

The National Minister's Letter to the Order



Building with Living Stones...

By Patrick Mendés, SFO
National Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Peace and all that is good! This is my first opportunity to write you as your new National Minister. My name is Patrick Mendés (Sounds like Mon-day). People often have difficulty pronouncing my last name, but just so you are comfortable, I respond to Patrick just fine, thank you! Prior to being called to serve our national fraternity, I served as Minister of the Mother Cabrini Region, which covers the northern part of the State of Illinois. I live in Oak Brook at Mayslake Village, which is a Franciscan retirement community. Know that the door is open and the welcome mat is out, anytime you are in our area.

I, also, look forward to meeting you at the Quinquennial next July in Steubenville, and as I make visitations.

Your new Executive Council and I look forward to serving you with the same dedication and commitment, as did our predecessors.

As I alluded to in the scripture at the beginning of this column, we do, indeed, build with and upon living stones – those who have preceded us and have accomplished so much for us as an Order and for all the people of God. I give thanks to those “living stones,” who have come before me and in whose noble and holy footsteps I walk - our past National Ministers: Richard Morton, Bill Wicks, and Carol Gentile. They have modeled for me the role of National Minister. I am confident that I can call upon their wisdom and guidance, as I begin my ministry in

these new seas, along with my able and gifted fellow navigators of the Lord’s ship, the SFO. I give thanks to the Lord for the wonderful members of the newly elected Council. They are grace filled, dedicated and very gifted. I am humbled to be in their midst. I give thanks to you and for you, the 15,000 brothers and sisters of our National Fraternity. We are companions on the journey.

I ask your prayers as we set about the tasks before us. As we re-vision our living of the Holy Rule, we will be looking at ways for a more holistic approach, which is practical, faithful to our charism and rebuilds the Lord’s Church, as he told Francis to do. We will look at the Apostolic Commissions and their current structure, which has served us well, and how they interface with the other articles of the Holy Rule and ask the question of ourselves – what is the next growth step we need to take? To this effort, the National Fraternity gathered in Marathon, Wisconsin, voted to appoint an *ad hoc* committee to study what we currently do and make recommendations for the future. This is not something that will be accomplished overnight, but with careful steps, so that we build on what we have and not lose all the good fruits of our efforts up to now. In the oft quoted words of our holy father, Francis “Let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing.” It’s not so much that we have done “nothing,” as the fact that there is much more yet for us to do.

Until next time, I beg your prayers and assure you that you are in mine. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings.

Patrick