



OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS MESSENGER

Issue Number 51

November 2024

From Our Regional Minister

My Franciscan Brothers and Sisters,
You have been in my mind and prayers. I am very grateful for the encounters I have with each one of you: in-person, emails, phone calls, and zoom gatherings. You showed me how much you love your fraternities and the Secular Franciscan Order which has inspired and encouraged me to serve you in my own limited capacity and familiarize myself with the Rules, General Constitution, National Statutes, Rituals, and Regional Statutes. What I have learned from the initial formation makes sense!

Lately, at the National Formation Workshop discussion, our group noticed that at fraternity gatherings, ongoing formation and activities there are tensions (need for balance) between

- following structured agenda and desire to spend more time to listen to one another to enhance fraternal spirit
- those who are talkative and those who are quiet
- fraternity activities and our personal schedules (which one to prioritize)

Someone made a suggestion that perhaps it worth considering our fraternities as extended families. Let us ask the Holy Spirit how we should schedule our day, particularly on the day we meet as a fraternity. At two separate encounters, I was touched by the remarks made by two members of St Pio (Red Deer, AB) that they love their fraternity so much they cannot wait until the time they meet again as a fraternity. Thank you!



I come, O Lord, unto Thy sanctuary to see the life and food of my soul. As I hope in Thee, O Lord, inspire me with that confidence which brings me to Thy holy mountain. Permit me, Divine Jesus, to come closer to Thee, that my whole soul may do homage to the greatness of Thy majesty; that my heart, with its tenderest affections, may acknowledge Thine
infinite love...
St Agnes of Assisi

Saint Agnes of Assisi
(sister of St Clare)
Feast Day
Nov 18th



Blessed John Duns Scotus

1266 – November 8, 1308

Just a few updates of what's going on at the region:

- There were elections at St Elizabeth Hungary (Edmonton) and St Clare (Pickardville). I would like to thank for their generosity: those who served in the previous council, those nominated, and those who are elected.
- The National Formation workshop was held, many thanks to Catherine Payne (our National Director of Formation), Colleen Finlon (our Director of Communication) and the group discussion facilitators from

Trillium Regional Fraternity: Debbie Tessier and Maria Ferrera.

- We had our regional council meeting on zoom on November 8. We decided the four delegates from the council to go to the National Chapter of Election (alphabetical order): Anna-Maria, David, Lanny, and Fr Manoj. Our next meeting will be on Friday, April 25, 2025.

Let us offer prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of one another and please continue to pray for those who need our prayers: our loved ones, fraternity members, the deceased members, and those who have no one to pray for them, including souls in purgatory. May each of you have a blessed Advent!

Your servant, Lanny

From Our Regional Spiritual Assistant

We are pilgrims and strangers... Just a month ago, I had the privilege and blessing of accompanying 28 Secular Franciscans of Western Canada for a pilgrimage to Italy (La Verna, Assisi, Greccio, San Giovanni Rotondo and Rome). We started this pilgrimage from Laverna-the place of Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi and ended with visiting four major Basilicas in Rome.

Ten minutes before the vesper, a religious nun who serves with the friars in La Verna sanctuary, informed me in case I knew of any Indian friars here... to that I said, 'I am familiar with brothers of Indian province because I belong to that brotherhood...so let me know who is here?' I had never expected and was not aware that three Indian brothers would be at Laverna during my visit. Brothers invited me to join the community for dinner. I experienced a brotherhood filled with joy. A warm hospitality from brothers even though a short notice was given to the guardian of La Verna of my presence. Indeed, La Verna, a mountain of natural beauty, is a place for prayer and solitude.

I had another unexpected meeting with four brothers from an Indian province and my cousin who is in his final year of theology to be a priest in Rome. It was a blessing to connect to familiar faces in a foreign land and share a dinner with them. I was a bit overwhelmed with the grandeur of the Basilicas in Rome and felt sad to see such places also have a lot of poor and homeless, especially sleeping under

the arches (a quadruple row of Doric columns) of St. Peter's square. So, the real pilgrimage has just begun...how do I embrace the Poor Christ in those visible poor and homeless around me.

For me this pilgrimage was rather exhausting with far distances to travel on the road but nevertheless, travelling as a group on a bus through the beauty of Italian valleys, visiting the spiritual power houses (Basilicas) in Rome and meeting Indian brothers was outstanding. I was delighted to be in such places of high importance for us Franciscans. It gave me a good impression of walking in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi and a little better understanding of how his world would have been 800 years ago. I also came to know a little more about my Secular Franciscans brothers and sisters. I might have begun as a stranger for some but I am sure at the end of it, we have grown in our friendship.

Pilgrimage was a God given opportunity to see beautiful places, meet strangers and nourish spiritual life through prayers and Eucharist. As I said, the real pilgrimage begins right where we live. Soon, we are going to enter the holy season of Advent, preparing ourselves to welcome the incarnate Jesus on Christmas.

How are we going to prepare ourselves for Christmas? I am sure many have already scheduled their Christmas parties, starting the very first week of Advent. I encourage you to pay attention to what is essential in our pilgrimage to heaven. I invite you to get serious about the season of Advent. Check for yourselves what you need to clean from your heart to make a manger for Jesus to be born. Sometimes, we get caught up in doing what is not essential to the point that the real purpose of Christmas is lost. Some of us have seen Greccio, the cave where the first live nativity scene was created by St. Francis of Assisi. This Christmas it should put us into vigor to truly embrace that poor Christ in our poor brothers and sisters.

Brother Manoj

From our Regional Director of Formation

We are just finishing three sessions of the "Observer Initial Formation" Zoom course from Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity. During the one-hour sessions we have six to seventeen participants from Nanaimo, BC to Weyburn, Saskatchewan and from Valmont, BC to Southern Mexico. Some of the

participants are Observers who are curious about Franciscan spirituality and others are Inquirers and Candidates and Professed Secular Franciscans who are wondering how they can make their programs more engaging for their fraternities. During the first session we talk about asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit to look at the question "Why be a Secular Franciscan?" and introduce the *Franciscan Journey* and the little red *Rule Book*. We mention the admission requirements and the periods of formation. During the second session We look at the three Franciscan Orders - Friars, Sisters and Secular Franciscans and discerning a calling to the Secular Franciscan way of life. A highlight of the second session is viewing the 75th anniversary video of the founding of Mount Saint Francis, nestled in the foothills of the Rockies, the work of the friars and their contribution to the local community of Cochrane, Alberta. In the third session we look at the lives of Francis and Clare and Catholic Doctrine as it relates to Franciscan spirituality. We also listen to Adam, a Candidate from St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity in Red Deer as he tells us about his faith journey and his call to become a Secular Franciscan. Loving and gracious God, please help all of us, so that together we may work to bring the Gospel to life in all our fraternities in Our Lady of the Angels Region!

Pax et bonum,
Catherine McNiff, ofs

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

*Loving and gracious God,
You are a God of mercy, compassion,
generosity and unity.*

*Today, as we live our lives by following Francis,
we make daily choices to live a Gospel life.*

*Help us to assist others to hear Your call.
Help them to recognize the Secular Franciscan
vocation that You have already
planted in their hearts.*

*Help all of us, so that together we may work
to bring the Gospel to life.*

AMEN!

The Secular Franciscan Rule

ARTICLE 3

*The present rule, succeeding "Memoriale Propositi"
(1221) and the rules approved by the Supreme*

Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

The new rule of the Secular Franciscan Order is just that - a new rule. It now replaces all the preceding rules. After Vatican II the Franciscan Order, like all religious orders, was challenged not only to re-discover the charism of its founder, but also to concretize this charism in the world of today. The Secular Franciscan Order has met this challenge. After 12 years of arduous work the new rule was approved by Pope Paul VI on June 24, 1978.

The basic expectation of the Church in the post-Vatican II era is that all Christians strive to lead a gospel life, to embrace gospel values and to achieve a deeper union with the person of Jesus Christ. The thrust of the new rule is its gospel orientation in the spirit of Francis. In the words of Benet A. Fonck, O.F.M., it challenges the Secular Franciscans "to see themselves and to communicate themselves in a new light; not so much as a pious prayer society or a pietistic sociality or merely a spiritual organization, but rather as a dynamic gospel community based on the person of Jesus Christ, shaped by a true Franciscan spirituality, expressed in an evangelizing life-style and secular ministry, and organized in a way that is autonomous from, yet interdependent with, the Friars."

On the occasion of implementing the rule approved by the Holy See, the four general ministers of the First and Third Order Regular made the following comment: "The Church consigns it to you as a norm of life." Clearly indicated here is the relationship of Franciscans to the Holy See. Just as St. Francis sought approval of the pope for his rule, the Franciscans continue to seek approval of the Holy See for any major decisions regarding their way of life. It is therefore understandable that whenever the need for interpretation of any part of the rule arises, Franciscans must have recourse to the Holy See.

In addition to the rule, the life of Secular Franciscans is governed by the general constitutions and particular statutes. The general constitutions, prepared by the general chapter in 1988, still await

the approval of the Congregation for Religious. According to the proposed text, they are:

1. applications of the rule that determine the nature, purpose, spirit and character of the Secular Franciscan Order;
2. concrete indications of the conditions for membership in the secular Franciscan Order; its government; the organization of life in fraternity; and its headquarters.

Particular statutes are further concrete applications of the rule and general constitutions to the needs of time and place. At present there are international statutes (approved 1984) for the International Council of the OFS (CIOFS), national statutes (approved 1984) for the National Fraternity of the OFS in the United States (NAFRA) and some provincial and local statutes.

From *Way of Life* by Richard A. Portasik, OFM

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation

Franciscan Voice Canada

A Link to [November 2024 Blog](#)

by *Andrew Conradi, ofs*

Save the Dates

-8th ANNUAL YOUTH ART CONTEST

December 8, 2024 Links to [INFO](#) & [ENTRY FORM](#)

- ADVENT RETREAT on zoom

My Soul Proclaims

Advent Reflection

with *Br Michael Perras, OFM*

Saturday, Nov 30th 2024 for 45 minutes

10am/BC, 11/AB, 12/SK & MB

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83441814722?pwd=RV3iyppkkNnHukMlsGhyio9P3DGDawD.1>

Meeting ID: 834 4181 4722 Passcode: 099941

Link to [POSTER](#)

-Zoom BIBLE STUDY

Wild Goose Series on the Holy Spirit

with Fr Dave Pivonka, TOR **Thursdays**

6:30pm PT/7:30pm MT/8:30pm CT

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89424828739?pwd=2q6WV6Yh8Fo8swwsjhHioZKqVBNuaZE.1>

Meeting ID: 894 2482 8739 Passcode: 048961

- FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY

On the first Saturday of each month.

Next..... **Dec 7th** @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EybWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

- FRANCISCAN VISION GLOBAL SUMMIT

Dec 7th 2024 *The impact of the Stigmata of Francis on the Franciscan family today: To follow Christ Crucified radically and to heal the "wounds" in diverse cultures, religions and in suffering people.*

Registration is free. For Info see [BROCHURE](#)

-WINTER YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

"Journey with the MAGI" Jan 3rd- 5th 2025

At Mount Saint Francis Retreat Centre, Cochrane, AB

The retreat starts on Friday January 3rd at 5:00 pm (Orientation and supper start at 7:00pm) to Sunday January 5th 1:00 pm with Fellowship, Mass, Reconciliation, Adoration, prayer walks, Lectio Divina, small group discussions + more. Please scan the QR code in the poster or contact maritzachouza@gmail.com for more information. Link to [POSTER](#)

-Canada-wide FRANCISCAN RETREAT

"You Are Love" - A Document from CIOFS

Saturday, Feb 15th 2025 for 1.5 hours

10 am PT/ 11 MT/ 12 CT/ 1 pm ET/ 2 AT

Hear from First Order, Poor & Clare's TOS of the Franciscan family in French & English.

Registration: Name, Email, Fraternity, City, Fr or En to cmariefinlon@gmail.com

Link to [POSTER](#)



Coming soon in every household!

Secular Franciscan of Vancouver
The Fraternity of St. Francis of Assisi
Congratulatory message for the 5th Anniversary of the Establishment

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!
Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21

In August 2014, there was the first informational gathering of the Secular Franciscan Order for the Korean Community, thanks to the generous permission of Fr. Joseph Lee from St. Andrew Kim Parish, the support of the Franciscan Friars in the East, and above all, my desire to share with others about the life of St. Francis. I remember the discussion about the purpose of a Secular Franciscan Order and the reason our Jesuit Pope chose the name Francis. (Before the event, I prayed that at least 12 people would attend the gathering; otherwise I would not pursue the idea of having a Franciscan fraternity for the Korean community. The Lord generously sent me 18 people).

I could not start the fraternity alone. The Lord provided me what I needed: the support of my goddaughter and her husband who left Montreal and moved to Vancouver and Simon's enthusiasm (he came to gatherings all the way from Whistler!), and the guidance of my spiritual father the late Fr. André Comtois, ofm and the late Fr. Paul Seo, ofm (the previous Spiritual Assistant of the Korean fraternity St. Mary of the Angels, Montreal and died in March 2024 at the age of 50). Following the prompt of the Holy Spirit, I entrusted myself to the Lord and prayed for the intercession of St. Francis.

Similar to a Korean proverb, "Well begun is half done", Aristotle says. Unforgettable joy-filled memories are a 2-day retreat with Fr. Dan Gurnick, ofm at St. Joseph Friary, Victoria, two profession ceremonies, the Canonical Establishment of St. Francis Korean fraternity in 2019, profession retreats led by the late Fr. Paul Seo, pilgrimages in Quebec and visits to Korean fraternity in Montreal, where we learned the fraternal spirit and Franciscan family connection. I devoted most of my time and energy to the fraternity. Members were very generous to one another in providing spiritual and material support. I am grateful to Ansovino, who was professed at the Montreal Youth Group then moved to Vancouver. He was very caring and helped me with the first profession mass and reception after the establishment. We had smooth sailing, so it seemed.

The fraternity went through trials as I grew weaker physically and mentally. The devil spread the spirit of jealousy and selfishness in the fraternity. We were in darkness. I did not want to leave the fraternity though I was told to let go and rest. God, in his mercy, sent us Fr. Joachim Yoon, ofm from Montreal. His presence has brought back our joy and the fraternity regained its vitality.

In the meantime, during the year of rest, I attended the New and Old Testament Bible lectures of Fr. Lee Tae-Woo. I also continued to attend the Bible lectures of Fr. Pio of St. Agnes Korean Parish and read the New and Old Testaments twice in succession. I received much comfort and the grace of healing through the words of the Gospel, especially through the Old Testament. When darkness clears, the sky brightens. The dark clouds disappeared as if they had been washed away, and green sprouts sprang from the ground. I felt at peace in my mind and heart. The Franciscan love stirred my heart.

As we celebrate our 5th anniversary of the establishment, I would like to prepare a special 5th birthday meal. In the past few days, I have been thinking carefully about the menu. I would like to prepare five good dishes, so that it continues to be nourishing in the future. What should I do? How should I transfer from the Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel? I wrote the menu as follows...

1. A life of obedience to the church, family, and fraternity
2. A life of prayer, a life of participating in the Eucharist
3. A life of practice, a life of love for neighbours and the earth
4. A life of being a messenger of joy and peace
5. A happy life of being internally purified through daily repentance and atonement

In addition to these five dishes, there should also be dessert. I have chosen the most delicious dessert that no one can take away. This dessert is a dish that the late Fr. Paul told us "to eat" during one of our Quebec pilgrimage retreats, and I would like to share it with you all:

Rejoice, brothers and sisters!
Rejoice even if someone does not know you and forgets you!
Rejoice even if others oppose your will!
Rejoice even if they give you a lowly job!
Rejoice even if they do not use you! Rejoice if they don't ask for your will!
Rejoice if they don't believe in you!
Rejoice if they leave you alone!
Rejoice if they don't praise you!
Rejoice if they don't cherish you above all others!

*(A spiritual message from Fr. Peter Seongje-Deok; I took the liberty of adding "brothers" to his address).
I find this poem helpful in the journey to the perfect joy taught by our Seraphic Father St. Francis.*

As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 6:14

**With the intercession of Saints Francis and Clare
Kim, Choon-Hee Agatha
St. Francis of Assisi, Vancouver**

Franciscan Book Club

Would you like to know more about the Franciscan Intellectual Traditions?

Secular Franciscans typically lead lives of prayer and ministry in our parishes. Intellectual concepts can appear far away and unrelated to our everyday life. In the Franciscan book club, we hope to read, study and talk to each other to connect the dots between everyday life and Franciscan spirituality and theology.

Please contact Marlene Welch Patmarlocel@gmail.com or Miriam Liem ofsmiriam@gmail.com for more information on the Franciscan Book Club.

Social Corner

In the Footsteps of Saint Francis

Hello fellow pilgrims, I am responding to a request to enter a few words in this edition of OLOTA in regard to the pilgrimage to Italy in October. First of all, I would like to thank all who supported us through their leadership roles that were taken on during the trip but especially to Cathy and David Bouchard for their overall handling of the trip. A special mention to Father Manoj who inspired us through his sermons and put up with me as we shared a room together. I will speak to the first place we stopped after a lengthy bus ride that commenced upon arrival in Rome which was Laverna where Francis received the stigmata. It is literally a monastery built into a cliff on top of a mountain overlooking the countryside. It was in a cave within this mountain where Francis received the wounds of Christ. I spent some time there absorbed as others came in and out to pray and take a

few pictures. At some point I realized I was alone. I have never been alone in a cave before but the images I was pondering in the artwork of Andrea della Robbia kept me glued there on *The Crucifixion*. Considering we are resurrection people I feel called to constantly reflect on those wounds of suffering as we follow Francis carrying our own cross. This being *The Way* (John 14:6) is most difficult but the truth of it allows joy to flow within me that I feel provides the healing of relationships for everyone. The eye of perception, that awakens to the spirit calling, offers clarity as it opens a little bit more on such a pilgrimage as I am sure it was for others as we travelled together. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fraternity of St. Pio for their unrelenting support in my own life and to all of you that I have encountered in the various fraternities within our region and to those I hope to meet as our paths cross in the direction that leads to eternal life. (photos below)

Forever grateful,
Blaise Mac Sween ofs

Monastery at
the top of
Monte Penna
at Laverna



The Crucifixion 1481 by Andrea della Robbia in the Chapel of the Stigmata, the exact place where Francis received the stigmata at Laverna



Ruth Simonsen ofs of St Pio Fraternity in Red Deer passed away on October 22, 2024. She was a mother, teacher, sports enthusiast, nature lover and a proud member of the Secular Franciscan Order. Her signature farewell, **Peace, love & joy!** reflected her unwavering faith and commitment to serve the Lord.

On November 4, 2024 St Pio Fraternity in Red Deer, AB celebrated the Rite of Admission of two new candidates, *Chizoba (Chi) Ojiako* & *Denise Guillemaud*. After the candidates stated their desire to continue on their Franciscan journey, Irene Manning & Joyce Reilander presented them each with The Rule and a Tau Cross. (left to right: Joyce, Chi, Denise, Irene)



Our Lady of the Angels Messenger, Secular Franciscan Order of Western Canada Region
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