

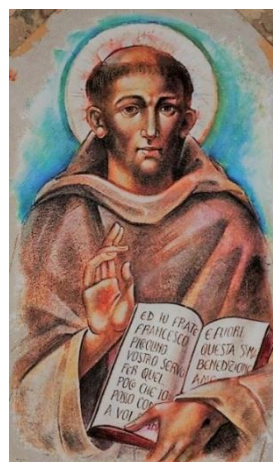


Issue no. 31 – March 2023

Message from our Regional Minister

My brothers and sisters,

On behalf of the regional council, I would like to express my gratitude for your financial support and for your time in completing the 2022 Annual Report/Census. On March 18, a cheque of \$7520 was sent to the National Fraternity Council as they have to submit a contribution to CIOFS by April 1. According to your recent report, there are a total of 388 permanently professed members (as of the morning of March 25 - a balance of \$240 needs to be sent to the National Fraternity) and 49 candidates and temporarily professed. *Congratulations* to St. Clare Korean Fraternity in Edmonton, for your canonical establishment on March 11. The fraternity was not alone in their journey towards this; St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the mother fraternity, St. Padre Pio Korean Fraternity in Calgary, Friars Manoj, Jean-Louis, and Joachim, and previous and current VMs (Renette, Fr. Don, and Isaac) have been instrumental in the journey. Many thanks to the fraternities in Northern Alberta, for your hospitality during my visit with you on March 10-15 and at BC Coastal Chapter of Mats last Saturday on March 18. It was truly memorable. I am hoping to visit all fraternities by the end of my term in 2025. By this time, you should have received a letter from Jewel Jasmins, our National Minister, regarding Discerning Regional Options for Western Canada. A committee was formed to put out questions, gather responses from all fraternities, and present them to the National Fraternity Council for considerations. The members of the committee George Guimond as a chair, Fr. Manoj, as the Spiritual Assistant, Miriam Liem as the secretary, Paulette Matovich representing Manitoba /Saskatchewan, David Bouchard representing Alberta, Anna-Maria O'Hagan representing BC, and



*We adore You,
Lord Jesus Christ,
here and in
all Your churches
in the whole world, and we
bless You,
because by
Your holy cross
You have redeemed the
world.*

St. Francis of Assisi
(From the Testament)

myself. Backups are Kate Klassen representing Manitoba/Saskatchewan, Isaac Reyes representing Alberta, and Warren Postma representing BC, and David Bouchard as my backup (according to the decisions made by the capitulars at the 2022 Regional Chapter of Elections). How were these people appointed, you may ask. It was based on the responses received from the email I sent in January and the involvement at the current and previous Regional Council. (Lynda Black was initially appointed in error to be my backup.) The committee welcomes all suggestions, including the questions to be asked to all fraternities in the region. Our main task is to listen to your voice, not to vote on your behalf. Looking ahead, we will have a mini-retreat via zoom on April 22, tentatively. If some have fraternity gatherings, please use the opportunity to join the mini retreat via zoom as a fraternity. I am also asking your prayers for one another, particularly for those who are going through challenging times. Please offer these prayers at the offertory during the mass. We need all the prayers: a decade of rosary, novena, a mass intention, etc.

☞

☞Peace and all good,
Lanny

Message from our Spiritual Director

Easter: A Time to Renew Baptismal Promise and Reclaim Responsibilities

Easter is the feast of New Life. It is the victory of Jesus over sin and death. It is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. We are redeemed by the passion and death of Jesus Christ our Savior. By His love, sacrifice and death, we are given a New Life.

Renewal of Baptismal promise remains a central focus during the celebration of Easter liturgy. It is through the Sacrament of Baptism that believers enter a covenant with God. Jesus calls it a 'New Birth' (Jn 3:5) through which one enters the Kingdom of God.

Theologically, Baptism is a passage, a cleansing, a new life and an incorporation. It is a **passage** to a new world. Church fathers call it 'illumination.' From the darkness of sin, we are brought into the light of God, light of Christ. In Greek the word baptism means 'immersion.' Through Baptism Christians are immersed in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. Plunged in the waters of Baptism, a baptized is freed from the slavery of sin and death and given the freedom of the children of God. It is a **cleansing**. We are liberated from the original sin and personal sin. Cleansing takes place in our souls. It is a **new life** of water and the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who makes us children of God. It is an **incorporation**. "You are a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession to sing the praises of God who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). Baptized are incorporated into Christ and His Church.

Through the anointing with the sacred chrism, the baptized share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission. In very simple ways we can fulfill this threefold mission. The **priest** offers sacrifice to God on behalf of people. Baptized share in priestly function when, out of love we offer our entire life to God as a pleasing sacrifice. Leading prayers (in family and society), praying for the needs of others (stranger, immigrants, homeless, broken hearted) and their salvation are some examples of a priestly responsibility. The **prophet** is a spokesperson for God. When we proclaim the Gospel by words and deeds, we are fulfilling the prophetic call. In the face of violence and injustice, speak the Gospel of justice,

love and reconciliation. Not to forget that prophets were rejected for being the voice of God, but rejection even made them stronger. We share in the royal function of Christ as **King**. The King is to serve his people and not to dominate. Jesus came to serve and not be served. The Rule is to serve as Jesus did with mercy, compassion and forgiveness. Each time we fight against the forces of evil through a life of selfless service and teach the world to live with the spirit of the Gospel, we fulfil the kingly office of Christ.

As we renew our baptismal promise this Easter, let us also reclaim our baptismal responsibilities and live like Easter people. Baptismal call requires that all of us seek ways to imitate Jesus, the priest, prophet and king in whose footsteps we follow. We believe that when we live out our baptismal call, we are living out our participation in the mission of Christ. Just imagine how the Church and society will be if all the baptized live out their Baptismal calling!

Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed! Happy Easter!

God bless,
Br Manoj, OFM

Message from our Director of Formation

First Good Message: This is the Fourth Week of Lent. In his book, "From Fear to Love" Henri Nouwen reminds us "Stay close to the weak." This is God's way. How did God finally reveal true love for us? By sending his beloved son to be with us where we are poor. "I have come for the lost sheep." God chose the descending way to reveal how deeply we are loved and how we have much love to offer each other. It is such a wonderful sign for us that Jesus chose the "downwardly mobile" way to be one with us at the same table. This is God's way, lived in the flesh by Jesus and given for our consolation and example. "I'm sent into the world by the Father to bring Good News to the poor."

Second Good Message: We are sold out of Franciscan Journey Books and Little Red Rule Books! This means that 20 Inquirers have joined OLOTA fraternities to deepen their love of Christ as they learn about the Franciscan way of life in our Secular Franciscan Family. Praised be to God! More Franciscan Journey Books and Little Red Rule books have been ordered ...

Peace and joy,
Catherine McNiff

Save the Dates

-Online LENTEN RETREAT MARCH 30TH by Franciscans International from 6 am to 7:30 am PT.

Theme: *I was a stranger and you invited me.* Reflection of care on the Franciscan mission towards migrants and refugees. [Register here.](#)

-VESPERS and FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY first Saturday of each month. Next on -

Saturday, APRIL 1st at 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EvbWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Zoom ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

-MINI RETREAT via Zoom APRIL 22nd 9-11am on *Discernment of Regional Options for Western Canada.*

By the National Fraternity Council with Br Gerry Clyne, OFM. Everyone welcome! Important for the future of our region! Zoom ID: 870 4656 2377 Passcode: 907599

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87046562377?pwd=aFd4WWw2WVFwWHVCeVFCTUpSTnhNQOT09>

-FRANCISCAN VISION GLOBAL SUMMIT each month of 2023 to celebrate 800 Years of the Rule of 1223 and the Crib of Greccio. NEXT SESSION: Sat. APRIL 29th at 2am PT/3am MT/4am CT by Br Ignacio Ceja, OFM on: *Friars Minor as builders of peace today echoing the Rule of 1223*

Register to receive ZOOM link. Registration is free.

>>>CLICK HERE TO SEE [POSTER](#) and [BROCHURE](#)

-ALBERTA CHAPTER OF MATS

Saturday, JUNE 17th at Sacred Heart Parish Hall in Red Deer. Theme: *Live & Love Your Rule*

Presenters: Paul Vanderham ofs, Deacon Thomas O'Toole ofs, Deacon Roger Reilander ofs.

All professed members, candidates and inquirers are welcome!

-Next Zoom Drop In: May 17th

Social Corner



St. Clare of Assisi Coquitlam Fraternity has begun a new apostolate during Lent. We made sandwiches and hot chocolate for the unhoused in our local community. This will be an ongoing endeavour. The seed for this was planted quite some time ago and it has finally become a reality. Our picture also includes a person who happened to be available to help who is not in our fraternity. All are welcome!



Lanny and Br Manoj Visit St Clare Fraternity in Pickardville, AB



Visit with St Berard Fraternity in Sherwood Park, AB



Visit with Sts Louis & Zelig Fraternity in Edmonton, AB



BC Coastal Chapter of Mats in Coquitlam, BC

Canonical Establishment of St Clare Korean Fraternity in Edmonton, AB on March 11, 2023



Franciscan Vision Global Summit 2023: February 25th, 2023 Session

Hymn to the Holy Spirit by Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne, Phirangipuram (CSSA), India

Greetings by Br Arokiam John, ofm: Moderator of the Session and Organizer of FVGS, Editor of Tau Journal

Welcome by Br Xavier Durairaj, ofm, Provincial of St. Thomas the Apostle: Saint Francis became prayer. His entire life was a lesson in prayer.

Br William Short, ofm originally from Seattle Washington is of the Santa Barbara Province in USA. He is a professor at the Franciscan School of Theology in San Diego. Br William is a very inspired and prolific writer and you can read more about him and his works at <https://www.fst.edu/about/faculty-and-staff/william-short-ofm/>

Prayer – personal, fraternal, common and liturgical vision of Francis for today starting from the Rule of 1223; Suggestions for the 21st Century.

Francis had many daily prayers yet his focus was not on quantity but on being a genuine person of prayer. Francis threaded together a fabric of prayer by spending many hours each day in contemplative, vocal, private and common prayer alike. Later the celebration of the office was made by all brothers. Those who could read Latin used the Breviary which was similar to a Breviary of the Papal Court, Lateran. While clerics prayed the Latin Psalms, the lay people who could not read Latin at that time prayed the Our Father. The schedule of the Liturgy of the Hours in 1200 AD from Monday to Saturday:

1) Late night/early morn: *Matin/Lauds*, 2) After sunrise: *Prime*, 3) Midmorning: *Terce*

4) Midday: *Sext*, 5) Midafternoon: *None*, 6) Before sunset: *Vespers*, 7) After sunset: *Compline/Night prayers*

Singing was always included in prayer. Francis always emphasized the spirit of prayer. When travelling he would always have another cleric with him. They would stop at various hours to read the Breviary. There were few priests in early times to celebrate Holy Mass so Francis maintained a detailed schedule of prayer. In later years Br Anthony of Padua was a priest who would celebrate the Holy Mass for the clerics and lay brothers. Francis would then pray the Liturgy of the Hours and receive the Holy Eucharist in part of an even larger schedule. He would take much time alone in the hermitage *praying in secret* as the scriptures say. Brother Celano in *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* said Francis would meditate without moving his lips or talk out loud to God. He would also make loud noises such as sighs, weeping, or striking his breasts. It would be very intense but he would also have a change in appearance. Francis would appear glowing and melting as he was touched by God.

Early sources on the life of Francis narrates at least five long retreats by Francis:

the Great Lent (40 days), before Christmas (40 days or more), after Epiphany (40 days),

in summer (June 29 to August 15), Lent of Saint Michael (from Assumption to Sept 29).

Francis spent anywhere from four to seven months in dedication to solitary prayer with fasting mostly in hermitages. When he became ill, he would have one of the brothers read the Gospel to him as in church. Francis' writings were all rooted in the Word of God and he most frequently quoted from John 17. His two books of the Middle Ages were

1) The Book of Scripture: The Word of God and 2) The Book of Creation: birds, fish, sun shining as he saw God revealed in heaven and earth. If you want to follow the example of Francis and Clare:

- Give the Word of God a place of honor in your home
- Give importance to read the Word of God carefully and loudly
- Prayerful reading of the Word of God alone and together (Lectio Divina)
- Give praise to God for ALL things: birds, children, electricity, places of beauty, death

Francis had a particular devotion to the Nativity as it led him to the Eucharist: the Word made flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Was Francis particular to the miracles of the time? Francis said no. Even evil can do that. It is more important to endure suffering in patience without becoming angry. He fostered a unique tradition of life dedicated to prayer in fraternity. *Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I.*

Br Matthew spoke about the TAU Journal published by the OFM in India now in its 47th year. He encouraged us to subscribe. <https://www.taufranciscanjournal.com/> The FVGS talks are exclusively published in Tau.

Closing hymn by the Ursuline Franciscan Sisters.

Pax et Bonum,
Colleen Finlon, ofs



For [OLOTA ofs](#) Facebook page!