

## FORMATION IN THE SUMMER OF 2023

Happy summer! I hope you have a chance to enjoy being outside, being with loved ones, smelling the flowers, admiring God's amazing world!

When we had our Alberta Chapter of Mats in June, 2023 we were reminded by CIOFS – the International branch of our Franciscan Family - that this is the year to look anew at our Rule with an initiative called THE RULE: A WAY OF LIFE, 800 YEARS ON THE ROAD and asked to make our Secular Franciscan presence felt in our local parish with a humble action such as cleaning the church or the parish hall. As a fraternity, have you considered helping at the Mustard Seed Ministry for the Homeless in your community or spending time at your local food bank? What about befriending one of the clients and supporting him or her as they initiate relationships in the community?

You can do individual actions too. One small action that Loretta, a Secular Franciscan in Little Portion Fraternity in Victoria, BC does is to buy chocolate bars when she goes to the Dollar Store and always has one ready to give to a homeless person she happens to see in her day. With a simple gesture Loretta honors the person she is interacting with as she acknowledges the dignity of the individual.

### PRAYER FOR THE HOMELESS

O God, you are the defender of the poor and the homeless.

In the fullness of time, you sent Christ who announced the good news of salvation to the poor and the homeless.

In these days, the nightmare of poverty and homelessness haunts our world.

The poor and homeless of our world beg for our love and ask for food, shelter and work.

Shine your spirit of courage and compassion upon them.

Warm their hearts and wills.

Help us to see that in loving and tending their needs, we are tending the presence of Christ among us.

We ask this through Christ and the Holy Spirit, with you, One God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

*Adapted from Act Justly, Love Tenderly and Walk Humbly by Edward Gabriele.*

In the Franciscan Daily Companion – Minute Meditations for Every Day – there is a daily inspirational quote from a Franciscan saint or blessed, a reflection and a prayer by Rev. Jude Winkler, OFM Conv.

On July 20, 2023 St. Francis says “What a man is before God, that he is and no more.”

The topic is “Our Value Before the Lord.” The Reflection states “When each of us tries to determine our value as a person, we can exaggerate: either by being unrealistically positive, seeing ourselves as all but perfect or by being unrealistically negative, seeing ourselves as total failures.

We have to look at ourselves through the eyes of God. We are broken, we are sinners, but we also are loved beyond limit.” The Prayer that follows tells us “Let me see myself always, O Lord, as You see me.”

In his book “Surrounded By Love – Seven Teachings From Saint Francis - Franciscan Friar, Fr. Murray Bodo, OFM tells us “When we begin to see others for what they are in God’s eyes, we are moved to compassion. When we then reach out to those of our brothers and sisters in distress, the love of God becomes the love of others, all of whom are beloved of God.”

If you want a book that fits into your pocket for summer reading then “Come Into The Silence” by Trappist Monk, Thomas Merton is for you!

Daniel. Horan, O.F.M., author of *the Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton* says “This book wonderfully opens the wisdom and inspiration of Thomas Merton for daily prayer. The book provides a month of daily readings from one of Christianity’s most beloved spiritual guides. For each day there is a brief and accessible morning meditation drawn from the mystic’s writings, a simple mantra for use throughout the day and a night prayer to focus one’s thoughts as the day ends.



On Day Fourteen Thomas Merton  
writes:  
MY DAY IS ENDING  
This love of yours is much more,  
I realize,  
than what  
You are doing in my life.  
It is also more than my acceptance of  
Your will for me.  
Your love is all around me in the world  
too,  
and not only in what I see as beautiful  
and wondrous:  
sunssets  
birds singing and flowers in  
springtime.  
Your love is here in the pursuit of  
freedom  
and justice.  
Your love is in the care of the immigrant  
And in solidarity with everyone who is  
lonely,  
sad or in pain.  
My response to Your tremendous love  
needs  
to respond to these situations  
if I am to be Your hands and feet in  
the world around me.  
Keep showing me when and how and  
where  
I am Your love.



THIS SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER  
SAYS IT ALL ...

My Jesus,  
I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament.  
I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
Come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you as if you were already there,  
And unite myself wholly to you.  
Never permit me to be separated from you, Amen.





**THIS FALL, WATCH OUT FOR AN OCCASIONAL STORY ABOUT RITZ, THE FRIARY CAT AT MOUNT SAINT FRANCIS AND THE SITUATIONS HE CAN GET HIMSELF INTO!**

Ritz is the frisky feline who lives at Mount Saint Francis. No doubt he will have something to say about the annual “Blessing of the Animals” event that comes up in early October. That’s when about sixty dogs are brought to the grounds of the Friary by their dotting owners to receive a blessing from the kindly friars – needless to say, Ritz the cat is not impressed. In fact, he usually takes off to a near-by roof to make sure he can keep an eye on what’s going on down on the grounds!

Catherine McNiff, ofs – Director of Formation, Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity