

TRACINGS

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Minister's Message – *Be Ready!*

By Kim Pappas, OFS, Regional Minister

During Advent, we hear the gospel where we are urged to stay awake. If an owner knew when the thief was coming he would have stayed awake. I reflect on this biblical passage as I return from the annual gathering for NAFRA

The newly elected National Executive Council has been working hard. In addition to the routine stuff (elections and visitations) they found themselves with a unique request. The International Visitor (CIOFS visits every six years) requested medical supplies for her home country of Venezuela.

I believe that if every fraternity works on its organization (rules and constitutions) in addition to their Franciscan Spirituality, that every situation has a solution. NAFRA notified regions. Regions notified their fraternities. Fraternities throughout the country (and I am very proud to say our region as well) responded with supplies and money.

There is nothing in our rules to "figure

out" how to handle the outpouring. Volunteers boxed up the supplies. Others transported the boxes to Miami where they were sent on. Others figured out the customs requirements. The visitor carried 18 lbs. in her suitcase. 120 lbs. were shipped; quite an accomplishment for our nation in dealing with the short notice request – a testament to readiness. We were wide awake.

I think the gospel is reminding us that if we take care of the routine stuff we encounter, we are probably prepared to handle the unexpected, whenever it presents itself. I am sure that God was looking for someone who took care of their faith to be the mother of Jesus. Faith life-routinely cared for; an unexpected-request from God to bear his Son.

Our Franciscan families need to be cared for, not so much as to be "routine", but to be ready for the unexpected. Peace be with you this season and remember – be ready.

In this issue

Minister's Message	P.1
REC Guidance	P.1
Living Mercy	P.2
JPIC Priorities	P.3
Charitable Giving Form	P.3
Upcoming Events	P.4

REC Offers Guidance on Civic Responsibility

As Secular Franciscans, we are called to work for peace as the work of justice and the fruit of reconciliation (Article 23 GC), striving to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ (OFS Rule, article 13). In the days to come, we are to be in the forefront in the field of public life, collaborating for just laws and ordinances through courageous initiatives whenever human dignity is attacked by oppression or indifference. As Secular Franciscans, we commit ourselves to oppose every form of exploitation or prejudicial outlook and to support personal and public actions which care for creation (articles 18, 22 GC, rule 18).

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Living Mercy

by Sr. Nancy Miller, OSF, Regional Spiritual Assistant

It has been a year since the “*Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy*” began in which Pope Francis’ proclaimed, “This is the time for mercy. It is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time for all those who are waiting to see and to touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.”

The *Year of Mercy* officially ended on November 20th, but *living Mercy* and committing to new works of mercy are needed more now than ever. In the *Rule of The Secular Franciscan Order*, the brothers and sisters of penance are summoned to the road to renewal in “the sacrament of reconciliation which is privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and source of grace (art. 7).” “They are to live in the Spirit of the Beatitudes (art. 11) and . . . individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives

and their courageous initiatives; especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices with their faith” (art. 15). Article 19 states, “Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.” As we know, our world, country, neighborhoods and families are in need of all these. And that is what Franciscans can and are called to give to our world. What a challenging call!

In Pope Francis’s *Message on World Day of Prayer for Creation* in September, 2016, he reminded us that, “Nothing unites us to God more than an act of mercy, for it is by mercy that the Lord forgives our sins and gives us the grace to practice acts of mercy in his name.” He paraphrased Saint James and wrote, “We can say that mercy without works is dead ... In our rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world, many new

forms of poverty are appearing. In response to them, we need to be creative in developing new and practical forms of charitable outreach as concrete expressions of the way of mercy.”

He also notes in his *Message* that “The Christian life involves the practice of the traditional seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy.” He continues; “But if we look at the works of mercy as a whole, we see that the object of mercy is human life itself and everything it embraces.” Obviously “human life itself and everything it embraces” includes care for our common home. So let me propose a complement to the two traditional sets of seven: may the works of mercy also include *care for our common home*. As a spiritual work of mercy, care for our common home calls for a “grateful contemplation of God’s world” (*Laudato Si*, 214) which “allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us” (ibid. 85). As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires “simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness” and “makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world” (ibid. 230-31).

Each of one of us can seek ways to live mercy by “simple daily gestures which build a better world,” for that is ours to do, in our time and place and we do it together. Together, as part of our initial and ongoing formation as Franciscans, we can seek ways to change structures that diminish people’s lives and destroy our “Sister Mother Earth.” Look at what Francis and Clare of Assisi did with their little band of followers. Imagine what we can do now as part of a larger Franciscan Family.

May we live Mercy each day. May you have a blessed Christmas season.

Three New Secular Franciscans Profess . . .



Fr Matthew Malik, OFM, queries Fr John Bauer, Janet Uhlir and Cathy Maloney-Hills as to their desire to profess to the Gospel life. The three new Secular Franciscans of St Alphonsa Fraternity professed on 29 November 2016 at the church of St Vincent DePaul in Brooklyn Park, MN.



Fraternity of Mary, Queen of Peace Holds Elections



Posing after election on October 7th are the new servant leaders of Mary, Queen of Peace Fraternity in St Paul. Left to right: Eileen Moore, OSF, Council Member; Anne Keller, OSF, Secretary; Robin Donner, OFS, Treasurer; Steve Smith, OFS, Minister; Jeannie Kratzer, OFS, Formation Director and Eugene Krentz, OFS, Vice Minister.

JPIC Priorities for 2017

Your JPIC animators are setting goals for the coming year. Here's a preview:

1. Continue to develop JPIC pages on the website. Add more content on peace.

"Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon..." Article 19, OFS Rule

2. Educate on the two facets of social action: charity and justice.

Charity – works of mercy, direct service to others

Justice – advocacy for legislative action and development that support the dignity and value of all human life.

3. Encourage advocacy on state and national issues.

"Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith." Article 15, OFS Rule

4. Invite fraternities to share information and photos of their social action ministries. Post submissions on the Queen of Peace website.

What is your fraternity up to? Let us know so we can share!

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Secular Franciscan Order Queen of Peace Region Charitable Giving 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, made out to "QUEEN OF PEACE REGION."

My/Our Name: _____

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 2017

Regional Spring Gathering sponsored by Spiritus Sanctus Emerging Fraternity; Saturday, April 22, 2017, Franciscan Mother House, Little Falls, MN. Registration 8:30 to 9 AM. Program 9 AM. Guest speaker: Fr. Daniel P. Horan, OFM Conv. Topic: Franciscan Spirit of Thomas Merton. Registration information will be available later.

Annual Regional Spiritual Assistant Workshop – 1-2 June 2017 to be held concurrently with the Annual Council Meeting.

Annual Regional Council Meeting and Chapter of Elections – 2-4 June 2017, Christ the King Retreat Center Buffalo, MN

Election and Visitation Schedule 2016/2017

Fraternity	Location	Election	Visitation
San Damiano	Marshalltown, IA		Spring '17
Holy Trinity	Dubuque, IA		1/15/2017
St. Leonard			
Of Port Maurice	Minneapolis, MN	2/19/2017	
St. John XXIII, OFS	Bloomington, MN		3/12/2017
St. Mary	Waterloo, IA	4/2/2017	
St. Thomas More	Inver Grove Heights, MN	4/18/2017	
Immaculate			
Heart of Mary	Grand Forks, ND	5/14/2017	
St. Anthony of Padua	Minneapolis, MN		5/21/2017
Little Portion	Marshall, MN		5/21/2017
Our Lady of Consolation	Prior Lake, MN		5/21/2017
St. Alphonsa	Coon Rapids, MN	5/28/2017	
Fraternity of Mary, Queen of Peace	St. Paul, MN		10/6/2017
St. Francis of Assisi	Little Falls, MN	10/17/2017	
St. Louis	Rochester, MN	11/16/2017	
St. Mary	Shakopee, MN		11/19/2017

Dates in blue have yet to be confirmed

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