 15: Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 25-30: NAFRA Meeting

November

- 13: Mother Cabrini Feast Day Celebration (Mayslake Village)

December

- 04: St. Bernardine of Siena (V)

Spiritual Assistant's Message

by Br. Joe Middleton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Here we are again in sweet November which is one of my favorite months of the year for many reasons. The weather is usually fair and Thanksgiving is my favorite secular holiday. And who doesn't love the colors of fall foliage and falling leaves which is a charming and remarkable phenomenon...although some poor souls who have the daunting task of raking those leaves might not agree to that 'charming' part. As Catholics and as Franciscans we have additionally a glorious range of activities and events particular to this time of the year. The Church begins the month with the Feast of all Saints which is a holy day of obligation this year; this is followed the next day by The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed known to most of us as All Souls. Then as Franciscans we celebrate the Commemoration of All the Deceased of the Seraphic Order on November 24th as well as All Saints of the Seraphic Order on November 29th. I have always felt that this prescribed time of remembering and honoring the dead offers we Catholics some of the most profound and relevant opportunities to pray, support life, and encourage deep family connections.

At the mass during the Mother Cabrini celebration we will remember our Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters who have died this past year with a little ritual during the prayers of petition. Each name will be called and the local minister will light a candle in their honor.

Before I conclude I feel compelled to also mention that for Secular Franciscans there are additional opportunities to be connected to God and to each other. On November 17th we have the Feast of Elizabeth of Hungary; the great patroness of the Third Order Secular. Then, on November 19th, we have the memorial of Clare's sister Agnes of Assisi. And of course, for those of us in the Mother Cabrini Region, we celebrate her feast on November 13th.

On the subject of Mother Cabrini Celebration 2011, not only do I want to encourage you all to attend this special regional event, I want to encourage you to bring something to contribute to the Mother Cabrini Region Pot Luck Buffet. I would invite you to bring something you really love and do well, something ethnic in origin perhaps. Bring something that could serve a dozen or more Franciscans in a proper container with a serving utensil if necessary. The Mass begins the day at 1:00 PM but the kitchen and the meeting room in the senior center will be open beginning at 9:30 or so to drop off items for our lunch to be served after Mass. Consider bringing appetizers or main dish items, some with meat and some vegetarian, and vegetables or salads. How about cookies, cakes, and pies? Don't forget a variety of breads n' spreads or crackers & cheese, or nuts and olives and pickles oh my! I'll be preparing my gigantic Bella Mundo Pasta Salad Deluxe. So, the first thing we need is your glorious presence on that day and second, some of your food judged to be good by you with a little extra for some of the rest of us.

With best wishes and my thanks,
I am your Brother Joe☞

Mother Cabrini Celebration

This is a final reminder about the upcoming Mother Cabrini Celebration that will take place on Sunday, November 13th at Mayslake Village. The agenda for the day is as follows:

- 12:30 PM Registration in main lobby outside the Chapel
- 1:00 - 2:00 PM Mass in the Chapel
- 2:00 - 3:30 PM Lunch in the Senior Center
- 3:30 - 4:15 PM Fr. Kurt Hartrich
- 4:15 - 4:45 PM Conclusion

NOTE: The Senior Center will be open starting at 9:00 AM. Bring ALL food items directly to the **Senior Center** for advance preparation and setup prior to the Registration in the main lobby. Soft drinks, regular and diet variety are also needed. There will be people in Senior Center between 9 and 12:30 to help with food set up and preparation. ☞

In-Formation

By Nick Noe, SFO

Regional Formation Commission

Daily Turning

“It’s all about turning, it’s all about conversion.” proclaimed the priest as he began his homily on the 26th Sunday of Ordinary Time. I silently agreed, but thought “it’s not easy.” As he continued to reflect on the readings from Ezekiel, Philippians and Matthew emphasizing “conversion” and “turning,” I naturally thought about Art. 7 of our Rule. It challenges us to become Christ-like in our thoughts and deeds through a radical interior change, and this “conversion” needs to be carried out daily. And conversion is indeed a turning, a turning from a self-centered life to a God-centered life. The 19th century Shaker hymn, *Simple Gifts*, came to mind during the homily, and I made a mental note to reacquaint myself with the lyrics.

*‘Tis a gift to be simple, ‘tis a gift to be free
‘Tis a gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
‘Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain’d,
To bow and to bend we shan’t be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come ‘round right.*

As I read the lyrics, I could imagine Francis singing this Shaker hymn because he strongly felt the Lord calling him and his followers “to travel the paths of humility and simplicity.” And he might visualize the path of conversion to be a dance as does the hymn. (Shaker manuscripts indicate *Simple Gifts* is a dancing song.) But we shouldn’t turn too quickly, and we need to let our Divine Partner lead as we try to dance along the path of conversion. Our Rule and Constitution describe the dance steps we should follow, but it’s only with the help of God’s grace and by following God’s will that we can stay on the path.

A friend recently e-mailed me a poem written by a teenage girl who has cancer and only six months to live. In her poem, *Slow Dance*, the anonymous author pleads with us not to dance and turn so fast that we don’t have time to appreciate family, friends, children and nature. And I would add that dancing too fast and making up your own dance steps causes you to stray from the path of conversion. The last lines of *Slow Dance* are:

*You better slow down.
Don’t dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won’t last.*

What is this right place “of love and delight,” the place where the dance takes us and is willed for us by God? Thomas Merton writes in *Thoughts in Solitude* that “when we find that place, our life and our prayer both at once become extremely simple. Then we discover what the spiritual life really is.” It doesn’t matter what we do, where we live, or how we pray. We habitually realize “that He (God) is everything and we are nothing, that He is the Center to which all things tend and to Whom all our actions must be directed....we depend entirely on Him.” But until we reach that place, God is with us and leads as we turn and dance along the path of conversion. ¶

In Memoriam

We remember the following SFO brothers and sisters of the Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity who passed to eternal life between November 2010 and October 2011

Angela Allred, SFO - St. Clare - Oak Brook, Nov. 1, 2010
Gloria Cain, SFO - St. Anthony of Padua - Oak Lawn, Nov. 21, 2010
Wanda Brierton, SFO - Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM, Dec. 3, 2010
Frank Storey, SFO - St. Francis-St. Louis, Dec. 9, 2010
Edward Beilfuss, SFO - St. Pascal, Dec. 12, 2010
Deacon Max Jinkens, SFO - St. Maximilian Kolbe, Dec. 23, 2010
Lavonna Rann, SFO - St. Anthony of Padua - Joliet, Dec. 23, 2010
Candita Pancini, SFO - St. Anthony of Padua - Joliet, Dec. 25, 2010
Patricia Gudac, SFO - St. Anthony of Padua - Joliet, Dec. 27, 2010
Fr. Roch Niemier, OFM, Provincial Spiritual Assistant to the SFO of Assumption Province, Dec. 31, 2010
Loretta Ciszewski, SFO - St. Clare - Oak Brook, Jan. 9, 2011
Bill Doerres, SFO - St. Juliana, Jan. 27th, 2011
Anne Malczewski, SFO - St. Clare - Oak Brook, Jan. 31, 2011
Gerarda Seemayer, SFO - St. Clare - Kankakee, Feb. 15, 2011
Earleen Soprych, SFO - St. Elizabeth of Hungary/St. Francis-St. Louis, March 5, 2011 - (First Regional Minister, 1994-1997)
Florence Conrad, SFO - St. Maximilian Kolbe, March 18, 2011
Hattie Plecki, SFO - St. Anthony - Oak Lawn, April 5, 2011
Margaret Ann Smith, SFO - St. Francis-St. Louis, April 14, 2011
Elena Frigoletti, SFO - St. Clare - Oak Brook, April 25, 2011
Sylvia Mack, SFO - St. Francis-St. Louis - May, 2011
Arlene Wasisco, SFO - St. Clare - Oak Brook, May 10, 2011
Doug McDougall, SFO - St. Francis - Crystal Lake, May 25, 2011
Catherine Padula, SFO - Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM, June 28, 2011
Rosemary Warren, SFO - St. Francis - Crystal Lake, July 16, 2011
Lillian Miazga, SFO - St. Anthony - Oak Lawn, Aug. 1, 2011
Marge Harkenrider, SFO - St. Anthony (East Side), Sept 22, 2011
Jean Conklin, SFO - St. Francis-St. Louis, Oct. 2, 2011
Betty Konar, SFO - Northwest Franciscan Community of the IHM, Oct. 9, 2011
Cecilia Schwer, SFO - St. Clare - Oak Brook, Oct. 13, 2011

May God grant eternal life, happiness and peace to these brothers and sisters and all our loved ones who have passed into the Lord’s embrace. Amen. ¶

JPIC News - News from National Chapter Meeting

Vickie Klick, SFO

I am taking the liberty of pre-empting Stephanie's column so I can share with you the exciting plans for JPIC at the national level that have been shared with us by National JPIC Coordinator Kent Ferris at the National Fraternity Chapter.

Having completed ten months of webinars on the joint initiative with Catholic Relief Services, Kent has now started ten months of sharing materials via our JPIC coordinators (Stephanie in our region) that introduces a variety of programs and initiatives from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). What follows is the high-level summary of these programs shared with us by Kent in his annual report. If you or your fraternity are looking for an area to support with your time, talent, and treasure, these USCCB programs may suggest a worthy area for your attention. If one of these catches your eye, please let Stephanie know so that she can share the materials as they become available. If there is sufficient interest in a particular area, it may be a workshop theme in the future.

Since there are quite a number of initiatives they will be covered across two newsletters (November and December).

Respect Life. The Respect Life Program begins anew each year on Respect Life Sunday, the first Sunday in October. The program is highlighted in liturgies and marked by special events. The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities publishes a program packet each year to call attention to numerous human life issues. These materials are especially helpful for priests, parish groups and other organizations. This year's theme is "I came so all might have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

The Two Feet of Love in Action. The packet will be a one session curriculum enabling participants to learn how to respond to others in need with love. From the facilitators' materials: "There are two different, but complementary, ways that we can act in response to God's love. We call these the Two Feet of Love in Action. These two feet, Social Justice and Charitable Works, allow us to walk the path of love, or *caritas*. This pilgrimage of love is an ongoing, lifelong journey of growth. Just as our faith leads to action, our loving actions lead to new spiritual growth. This action is not taken alone, but together with others. In this way, we work to make God's kingdom present on earth." You can find the facilitator's guide at the USCCB website at: www.usccb.org/.../upload/Two-Feet-of-Love-in-Action-Facilitator-s-Guide.pdf.

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Justice for Immigrants (JFI). From the JFI website: "In June 2004, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration and The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, INC. (CLINIC) Board of Directors resolved to make comprehensive immigration reform, with special emphasis on legalization, a major public policy priority within the Church. Many other national Catholic institutions have also made legalization a policy priority.

As part of the Church's response, a diverse group of Catholic organizations with national networks have decided to join the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope* campaign designed to unite and mobilize a growing network of Catholic institutions, individuals, and other persons of good faith in support of a broad legalization program and comprehensive immigration reform. Its goal will be to maximize the Church's influence on this issue, consistent with the immigration reform principles enunciated in the bishops' pastoral letter.

The Campaign's primary objectives are:

1. To educate the public, especially the Catholic community, including Catholic public officials, about Church teaching on migration and immigrants;
2. To create political will for positive immigration reform;
3. To enact legislative and administrative reforms based on the principles articulated by the bishops; and
4. To organize Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms."

(To be continued in the December SFO News) 

Prayer for Feast of All Saints of Seraphic Order

Almighty, eternal God, You were pleased to make your Church illustrious through the varied splendor of the saints of the Seraphic Order.

As we venerate their memory in one festival may we also follow such shining examples of virtue on earth and thus obtain merited crowns in Heaven.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*We wish all of you a blessed and
Happy Thanksgiving!*