

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS MESSENGER

Issue Number 52

December 2024

From Our Regional Minister

My Franciscan Brothers and Sisters,
I would like to thank each one of you for being faithful to your profession as Secular Franciscans and being joyful. My gratitude also goes to those who are journeying to become Secular Franciscans as you have reaffirmed our profession and remind us of our first encounter with the calling to become Secular Franciscans.

The heart of our Franciscan way of living, as was shown by Saints Francis and Clare, is to love Jesus particularly at His birth, crucifixion and His Presence in the Eucharist. Love of Jesus is now becoming ever more important in the present secular world which worships gods of comfort, wealth, health, online fame, efficiency, independence and more recently, social media and artificial intelligence, among many other gods.

Many of you (and me!) have experienced suffering in sickness and pain, loss of loved ones, loneliness, disappointment, and division in the family, to name a few. Though unpleasant, every suffering has the potential to bring us closer to God in our vulnerability. In our helplessness, we cannot think of any other solutions other than to let it be - to surrender to God's love and let Him take charge. It is always a wonder why we didn't surrender to God earlier; it would have saved us all efforts, troubles, and energy of trying to be in control of all things! Blessed Mother Mary, show us your fiat - how to let God be in charge! In our discomfort, we are tempted to think of ourselves and our problems and drawn to our "hamster wheels", as my Franciscan friend calls it. This is the time when we need to focus on Jesus and to love Jesus as much as

O Come Let Us Adore Him



Jesus Christ the Lord!

we can by being faithful. We encourage one another to ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit to be present in our midst; so that we can become instruments of God's love, even in our suffering. Finally, we need to remind ourselves that our suffering is not wasted if we offer it for the redemption of those who need it the most. If I forgot to offer my previous sufferings, I can still offer them now, trusting God that they never expire and can still be used.

This Christmas, let us be grateful to God for our faith and love in Jesus: the Great "I am", Messiah, Emmanuel, God-with-us! Have a blessed Christmas, everyone and may all of you have a grace-filled New Year!

Your servant, Lanny

From Our Regional Spiritual Assistant

What should we do? (Lk 3:10) ...Third Sunday of Advent, I was struck by the question people asked John the Baptist; What should we do? People,

having been challenged to produce 'good fruits' ask for advice about how to express their repentance. Their question shows their desire for salvation. Great courage is needed to ask, what should we do? Even greater courage is needed to listen and to heed the answer to that question.

John the Baptist instructed those who wanted to begin a new life, to those who are ready to repent which includes people who are despised by the Jews. The teaching of John the Baptist for the common people has to do with sharing when my neighbors lack sufficient clothing or food. For the tax collectors, it has to do with justice in the course of collecting taxes and other dues. And for the soldiers, it has to do with observing limits in matters of power (no theft, extortion or pressure for more pay), something that can be difficult for military people.

It is a valid question that should be often upon the lips of each one of us who seek to be continually renewed in the spirit and mind of the coming Christ. Christmas is indeed a joyful time for all of us but at the same time it is also time for us to live up to who we are. Our identity is rooted in being the children of God. Christmas is a time of joy, not primarily because we are celebrating the nativity of Jesus but because God is already in our midst as Immanuel. God is with us, not as a judge but as a Savior and that constantly calls us to rejoice with faith and total trust in Him.

Can we rejoice when we see the war and misery around? The circumstances of life do not determine whether or not we should rejoice. The presence of God in our midst calls us to it. The Lord is in our midst whether things are going the way we would like or not. That's why it is important to remind us who we are and be who we are. When we wander away from being God's children then the other power takes over us leading us to sin and evil. When we truly realize that God is in our midst, we have no need to deny our own limitations or the legitimate boundaries that define our lives. Rather, ask ourselves like the people of John the Baptist's time what we should do to bear good fruits of repentance and do it in order to achieve our salvation.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2025.

Brother Manoj

From our Regional Director of Formation

In the *Franciscan Daily Companion* on December 18, 2024 Fr. Jude Winkler, OFM Conv. quotes the words of St. Colette, "My eyes have filled with Jesus upon whom I have fixed them at the invitation of the Host at Holy Mass and I do not wish to replace Him with any other image."

REFLECTION: One of the most common of Franciscan devotions is contemplating before the Blessed Sacrament in Eucharistic Adoration. St. Francis marveled at the fact that God would become present in the flesh in Bethlehem - and again would become flesh upon our altars.

What a privilege to be able to spend quiet time alone with our Lord. PRAYER: *I thank you, Lord, for Your presence in the Blessed Sacrament. I praise you.* I wish all of the Secular Franciscans in Our Lady of the Angels Region a very Happy and Holy Christmas and many blessings in 2025.

Peace and joy,
Catherine McNiff, ofs

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation

Franciscan Voice Canada

A Link to [December 2024 Blog](#)

by Andrew Conradi, ofs



From
The Nativity
by
Giotto

Save the Dates

-Zoom BIBLE STUDY

Wild Goose Series with Fr Dave Pivonka, TOR

Resumes Thursday, January 9, 2025

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89424828739?pwd=2q6WV6Yh8Fo8swsjhHioZKqVBNuaZE.1>

Meeting ID: 894 2482 8739 Passcode: 048961

- FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY

On the first Saturday of each month.

Next.. 2025 Jan 4th @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1V0Z3EybWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

-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](#) to Document [YOU ARE LOVE](#)



From Saint Bonaventure on Saint Francis & the First Nativity Scene

It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed.

The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise."

The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the

nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem."

A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvelously beautiful, sleeping in the manger, Whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep. This vision of the devout soldier is credible, not only by reason of the sanctity of him that saw it, but by reason of the miracles which afterwards confirmed its truth.

For example of Francis, if it be considered by the world, is doubtless sufficient to excite all hearts which are negligent in the faith of Christ; and the hay of that manger, being preserved by the people, miraculously cured all diseases of cattle, and many other pestilences; God thus in all things glorifying his servant, and witnessing to the great efficacy of his holy prayers by manifest prodigies and miracles." Bonaventure

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.*

Contact Marlene Welch Patmarlocel@gmail.com or Miriam Liem ofsmiriam@gmail.com for more information.

Franciscan Art Contest Winners

From The Regional Director of Youth, *Maritza Chouza, ofs*

Hello Brothers and Sisters, as we approach to receive Baby Jesus, may the peace and joy of Christmas fill your hearts with hope and love. Here are the results from the **OLOTA 8th Franciscan Art Contest: *The Canticle of Creatures***. It was a joy to see the art of many youths printed on tiles for later use on one of the trails at Mount Saint Francis Retreat Centre. People who attended the events at Mount St Francis Retreat Centre during the Greccio weekend had the opportunity to vote. Fr Dan Gurnick was the witness while counting the votes for each category. The winners are as follows:

Kindergarten

1st Place: *Evelyn Guo* of Holy Cross Elementary, Burnaby BC (05)

Honour Award: *Gracie Gnuato* of Holy Cross Elementary, Burnaby BC ((03)

Artistic Merit: *Ella Song* of Holy Cross Elementary BC (01)

Elementary

1st Place: *Gabriel Iupsoiv* of Holy Cross Elementary, Burnaby BC (13)

Honour Award: *Anakin Zhu* of Holy Cross Elementary, Burnaby, BC (14)

& *Chloe Ho* of Holy Cross, Burnaby, BC (49)

Artistic Merit: *Theodore Tangtongco* of Holy Cross Elementary, Burnaby, BC ((15)

Jr High School

1st Place: *Amiel Pamintuan* of Holy Cross Elementary, Burnaby BC (102)

Honour Award: *Makenzie Fowler* of Queen of Angels School, Duncan, BC ((73)

Artistic Merit: *Alli Sewell* of St Matthew Catholic School, Rocky Mountain House, AB (78)

High School

(one participant in this category)

1st Place: *Sarah Browne* of Bishop O' Brien High School, Calgary AB (94)

Congratulations to all of them!



In The Footsteps of Saint Francis



The pilgrimage to Assisi in October was my first and my father would have been so happy to see me embark on. I had been incredibly busy up until the last day before my flight that I had no time to anticipate what was to be the most incredible trip of my life. I call it God's 'mic drop'! It was a physically demanding trip that included little sleep, 60 kms of walking, going from place to place over several days and sensory overload at times, but it was a profound religious and spiritual experience. Although each place we visited was very special in its own way Mt. Laverna and the Sanctuary of San Damiano brought to life both St. Francis and St. Clare for me in a deep and quiet way. The former is a very holy and isolated place and the latter enhanced my connection to St. Clare and was what I needed.

The reality of the distances between Rome, Assisi, Laverna and all of the other monasteries and places we visited brought to mind how it must have been for St. Francis traveling on foot. We were driven in a comfortable bus and occasionally stopped for lunch at rest stops. I had the best lasagna ever at one of those rest stops! Only in Italy, I say!

Every day brought new surprises and I was astounded at how many of them came our way. Being so close to the body of Carlo Acutis, St. Clare, St. Francis in Assisi, St. Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotundo, St. Rita of Cascia in Roccaporena, all of the Basilicas and Churches, St. Peter's Square, the Vatican Museum, the Relics of Christ in Rome and climbing the Holy Stairs on my knees was joy filled. The final surprise was seeing the Relic of Manuel Ruiz Lopez at the airport being transported back to Jerusalem after just being canonized. I was inspired and humbled at the same time.

Yes, God's love does overflow and now that I am back in my ordinary life and have come down from the mountain, the tether to God has grown much shorter. I feel the call to live the Gospel life more acutely.

My deepest thanks to David and Cathy Bouchard who organized this trip and I am deeply grateful to have met everyone who came and experienced this incredible journey with me. The many conversations I had, the meals shared, the daily Masses and prayers really made me feel at home. All things considered it really was a taste of heaven.

Peace and all good,
Carmen Moorhouse, ofs
St Clare of Assisi, Coquitlam

Social Corner



St Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity in Saskatoon, SK celebrated the Feast of St Francis on Oct 4th with Rosary & Holy Mass.



On November 17th they celebrated the Feast of St Elizabeth of Hungary with Rosary & Holy Mass in St Ann's Chapel while some members baked ten dozen buns & gave them to the homeless in Saskatoon. They all gathered for lunch followed by praying the Franciscan Crown Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet & Adoration in the Chapel.

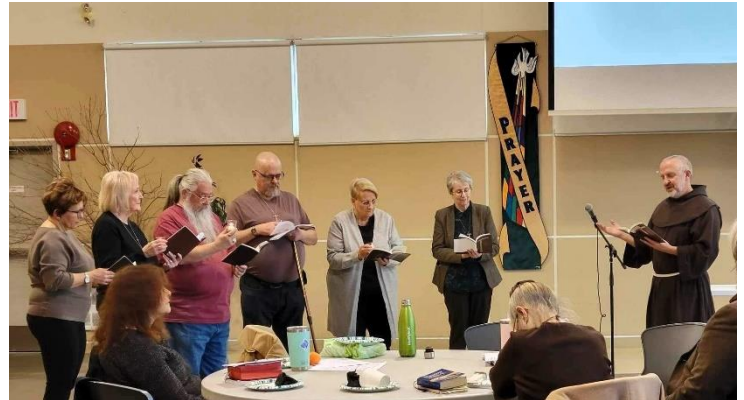




Left to Right above: Cathy Pamer 10 yrs, Robert Lowther 15 yrs, Ron Semenoff 30 yrs, Linda Schultz 30 yrs

St Mary's Fraternity of Calgary gathered on Nov 17th for the Feast of St Elizabeth of Hungary to honour the patron saint of OFS & celebrate the profession anniversaries of four OFS members. Other representants of the Franciscan family, Friar Dan Gurnick, OFM, Sister Dianne Turner, OSE, Sister Anne Adoukpe FMM, Deacon Tomas O'Toole OFS, joined in the celebrations.

In addition, Left to Right below: Erika Bancila – Minister, Heather Shilling - Formation Director, Friar Dan Gurnick, OFM



Using the Litany of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Sister Dianne Turner, OSE had an insightful presentation on the virtues of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, encouraging all to explore which of these virtues God is calling them to grow in today.

Brother Manoj Goes to Visit



St Clare of Assisi Fraternity
Chilliwack, BC



St Agnes of Assisi Fraternity
Coquitlam, BC



St Clare of Assisi Fraternity
Coquitlam, BC

Christmas Question: What are the names of The Three Magi referred to in Matthew 2:7-12?

Answer: Melchior, Caspar, Balthasar - The Three Kings or Magi. The book *Collectanea et Flores* attributed to St. Bede the Venerable records an early legend of their names that describes Melchior as an older man offering the gold; Caspar (sometimes Gaspar) as young and offering the incense; and Balthasar, having black complexion and offering the myrrh. Again, with the number, origin and identification as kings comes another hint from Butler's Saints. While early sculptures of them depicted the three wearing Phrygian caps (worn by people like the Persians and Medes), beginning in the eighth century Christian art regularly presented them wearing crowns — hence, the Three Kings.



From *The National Catholic Register* 2024
Link to [FULL ARTICLE](#) (Suggested by Linda Adams, ofs)



Our Lady of the Angels Messenger, Secular Franciscan Order of Western Canada Region
December 2024 Minister Lanny Hui, ofs lanny.hui@gmail.com
Editor Colleen Finlon, ofs cmariiefinlon@gmail.com