

TRACINGS

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Secular Franciscan Order

Spring 2016, Issue 16

Minister's Quarterly Message

God's Mercy Manifested in Us!

by Kim Pappas, OFS
Regional Minister

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, I think we Secular Franciscans are being called to a deeper relationship with God and our Brothers and Sisters in St. Francis. When we think of mercy, we usually associate it with God's mercy on us for the sins we have committed. The *Confiteor* Prayer at the beginning of Mass reminds us that as Christians, we not only ask for pardon from our faults, we ask for pardon/forgiveness/mercy for what we have **failed** to do.

St. Francis was a radical; he still is for that matter. Are we as radical in our love for each other that spurs us on to deeds of profound love? When we think of what we do – volunteer work at our convenience – what about when it challenges us beyond our comfort zone? For example; talking with a homeless

person who is holding a sign on the street corner, instead of just giving him or her some money and driving off, hoping that we did the right thing.

St. Francis never worried about whether or not he did the right thing. He **knew** he did the right thing because of his overflowing love that kept on overflowing into his next encounter.

When we come back from a fraternity gathering, are we energized to be like Francis or are we relieved that it is over? How do we attract others to this radical way of living/loving if we are defining God's boundaries?

Challenge: Let God's Mercy flow through us so that we can be like Francis and find that overflowing love. In this way, when people encounter us, they will know that God's mercy is manifested in us as we imitate Francis' overflowing love.

BE A DISCIPLE

by Margi Florence, OFS
Regional Formation Director

Each one of us is challenged to be who we say we are. We are challenged to be open to an "ongoing conversion" that promises to transform our life like St. Francis. Before we can assist others on their journey, we must make a choice to know and follow Jesus ourselves. Proclaim God's Good News by being who we say we are. We must nurture ourselves as well as others:

1. Initial Trust

You and I must allow the wall of mistrust to break away. Our life lived in Jesus is not for show or convenience but for the glory of God. You and I are about drawing others to God as we journey together.

2. Spiritual Curiosity

You and I are to live our life in such a way that other people want to know

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DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A PORTRAIT OF GOD?

by Kathy Taormina, OFS
QOP Regional Spiritual Assistant

Recently, my teacher and mentor, Fr. Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv. passed away. I participated in the first Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Regional Spiritual Assistant (SA) Class, led by Father Linus, which began in 2008. At that time we were all new to what the class was meant to be and what we, as Seculars, were meant to learn so as to serve our brothers and sisters in fraternity.

The one concept that Father Linus drilled into our heads was that we were to now “see through a different lens, through the pastoral eyes of a spiritual assistant.” That, although we personally remained Seculars, we were to be in fraternity, now as a member of the council, and to see the members in a new and pastoral way, not just a fraternal way any longer. He taught us to “always be open to the Spirit to lead and guide,” to which all the faithful are called. What Father Linus taught me in the BSSF SA class I now utilize as the Queen of Peace Regional SA and in the regional SA class, so his lessons live on!

The most impactful statement though was the note on my homework once where he wrote that my “*uniqueness will provide another portrait of God.*” For those who know me; that was quite comforting and yet quite funny at the same time!

I never looked upon myself as unique, or chosen, just different. But it got me to thinking about all of us. How *do* we see ourselves as Christians, as Catholics and as Franciscans?

Do we see ourselves as a “*portrait of God*”? We are made in the “image and

likeness of God” (Gen. 1:27), but yet, do we believe that statement enough to know what that involves concerning ourselves and others? Our OFS Rule, Article #19 states that we “trust in the divine seed in everyone.” We try to see that divine seed in others, but do we see it in ourselves? Do we believe that we are specially made to be the “handiwork of God” as Paul proclaims to the Ephesians (2:10)?

Do we believe we are unique? That God in all His omnipotence took the thought and time to form us into a unique, one-of-a-kind person? As Saint Pope John Paul II stated at the gathering of youth in New Orleans in 1987, “you are an unrepeatable event!” An event?!? WOW!

We *are* unique, made by God’s own hand and placed here and now to be a “*portrait of God*” to ourselves and to others! Make sure that others who encounter us can fully appreciate God’s artwork!

Be a Disciple - Continued

what motivates us. Our devoted faithful living and witnessing to Jesus draws others to want to know Jesus.

3. Spiritual Openness

The desire to know God’s Way leads us to realize that serious choices need to be made. God is someone calling us in a personal way. Something new is being required.

4. Spiritual Seeking

Jesus invites us to use our gifts and talents, to express our gratitude and joy for being His. We are to continue growing in faith, living a gospel life and carry out works of mercy toward all whom we meet. Can I commit myself to the mission of Christ and His Church.? Ask yourself this question.

Continued top of next column

5. Intentional Discipleship

You and I must follow Jesus intentionally, with our whole heart, soul, and mind and strength as once we ask for the privilege of following Jesus in the footsteps of Francis

In order to be recognized as a Secular Franciscan.

Our decisions to be who we say we are will drive and coordinate everything in our life. The result of the decision is the beginning of a new life_ empowered by the Holy Spirit.

If we wish to grow our fraternities we need to make choices to know and follow Jesus ourselves becoming intentional disciples. What example do you show?

Charter OFS Member Visits Marshalltown Fraternity

by Julie Stern, OFS, Minister San Damiano Fraternity Marshalltown, IA

Tau Cross Books and Media editor and publisher Lori Pieper, OFS attended a meeting of her home-town San Damiano Fraternity in Marshalltown, Iowa in February while on an extended leave visiting her parents over the holidays. Dr. Pieper has a Ph.D. in Medieval History from Fordham University, where she specialized in women’s history, hagiography and Church history community and other Catholic readers nationwide and internationally.

Lori, as her brothers and sisters in Christ call her, lives in Bronx, NY and is now publishing a Franciscan Saints Newsletter, sells her books through her website, and has other projects in the works.

I remember Lori when she was working in the DRE office at St. Mary Parish in Marshalltown, and was reintroduced to

JPIC – Regional Update

by Mary Higgins, OFS & Cynthia Gunsolly, OFS – Regional JPIC Animators

We have three things to share with you this month.

National Disaster Relief Effort: The team working on the OSF National Disaster Relief Program has recommended cooperation with the St. Vincent de Paul USA Disaster Services (SVPD), in providing assistance in response to needs that arise throughout the country. This organization has teams already in place and has connections and experience that would be helpful for us. The national executive council is considering this proposal. We will keep you posted when we have more information.

What is your fraternity up to? We would like to know what our fraternities are doing to share ideas and encourage one another. Each fraternity has its own character and apostolates, but we are all striving to follow Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis. We will post reports shared on the regional website. Check out the first report on the JPIC page under “Programs” from the main menu. Thanks to Immaculate Heart of Mary in Grand Fork ND, St. Alphonsa Fraternity, Epiphany Catholic Church in Coon Rapids MN, Our Lady of Consolation in Prior Lake MN and St. Louis Fraternity in Rochester MN for being the first to respond. Our strength is in our diversity and the way we use the particular charisms of each group. Please send your reports to knmhiggins74@frontier.com.

Formation at Minister’s Meeting in Buffalo: We are excited to be taking part in the formation portion of the program at the regional gathering coming up June 3-5. We will be highlighting the connection between Catholic Social Teachings and Franciscan values and giving fraternities’ resources and ideas to use for initial and ongoing formation. We will especially be looking at how fraternities can study and respond to *Laudato Si*. If your fraternity has begun using Pope Francis’ encyclical, please come ready to share what you are doing. If not, bring your questions.



Charter Member Visits - Continued

her during my formation in the late 1990's. She was the first “Lay Franciscan” or Secular Franciscan in the area at the time, sponsored by Holy Trinity Fraternity in Dubuque, IA. She would travel to St Mary Fraternity in Waterloo on occasion to visit other Franciscans and was the first member of the new fraternity in Marshalltown.

Dr. Pieper attended the last Q in Chicago, IL in 2012 and offered her published works for sale. They may be viewed along with the registration for her newsletter on her website, taucrossbooks.com.



Secular Franciscan Order Queen of Peace Region Donation Form

I/We would like to make a tax deductible donation to the OFS Queen of Peace Regional Common Fund:

In honor of: _____

- or -

As a Memorial to: _____

My/Our check numbered _____ in the amount of _____ is included in this mailing.

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Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Please mail this form and your check to:
Treasurer, OFS Queen of Peace Region
22983 W. Martin Lake Drive, Stacy, MN 55079



UPCOMING EVENTS

Queen of Peace Regional Spring Gathering

The Regional Spring Gathering sponsored by San Damiano Fraternity in Elk River, MN, will be held at the Franciscan Convent in Little Falls, MN, Saturday, April 23, 2016. Registration is from 8 to 9 AM. Program 9AM to 3PM. Guest speaker is Fr. Stephen McMichael, OFM Conv., who will be speaking on the Canticle of Creation. Registration form is attached to this newsletter.

Annual Regional Fraternity Meeting

The 2016 Regional Fraternity meeting will be held again at Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, MN, June 3rd through 5th 2016. Attendance by Local Fraternity Ministers or their designated representatives is mandatory. Please mark your calendars for this important event. This is our Region's Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation meeting. Our Visitors are currently designated as Bro. Bob Brady, OFM, Pastoral and Jan Parker, OFS Fraternal.

The Quinquennial

NAFRA will hold the "Q" in St Louis, June 30 – July 3, 2016 at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel. Rediscover the Franciscan Charisms and enjoy new growth and fruitfulness in your vocation. Share your joys and your insights as we look forward to future endeavors as a National Family.

Regional Formation Workshop

A Regional Formation Workshop is being planned for August 13, 2016 at Saint Bonaventure in Bloomington, MN. Mark your calendars for this important event. More information will be provided as planning continues.

Regional Fall Gathering

The 2016 Regional Fall Gathering, sponsored by St Leonard of Port Maurice Fraternity, will be held Saturday, October 8th, 2016 from 8:30 AM to 3:45 PM at St. Austin's Church in North Minneapolis, 4050 Upton Ave N. The speaker is Sr. Elise Saggau, OSF

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REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Minister

Kim Pappas, OFS
pappasfamily4@juno.com

Vice Minister

Tim Taormina, OFS
tjtaormina@delta.com

Secretary

Gordon Walker, OFS
gwalkerofs@gmail.com

Treasurer

Kathy Fraser, OFS
44frase@gmail.com

Formation Director

Margi Florence
margiflo32@gmail.com

MN, WI, ND, SD Council Member

Maria Hamilton
mhamil4388@aol.com

IA Council Member

Hazel Martin, OFS
yankeefan1950@outlook.com

NE Council Member

Richard Beal, OFS
bealsfo@cox.net

Regional Spiritual Assistants

Sr. Nancy Miller OSF
millern@osfdbq.org

Kathy Taormina, OFS
kathysfo@hotmail.com