



Issue no. 39 – November 2023

Message from our Regional Minister

As this is the month of November, please take the time to remember our brothers and sisters who have encountered Sister Death. We remember Barbara Wallace, Elaine Nadeau, Anlet Miranda, Fr. Louis Geelan, Br. Dominic Tessier and those who encountered Sister Death in the past year. We pray for the repose of their souls and consolation for those who are left behind. We specially pray for those who have no one to pray for them and all souls in purgatory.

Many thanks again for being part of the process of Discerning Regional Options for Western Canada. I am grateful for your support and patience. Initially, the schedule was to have dialogue among the fraternity members every month; however, after some consideration, it is better to allow more time for discernment.

By this time, each fraternity should have received the template of 2023 Annual Report and Contribution. Please kindly complete the form and send it along with the fraternity contribution either to Clemence or to me by the end of January 2024. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Lately, our BC Coastal Vice Minister, Lynda Black, decided to temporarily step down from her role until June 2024. According to General Constitution 81.2 and Regional Statutes 3.2.1, another council member should be elected, by the rest of the council members, as a temporary replacement. As there is no council member available to fill the position, the regional council members have agreed to share some of the duties and they are also supported by the local fraternity ministers from BC Coastal.

I will be the temporary contact person until she returns to her position.

May all of you have a blessed Advent, filled with hope, love, joy, and peace.

Peace and all good,
Lanny



Message from our Spiritual Assistant

For it is in giving that we receive. St Francis of Assisi
Giving is one of the most amazing acts we can do. Why? Because, there is nothing under heaven and on earth we are not given. Everything is a gratuitous gift from God, starting from our very life. It's true, living is giving. God gave us the best; He gave us His only Son Jesus who even gave us His Mother and kept nothing for Himself.

Recently, we have celebrated the 7th World Day of the Poor and approaching the season of Advent and Christmas, we may have already planned for

Christmas decoration, gifts and dinner, etc. Be mindful of the people in need of support and assistance to make their life a little more livable than what they go through. Our generosity in concrete action will bring hope and happiness to the season of Love. Through our generosity we can make a difference in their lives.

We are very familiar with the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), who gave his time, talent and treasure to a wounded stranger. Did he know the man? No, but what made him do that. It's just being a human to another human. He did not leave him to suffer and die by the road. Whereas the Levite and the priest left him by the road to die. Jesus tells us, *Go and do likewise*. Be a Good Samaritan to a stranger, to a person in need, and do whatever it takes to make the life of the other better. The two copper coins were the ultimate generosity of the Poor Widow (Lk 21:1-4). She gave not from her abundance but from her poverty, the only resource she had for survival. She willingly offered everything she owned for the greater need. She knew very well that unless she emptied herself of what she was holding on to, she could not receive what God had to offer in abundance.

Putting the words of Jesus into practice; *Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me* (Mt 25:40), Mother Teresa said, "At the end of life, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by, *I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in.* (Mt 25:35)

Truly, it is in giving that we receive and receive in abundance. Think of the last time you gave someone your time, talent or treasure. I am sure it made a big difference in the life of that person. Let us share whatever little we can with the less fortunate ones. God blesses a generous giver!

Br Manoj Xalxo, OFM

Message from our Director of Formation

In Chapter One of the Gospel of Luke, Mary says *Here am I, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word.*

Mary is so open, so free, so trusting. She is completely willing to hear words that go far beyond her own comprehension. She knows that the words spoken to her by the angel come from God. She seeks clarification, but she does not question their authority. She senses that the message of Gabriel will radically interrupt her life, and she is afraid, but she does not withdraw. (Jesus: A Gospel, 15).

Renowned writer, Henry Nouwen asks the question *Have you ever wondered if God may be saying much the same thing to you and me?* and God says *Trust me! I know what I am doing. You're going to be just fine. Why? Because I love you.* Then the Lord waits patiently for the words, *I am your servant. Lead me and I will follow.*

Let us be of peace and joy this Advent so we too, can respond **Yes** to Our Lord.

Catherine McNiff, ofs

National Formators Course

This course provides an excellent way to learn about yourself and your own approach to Franciscan spirituality and how to effectively share this with others! The National Formators Course has been offered a number of times in Canada, with very positive comments from participants: for example, "I really enjoyed this course- it helped me understand my own spirituality, and I could help others in their own journeys" (from a course participant).

The National Formators Course will be available in English by **email/correspondence**. The course will also be available in English **online** by using the learning environment on the OLOTA website. Both formats of the course include written assignments and a number of Zoom meetings. These two formats of the course will begin in early January.

The course could be very helpful for Formation Directors at local fraternity and regional fraternity levels, for members of formation teams, and for other Secular Franciscans interested in enhancing their understanding of Franciscan spirituality and sharing that Charism with our sisters and brothers

more effectively. For further information, please contact the Interim National Formation Director, Martha Gabriel at martha.rfec@gmail.com

Course Overview of Six Modules

1. Addresses the identity, role, and mission of a formator. Toolkit for formators.
2. Provides an overview on the elements and objectives of formation in the OFS.
3. Equipping formator for facilitating formation to individuals and groups. Includes principles of adult education, communicating in the learning process, and animating formation.
4. Covers key components of Initial Formation process, discerning a vocation to the OFS. Navigating through Orientation, Inquiry, Candidacy through Profession in the OFS.
5. Multigenerational formation (including youth and young adults). Servant leadership.
6. Ongoing Formation: Fostering ongoing conversion and engaging in the Four Pillars of Franciscan Life: Spirituality Formation, Fraternity, and Apostolate.

FORMATORS COURSE APPLICATION LINKS

>>>Study [ONLINE](#) or >>> Study [BY EMAIL](#)

Save the Dates

-7th Franciscan FINE ARTS & POSTER CONTEST

Our Lady of the Angels Regional Council invites children and youth to participate in our 7th Franciscan FINE ARTS & POSTER CONTEST held on **December 3, 2023**. For more information see

Links to [POSTER](#), [INVITATION](#), [ENTRY FORM](#), [LETTER TO PASTORS & SCHOOLS](#)

-VESPERS and FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY

On first Saturday of each month. **Next session:**

December 2nd @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EybWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

-Zoom BIBLE STUDY

The CASE for JESUS with Dr Brant Pitre

9 Tuesdays: **Nov 28-Dec 19 & Jan 9- Feb 6**

6 pm PT/ 7 pm MT/ 8 pm CT for 1 to 1.5 hrs

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82282367951?pwd=Z3JORWVxb0o3bkxrM2RMUINabzZqQT09>

Meeting ID: 822 8236 7951 Passcode: 276824

-WINTER YOUNG ADULT RETREAT (18-40)

"Journey With the Magi" *The gift of journeying together with the WORD made flesh.*

Mt St Francis Retreat Centre in Cochrane, AB

Friday, January 5 - Sunday, January 7, 2024

For more information click onto [INFO](#)

For questions contact: maritzachouza@gmail.com



Saint Elizabeth of Hungary

(Nov 17)

Secular Franciscan & model of charity, among the best-known legends about Elizabeth is the one often depicted in art showing her meeting her husband unexpectedly on one of her charitable errands; the loaves of bread she was carrying were miraculously changed into roses. This transformation convinced him of the worthiness of her kind endeavours, about which he had been chiding her.

Report on Franciscan Vision Global Summit: The October 28, 2023 Session

Love of Creation in the spirit of Love of Brothers as in the Rule of 1223 (A Holistic Vision of "One Earth, One Family, One Future") with Br Paul Kallan, OFM

The invocation to the Holy Spirit was sung by the sisters of five different congregations, Franciscan Clarist Congregation, Saint Joseph Congregation, Sisters of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Sisters of the Destitute and Daughters of

Mary. They are currently studying at different Universities in Rome and joined the online summit from the Collegio Santa Maria del Patrocinio run by Congregation of the Oriental Church in Rome.

Br Arokiam John opened the session welcoming all members of the Franciscan family and participants from all over the world. He introduced the theme and the speaker highlighting the context of the World Day of Prayer convoked by our Holy Father Pope Francis who on October 27, asked for prayers for peace in Gaza and the Ukraine.

Br Paul Kallan begins by humbly noting to his audience that he is not a Franciscan scholar and that he will present the topic with his experiential knowledge of the Franciscan life and research which may not necessarily touch upon the latest Franciscan publications on the theme.

The text from Rule 1223 in reference to the theme:

And wherever the brothers may be together or meet [other] brothers, let them give witness that they are members of one family. And let each one confidently make known his need to the other, for, if a mother has such care and love for her son born according to the flesh (cf. 1 Thes 2:7), should not someone love and care for his brother according to the Spirit even more diligently? And if any of them becomes sick, the other brothers should serve him as they would wish to be served themselves (cf. Mt. 7:12). LR, VI, 7-9.

The text from Rule 1223 makes reference to love of brothers but not creation therefore the first must be applied to the second. The Rule of 1223 reflects the need to promote brotherliness among the brothers thereby addressing the failure of such also within the context of the society lacking in brotherliness. The reader of today with current social and cultural concerns faces the question: How does the text of the Rule of 1223 relate to society today as it did in 1223?

How can two persons not from the same womb, without the same family background and history become brothers?

They must be born of the same womb; the womb of the Spirit of God as was Francis. Establishing spiritual and emotional bonds strangers become brothers to live the Gospel as the Rule of 1223 so implies.

Wherever the brothers may be together... The term wherever is all inclusive to any place on earth.

Let them give witness... Witness is personal attesting of a fact or event that provides proof of truth.

That they are members of one family... Through personal spiritual birth and a new fraternal bond, they become brothers with the same beliefs and values in how they relate to each other. Their interrelationships are mediated by love, trust, goodness, care. The new shared history is that they are born by the Spirit and led by the Gospel.

Care for as a mother... A mother's care runs deeply with concern for the future of her child. Growth is then guided by a future goal. Motherly care for one's brother is a commitment to the present as well as growth in the future. Care is the basis for all actions of the friars.

Love as a mother... Love is what makes a mother share her body, mind and soul for the well being and growth of her child. This is how a friar is asked to love his brother.

Brother in the flesh and brother in spirit... A very important distinction, the first being biological and the second, born out of inner conversion lead by the Holy Spirit. The bond becomes stronger and nobler in the Spirit of God. Franciscan life begins with a life of penance guided by the Holy Spirit causing the inner transformation turning strangers into brothers.

Brothers should serve others as they wish to be served... When brothers are in need of anything or when they are sick, other brothers have a duty to provide, such as attention, nearness, medical care. It is a moral and spiritual obligation.

Needs and sickness... Brotherliness can be expressed through acts of love and care in sickness and needs. Providing, comforting, encouraging, strengthening by way of the spiritual quality of minority is emphasized by the Rule.

Love of Creation

Now we will see the Franciscan fraternity as a moral and spiritual model of life for the world, present and in the future.

Give witness that they are sisters and brothers wherever they are or meet together... Public space now is not only physical but also cross cultural and global through mobility and digital media. God created everything through His Word; the womb from which every living being is born. Therefore, all beings are sisters and brothers of the one family of God. However, humans have still to learn that they are sisters and brothers deeply rooted in both local and universal nationalities, ethnicities, cultures. Giving witness to this is realized through behavior.

Provide for the legitimate needs of others when made known... The earth's resources are not available equally to all brothers and sisters for sustaining life. Rich and powerful groups of people control the market for resources. Yet the earth was meant to sustain all beings - humans, animals, birds and all creatures that live. Instead, terrible starvation, war, debt traps, extinction of biodiversity continue. All having the same origin, humans on earth have the duty to provide the needs of every creature. It is morally wrong that some enjoy excessive well being and a majority of others suffer a lack of basic necessities.

Love and care as a mother when anyone is sick... 6 of 9 biophysical systems and processes that regulate the state of the planet have transgressed their boundary level and are outside of the safe operating space for humanity. The recent

pandemic, the ongoing climate change, polluted water and air, ecological degradation, etc. are effects of this transgression and signs that the planet is in a disordered state. In order to begin healing and repair, humans must be reborn by the Spirit of God and into the role of mother for the love and care of creation.

Serve others as they wish to be served... Francis stressed the ideal of minority, to become a servant to one another. We are called to be servant leaders. The will to service is the antidote for the will to mastery. Service is a gentle force that arises from the mighty power of God.

The principles of Franciscan fraternal life can form the moral and spiritual fundamentals of life of all beings. Rule of 1223 for the friars prove to be a Rule of life for all creation. The instructions of the Rule of 1223 quoted above encapsulate not only the teachings of Pope Francis on "synodality" (living and striving together) but also the concerns of " *Laudato si*".

The FVGS was closed with a hymn in honour of Our Lady sung by Friars Minor who joined online from Antonianum, Rome but they are originally from Indonesia, San Michael the Arch Angel province and San Francis Messenger of Peace province.

Prepared by Colleen Finlon, ofs

Social Corner



Br Manoj Xalxo visits St Clare Fraternity in Chilliwack, BC on November 13th.



Permanent Profession for Joseph Boateng of St Louis & Zelli Martin Fraternity at St Theresa Parish in Edmonton, AB on November 9th with Br Dan Gurick & Spiritual Assistant Br Carlos Ona.

Our Lady of the Angels Messenger, Secular Franciscan Order of Western Canada Region, November 2023
Minister Lanny Hui, ofs lanny.hui@gmail.com Editor Colleen Finlon, ofs cmfinlon@hotmail.com

