

MAXIMILIAN KOLBE FRATERNITY



What a blessed day! We began at the 8:15AM Mass, during which Barbara Landry was professed into the Secular Franciscan Order. Not only was it a day of celebration for Barbara, but for our entire Fraternity.

Afterwards, we met in the White House for celebration and, of course, lots of good food. Barbara shared what a special day it was for her. It held significant meaning for her also, as it was the feast day of St. Andre Bessette, whose shrine she had visited as a young girl.

We prayed the Liturgy of the Hours together. We then went over chapter 29 in [The Franciscan Journey on Servant Leadership](#). As our elections are coming up in February, it was important that we reviewed and reminded ourselves of our promise to serve each other, the Church, and the world. We had good discussions with lots of sharing and our bonds of unity were strengthened.

As stated, at the February meeting we will hold Elections for a new Council. Please make every effort to attend this important day for our fraternity.

MARK YOU CALENDERS: The annual Regional Retreat will be held on May 4—6 at the St. Charles Retreat Center in Moss Bluff, LA. The expected Retreat Master will be Fr. Bamman, OFM. More information will be upcoming soon.

Dedication to the service of the kingdom comes about because the Lord gives a person the grace to consecrate himself to the cause of the Kingdom. Profession is a grace and gift of the Spirit.

-Felice Cangelosi, OFM
Cap

A MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL

“The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.”—SFO Rule Article 22

Recently we have been provided with multiple examples of how we as Secular Franciscans in Houston, Texas are part of this larger body made up of our Brothers and Sisters in the First, Second, and Third Orders all over the World. When we were hit by Harvey the response from our National and Regional family was overwhelming. When 10 of us made the road trip to San Antonio for Fiesta Franciscana, and there were as many Friars or those in formation for such, as there were seculars, it brings it home. Wow, we are so Blessed that we have been called to this.

I am still filled with joy after returning from Baton Rouge for our visitation from National. Our visitors were our brother, Father Christopher Panagoplos, TOR and our sister, Willie Guadalupe, OFS. Father Christopher is with The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants which is one of the four spiritual assistants, one from each friar obedience (Order of Friars Minor, OFM Capuchin, OFM Conventual, and Third Order Regular), who provide assistance to the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. The CNSA is responsible for guiding all the spiritual assistants to the SFO in the United States.

Father Christopher reminded us all that during our profession, we repeated three times (I immediately thought of Peter denying Christ three times) that this is what we wanted. At our gatherings the Holy Spirit comes as we sit around the tables much like what occurs at the Eucharistic table. Our fraternities are indeed a privileged place. We are not a devotional society or a prayer group. We are a religious order, canonically established. Within our Constitutions we read “The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong...(art. 30.1) The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration”. (art. 30.2)

This co-responsibility was, or should have, been emphasized during our formation. Primary importance should be given to this commitment. It is just like those people we all know who say they do not get anything from Church. Well, just sitting in a pew an hour a week does not get it done. We must be active. We only meet once a month and yet we have many not participating . Your fraternity needs you!

Elections will be in February. As we discussed, no ones feelings will be hurt if they are not elected. In fact, that would be good as it means others have stepped up to serve. To vote or serve you must be professed and active, which means you have participated in at least 6 meetings this past year and have contributed to the fair share. We do need everyone there as there are duties that those voting cannot perform .

When National completes their visitation report, the Region will forward and it will be shared. I want to encourage everyone to mark your calendars and plan to attend our Regional Retreat which will be held again at the St. Charles Retreat Center.

Pax et Bonum!

michael

PROFESSION ANNIVERSARIES

Shelley Barger (2005)
GG LaFitte (2005)
Karen Parsons (2005)
Dora Freeman (2010)
Mike Freeman (2010)
Magdalene Moon (2010)

“Pray for one another that you may be saved.” (James. 5:16)

To underline our communion with the Pope, we offer the intention of the Holy Father for the month and an intention for OFS: January 2018: For the Evangelization: That Christians and other religious minorities in Asian Countries, may be able to practice their faith in full freedom. OFS: For the national fraternities of Togo, Mozambique and Korea.

Concerning the distinctive features of Franciscan spirituality, as contained in the Franciscan tradition, suffice it to say that its essence is doctrinal Christocentrism and practical imitation of Christ, conformity with Christ, prompted by love. Distinctive aspects of Franciscan piety are childlike love of God, our Father, devotion to the Humanity of Christ, His Sacred Heart, the Holy Eucharist, the mysteries of the Nativity and the Passion, His Virgin Mother Mary, and reverence for the Catholic priesthood. Franciscan love of God finds expression also in charity to our fellowmen, understanding them as our brothers, especially in aid to the poor and sick, and in apostolic zeal for souls, Christian and pagan. Total poverty detaches the Franciscan soul from creatures, but at the same time it recognizes God in created things and uses the latter to mount to God. ...On the path of this traditional Franciscan way of life many have attained sainthood.

-The Franciscan Book of Saints

We must be visible

The Church expects from the Secular Franciscan Order, one and only, a great service in the cause of the Kingdom of God in the world today ... the Church expects from you, Secular Franciscans, a courageous and consistent testimony of Christian and Franciscan life, leaning towards the construction of a more fraternal and Gospel world for the realization of the Kingdom of God." - St. Pope John Paul II, 2002 OFS General Chapter

This past Saturday night the local ministers gathered with Father Christopher, TOR, and Willie Guadalupe, OFS, during the visitation from National and asked us to share with them some of the concerns and challenges we have. It did not come as a surprise to anyone that one of the challenges we face is our aging population. Many fraternities have very few active members. He went on to say that there may come a time when fraternities must merge into others and reminded us that, just as when we are baptized we are not baptized into St. Michael's church, but the Roman Catholic Church. When we profess, we profess into the Secular Franciscan Order. Willie asked us how are we addressing the inclusion of those who are not native English Speakers into our fraternities? Both of our visitors repeatedly stated we must be visible....let us set our own goals for our fraternity and that is to increase visibility; and begin to explore how we can include the dominant culture in Houston, those for whom English is not their native language.

Let us all be visible down at the Co-Cathedral for Caritas Day. We have done this as a fraternity the last two years and have had a wonderful time. This years' project is different than the last two in which we packaged food. We will be getting shoes prepared for distribution to the needy for Easter...I remember the excitement as a child when we would get Easter clothes!

This event always fills up so PLEASE make sure you call me or send Dora an e-mail a.s.a.p. that you want to participate. It begins with Mass at 9:00AM and we will be through by noon.

OUR NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 3

In the White House

Candidates/Inquirers meet at 9:00AM

Fraternity meeting begins at 10:00AM

(We are all encouraged to attend Mass together at 8:15AM in the St. Jerome Day Chapel.)

