

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Peace and all Good!

As the Feast Day of our Seraphic Father St. Francis draws near, let us look into our hearts and remember what drew us to him.

It might have been his love of animals and the kinship he felt with all of God's creation. Perhaps it was the awe and reverence that Francis showed for the humanity of Jesus...the baby in the Manger or the grown man suffering on the cross. It might have been Francis's love of the Eucharist and the unimaginable idea that God would give himself to us under the appearance of bread and wine. Or, perhaps, it was his love of the Gospel.

Later on, in formation classes, we learned about poverty and simplicity and perfect joy. We learned that Francis's great gift was that he showed the world that it was possible to live the Gospel. And, we also learned that when we promised to follow the Secular Franciscan Rule at our Profession, we too were promising to show the world that it was possible for all people, not just saints, to live a Gospel life.

In each choice we make, in our fraternities and individually, in what we say and how we say it, in our actions or in our lack of action--in the example of our lives, let us always remember that the Franciscan charism, St. Francis's gift to the world, lives on through us. May God help us to take good care of that gift!

On another note:

In the coming days, your fraternity ministers will be receiving a "Save the Date" card and a letter from me announcing the 2016 Chapter of Ministers, which will also mark the triennial Visitation of our region by members of the National Fraternity and the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. The Chapter will be held in Hackensack, NJ, on Saturday, November 19th. Observers are invited and welcome, so please ask your Minister to share the registration information with you.

As always, I ask that you share this email with your brothers and sisters who do not have access to the Internet.

You are always in my prayers. Please keep your Regional Executive Council in yours.

May you be joyful as you celebrate the feast of our brother and patron, St. Francis, and

May the Lord Bless you and keep you always,

Diane