



**Issue Number 54**

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### **From Our Regional Minister**

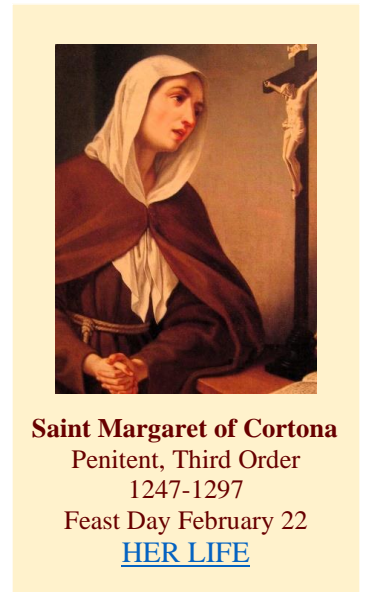
Dear brothers and sisters,

On February 15, we had a wonderful retreat organized by the National Formation Committee: 180 people registered and about 120 people attended. It was very uplifting for me to see many of you. I have been inspired by the organizers who have been very generous with their time and effort. Please save the morning/early afternoon of May 31 (i.e. try to keep the date clear) for another retreat. If it happens to be your scheduled fraternity meeting, you and your fraternity can join via Zoom as one user. On another note, by this time, your fraternity ministers may have been contacted by Paul Vanderham from St. Elizabeth Hungary (Edmonton, AB) regarding the proposed changes in the General Constitution. He is going to speak in-person at the BC Coastal Spring Chapter of Mats on March 22, 2025. I invite you to welcome him when he visits your fraternity. We are very grateful for him reaching out to us in person. I would like to express my deep gratitude for the fraternities who have submitted their Annual Reports and contributions.

I would like to invite each of you to reflect on your fraternity life: how can each of us contribute at the next gathering to improve our fraternity life? What is the most loving thing to do for our brothers and sisters? Although each fraternity is unique, perhaps the answer lies in how open and sensitive we are to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Like St Francis, let us ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten the darkness of our hearts and give us the grace of perfect charity (lookup online for the prayer of St Francis before San Damiano crucifix).

Please pray for:

- One another
- The sick and dying in our midst, especially Pope Francis as he is in critical condition
- Bishop-designate Pierre Charland OFM as he accepts the new appointment in Baie-Comeau, Quebec
- The National Fraternity Council as they prepare for the Chapter Election in June
- The newly professed, candidates and inquirers
- The deceased OFS members



*Your servant, Lanny*

## From Our Regional Spiritual Assistant

**Love and Mercy-the Magnanimity of God:** *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.* (Lk 6:27). Jesus proclaimed this command following the announcement of the beatitudes and to the very same group of people. He gave it to those who were poor, hungry or persecuted, as a condition to obtain the happiness he had promised them in God's Kingdom; that is, they were to love the very ones who caused their poverty, hunger, made them weep and persecuted them.

As challenging as this may be, the Gospel calls us to an even higher standard: we must be merciful as God is merciful. It is impossible to attain such perfection relying on our own power but when we rely on the power of the risen Lord whose image we bear, all things are possible. Transformed by the power of resurrection, we are capable of unprecedented good works. We can live without retaliation; we can render good for evil.

David had been faithful to king Saul all through his life. He had killed for him the mighty Goliath, risked his life in battles and done nothing wrong against him. However, king Saul out of jealousy quests for the life of David. God provided David with a golden opportunity to strike down the life of Saul with his very own spear while encamped and asleep. However, David would not raise his hands on the God's anointed, though it was considered sacred to take revenge in those days and foolish and even dangerous to spare the life of enemies. This is an example of magnanimity of David who spared the life of his bitter enemy because he was God's anointed one.

When Jesus calls us to love everyone, he means every word of it. Exclusion of enemies would violate the very command of love. Jesus loved and forgave His enemies. After His example, He commands His followers to do the same. We have been anointed by the death of Jesus. Like David, who saw in Saul, God's 'anointed' one, we in each other must see as God's 'anointed' one. When we do that, how can we cause poverty, hunger, or persecute the anointed one? We must be magnanimous like David to forgive and wish all good for people who may even cause us misery. Our love for others, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us, must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God in Jesus has shown to us.

The purpose of our life is to reflect the love of God. God continues to love us even when we do not reciprocate His love. His love is salvific, He continues to save us even when we go against his will. It is the grace of God, that we are not treated as we deserve but with mercy and kindness. It is easier to show kindness and mercy when we can expect to benefit from doing so. How much harder when we can expect nothing in return. Those who emulate the love and mercy of the heavenly Father, are His true children.

*Br Manoj Xalxo, OFM*



*'Most High, Glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my mind, give me right faith, a firm hope and perfect charity, so that I may always and in all things act according to Your Holy Will.' – St Francis*

## From Our Regional Formation Director

### THE SAN DAMIANO CRUCIFIX

Many Secular Franciscans have a "San Damiano Crucifix" in their homes. Have you ever meditated on this beautiful Icon?

In his book, *The Icon of "The Christ of San Damiano*, Fr. Marc Picard, OFM, Cap. tells us "For ages it was hung in the little church of Assisi named San Damiano. The young St. Francis was praying before this image when he heard a voice coming from the crucifix: "Francis, go. Repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruin." Francis took

these words literally and began to repair the little church where he prayed. Later he understood that it was the great Church of Jesus that he had to repair. At the end of his life, he had accomplished the task he had been given; there were more than fifteen thousand Friars Minor of all nationalities. They rebuilt the Church by means of a totally new proclamation of the Gospel.

Did you know that “The Christ of San Damiano Crucifix” is a twelfth century icon, painted by a Syrian monk? Fr. Picard mentions that the icon could be titled “The Icon of Christ in Glory” because all the glory of the mystery of Christ and of his Church is depicted on this icon. He explains “An icon is created to reveal the essence of profound mystery and at times at the loss of accuracy to anatomy.” Fr. Picard comments “For example, to express the power with which Jesus breathed the Spirit upon the Apostles, the iconographic painter portrays the throat of Jesus much larger than its natural proportions so aesthetics is sacrificed for the benefit of the spiritual message.

Fr. Picard encourages us to contemplate the “Mystery of Christ in Glory” by first praying to the Holy Spirit who has taught the heart and has guided the hand of the Syrian monk who authored the icon. As the Season of Lent approaches, perhaps we too, can look at our “San Damiano Crucifix” and contemplate the Son of God, looking at us with eyes full of love.

**Prayer:** *Come, Spirit of Light, enlighten our hearts and enable us to appreciate the profound teaching contained in this icon. Bring about in us the mysterious transformation of ourselves into the object of our love, according to the words of St. John “We shall be like him for we shall see him as he really is.” (1 Jn 3:2).*

For an Iconic explanation on the San Damiano Crucifix visit:

[www.peaceandallgood.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/San-Damiano-Crucifix-.pdf](http://www.peaceandallgood.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/San-Damiano-Crucifix-.pdf)

*Catherine McNiff, ofs*

## Historical Event for OFS Canada

On Saturday, February 15, 2025 a historical Canada. The retreat YOU ARE LOVE was held National Formation Commission. The retreat entitled *You Are Love*. Over 180 Franciscans registered to hear the message together of Order, Second Order and Third Order first time an event of this kind and size was Franciscans. Many participants expressed their delight and blessing to partake in the YOU ARE LOVE retreat. The OFS National Formation Commission hopes to hold more events like this sometime in the future.



event occurred for Secular Franciscans in on zoom across Canada by the OFS Canada, was based on the 2024 document by CIOFS from Newfoundland to British Columbia *You Are Love* in French or English from First Franciscans for a 1.5-hour retreat. It was the held cross Canada on zoom for Secular Franciscans.

*-God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him. (1 John 4:16) [You Are Love](#)*

### Reflection

**Romans 5: 1-5** *Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.*

**Who is the Holy Spirit? Do I choose to be guided by the Holy Spirit in my daily living?  
How do I know? From Linda Adams, ofs**

## Breviary / Divine Office / Liturgy of the Hours

By Colin B. Donovan, STL

All three names refer to the same reality, the official prayer of the Church offered at various times of the day in order to sanctify it. Clergy and religious have a canonical obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours as official representatives of the Church. Increasingly, the laity are also praying it, though they do not do so in the name of the Church.

Liturgy of the Hours - From *liturgia horarium* (L) and the Greek *litourgia*, a service performed by an official.

Divine Office - From *officium divina* (L.), a divine service or duty.

Breviary - From *breviarium* (L.), a compendium (of the canonical hours).

The Divine Office is also called the *Opus Dei* (Work of God).

### HISTORY

The Divine Office owes its remote origin to the inspiration of the Old Covenant. God commanded the Aaronic priests (c.1280 BC) to offer a morning and evening sacrifice (Ex. 29:38-29). During the Babylonian Exile (587-521 BC), when the Temple did not exist, the synagogue services of Torah readings and psalms and hymns developed as a substitute for the bloody sacrifices of the Temple, a *sacrifice of praise*. The inspiration to do this may have been fulfillment of David's words, "Seven times a day I praise you" (Ps. 119:164), as well as, "the just man mediates on the law day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

After the people returned to Judea, and the Temple was re-built, the prayer services developed in Babylon for the local *assemblies* (synagogues) of the people were brought into Temple use, as well. We know that in addition to Morning and Evening Prayer to accompany the sacrifices, there was prayer at the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours of the day. The Acts of the Apostles notes that Christians continued to pray at these hours (Third: Acts 2:15; Sixth: Acts 10:9; 10: 3, 13). And, although the Apostles no longer shared in the Temple sacrifices—they had its fulfillment in the "breaking of the bread" (the Eucharist)—they continued to frequent the Temple at the customary hours of prayer (Acts 3:1).

Monastic and eremitical (hermit) practice as it developed in the early Church recognized in the Psalms the perfect form of prayer and did not try to improve upon it. The practices were quite individual from monastery to monastery. At first some tried to do the entire Psalter (150 Psalms) each day, but eventually that was abandoned for a weekly cycle built around certain hours of the day. Among the earliest Psalter cycles of which we have a record is the division given by St. Benedict in his [Rule ch. 8-19](#) (c.550), with canonical hours of Lauds (Morning Prayer) offered at sunrise, Prime (1st hour of the day), Terce (3rd hour, or Mid-morning), Sext (6th hour or Midday), None (9th hour or Mid-Afternoon), Vespers (Evening Prayer) offered at sunset, and Compline (Night Prayer) before going to bed. In addition, the monks arose to read and pray during the Night. This Office of Matins (Readings) likewise had its divisions, into nocturnes, corresponding to the beginning of each of the "watches of the night" (Ps. 63:6), that is, 9 pm, midnight and 3 am. With the reforms of the Second Vatican Council the traditional one-week Psalter cycle became a four-week cycle.

Although the Divine Office has gone through various forms, and reforms, including that of Vatican II, its basic structure, combining Psalms, prayers, canticles and readings, has been relatively constant since the 11th century. Originally the practice of monks, it was also used by the canons of cathedrals and other great churches. The Roman Breviary, perhaps as old or even older than the Benedictine, was originally the Office of the canons of St. Peter's and the other Roman Basilicas. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) extended its use to the Roman Court (curia). When the Franciscan Order was looking for a convenient one volume Office for its much-traveled friars to use, it adopted this *Breviarium Curiae*, but substituting the Gallican (French) Psalter for the Roman. This modified Roman Breviary was then spread throughout Europe by the Franciscans. Pope Nicholas III (c.1270) would then adopt this popularized Franciscan version of the Breviary as the Breviary of Rome itself.

After the Council Trent, and its reforms, the Roman Breviary became the Office of the entire Latin Church. It should be noted that religious orders have a right to their own version, though many simply use the Roman Office. (continued next month)

## Save the Date

### - Franciscan CROWN ROSARY

On the first Saturday of each month.

Next.. 2025 March 1<sup>st</sup> @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EvdWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

### -Franciscan Book Club

Contact Marlene Welch [patmarlocel@gmail.com](mailto:patmarlocel@gmail.com) or  
Miriam Liem [ofsmiriam@gmail.com](mailto:ofsmiriam@gmail.com) for more information.

Monthly **PRAYER INTENTIONS** for vocational promotion  
of the Secular Franciscan Order (2025) From CIOFS  
**FEBRUARY: For new vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order.**  
**MARCH: For brothers and sisters who are discerning their vocation  
to the Secular Franciscan Order.**

## Social Corner



**Little Flowers of St Francis Fraternity** of Kelowna, BC celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary of Canonical Establishment on February 16, 2025.

**St Anthony of Padua Fraternity** of Richmond, BC celebrated the birthday of member Dennis Zakopcan who turned 80 years old on February 22, 2025.





**St Clare Fraternity** in Coquitlam, BC gathered to view a “Canticle of Creatures” video in celebration of 800-Year Anniversary of the *Canticle of Creatures* by St Francis of Assisi on February 22, 2025.



**Christmas Remembrance, 2024**

The Calgary Franciscan Family: OFM Brothers from Mount Saint Francis, FMM Sisters, Korean Padre Pio Fraternity as well as St. Mary’s Fraternity of Calgary gathered to celebrate Christmas Remembrance on the Third Sunday of Advent. To the right: The Korean Choir sang beautifully to lift the spirits of everyone there.



**Ceremony of Introduction**  
St. Mary’s Fraternity of Calgary welcomed their Inquirers at the January 2025 gathering.



Our Lady of the Angels Messenger, Secular Franciscan Order of Western Canada Region  
February 2025 Minister Lanny Hui, ofs [lanny.hui@gmail.com](mailto:lanny.hui@gmail.com)  
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