



# OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS MESSENGER

Issue Number 43

March 2024/EASTER



## From Our Regional Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
As we are getting closer to the Holy Week, I would like to invite you to journey with the suffering Christ. Perhaps, pick a point that speaks to you the most this time: How would you respond to Christ' plea to stay another hour to pray with him during his agony at the olive garden? If you have a desire to stay with him, will you stay another hour on this Holy Thursday night. Meditate on Jesus being examined by Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate. Be present to him as he is being condemned, scourged, and crowned with thorns. Where are you as he receives the cross and carries it to Calvary? If you were present at Jesus' crucifixion, where would you be?

When I prayed the passion, I had a vision in my mind that I was Barabas: the crucifixion punishment was originally intended for me but Jesus took my place and looked at me with love. I was in tears as I realized, for the first time, how unworthy I am as a sinner to receive so much love.

A challenging question has been haunting me since: how do I live worthily of Christ' redemption today? I am hoping that this question would continue to haunt me daily and hard for the rest of my life because this question is definitely a grace for me to help paving the path to deeper relationship with Christ and others.

Sending you prayers and wishing you a blessed Easter filled with deepening of your relationship with the Risen Jesus.

Peace and all good,  
Lanny



**He is risen.** Matt 28:5

## From Our Director of Formation

In the Pope John 23rd. Sunday Missal (1978) we read: "Christ's death is our ransom. God showed his love for us by sending his son to be our brother. Christ shows our love for the Father by giving his life in atonement for our sins. He is our high priest gone to the highest heavens but not before experiencing the depth of human suffering."

May our Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters have a holy Triduum and a blessed Easter.

Catherine McNiff, ofs



## From Our Spiritual Assistant

On this Easter Day, the whole church on earth hears the good news, “Christ is risen,” and we respond, “He is risen indeed! Alleluia!” First comes God’s word to us: “Christ is risen.” That’s what the angel said to the women at the tomb. “I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said.” This great fact of the resurrection is stated in such simple yet profound words. The reality of the resurrection itself is the first thing that grabs our attention. Jesus really did die, He was buried, and He lay in the tomb since Friday. Now on Sunday morning He is alive, risen from the dead! The unjust humanity could not stop God the Father to grant Him victory over death. As Easter people, the risen Lord is with us to take us through life as it unfolds. We are all invited to roll back the stone doors and come out of the tomb of anything that is blocking us to be God’s children.

Jesus appeared to different people following His resurrection. What do we learn from these appearances? It is Jesus as the gardener takes the first initiative to meet Mary Magdalene who was searching for Him, wanting to be with Him. Jesus calls her by her name, ‘Mary’, and in that instant, she recognizes Him. Jesus as a fellow traveler takes the first initiative to walk with two disciples on the way to Emmaus who are discouraged and dejected. He explains the scriptures to them and they recognize Him in breaking of the bread. And there are many other examples of Jesus’ appearances following His resurrection where we learn that Jesus takes the first initiative and bestows on his disciples what they needed at the time.

The same Jesus appears to us several times every day in different ways. We are preoccupied and caught up in our own self that we miss to see Jesus in sick persons, homeless and needy neighbors, etc. St. Francis of Assisi recognized Him in everyone and everything, calling them his brothers and sisters. He truly lived as Easter Saint upholding every creature of their God given dignity. The Easter of St. Francis reminds us that every day is an opportunity to start fresh, to renew our response to the call of

the Lord. He sends us forth as brothers and sisters to the whole world, to bear witness to Him in word and deed, so as to draw everyone to the love of God (cf. Prayer Inspired by the Our Father 5, FF 270). St. Francis of Assisi shows what can happen when the grace of Easter becomes effective in a Christian’s life. He teaches us that every earthly suffering holds the seed of resurrection. For St. Francis, Easter was a vibrant reality that gave light and hope and even energy for his daily journey with Christ to the Father. He teaches us that the real saints (the Easter saints) are quite human, quite natural people in whom, through the Easter purification and transformation, what is human appears afresh in its total originality and beauty (Pope Benedict XVI).

Today our world is going through war and violence to a peak that humanity has never seen. Once again, this year Easter will come and go but a question still remains to be answered by each one of us personally, have we risen with Jesus? Unless we rise with Jesus, our world will continue to suffer and Jesus will continue to be crucified. We may not be able to change the world but we can change ourselves, do our part as Easter people, reject sin and live as the children of God.

Happy and Blessed Easter to you. Peace and all good!

Br Manoj Xalxo

## Save the Dates

### -VESPERS and FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY

On first Saturday of each month. Next session:

**April 6th @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1V0Z3EybWMraG1PPTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

### -Next FRANCISCAN VISION GLOBAL SUMMIT

**April 27<sup>th</sup> 2024** on *Praises of God and Resolution of a “very grave temptation”– in the context of the Stigmata of Francis, and their lessons for us today with Sr Jessy Thomas FCC*

Moderator: Lanny Hui OFS

Registration is free. For Info see [BROCHURE](#)

[Link to JESUS CHRIST OUR REDEEMER](#)



## Links to Resources on the STIGMATA

- [POPE ST JOHN PAUL II VISITS LA VERNA AS A PILGRIM](#)
- [“HE TOOK THE SEAL FROM CHRIST” Akko celebrates the stigmata of St Francis](#)

*There will be more links each month on the Stigmata. They will also be posted on the OLOTA.org website.*

## FRANCISCAN VISION GLOBAL SUMMIT February 24, 2024

MC Br Arokiam John, OFM, introduced the program, saying, “May the Lord give you peace dear Brothers and Sisters!” He informed the participants that the talk would be delivered in Italian and made available in six languages by respective interpreters. The invited moderator, Br Henry D’Souza, who is fluent in both languages, performed the translation from Italian to English. The Holy Spirit was invoked by the English choir of St. Joseph Church, Erukkanchery, Chennai India and directed by Sr Moncy, FSM. The six singers are siblings.

MC Br Arokiam introduced the speaker, Prof Fr Pietro Maranesi, OFM Cap originally from Petritoli, Italy. He is at present a professor of Theology and Franciscanism at the Theological Institute of Assisi and the Pontifical

Antonianum University in Rome, as well as at other Institutes in Rome. He is also an author of many articles and books. He gave the talk on the theme: **The Stigmata of Francis: the earliest Franciscan narrations and their present-day relevance for spirituality.**

Fr Pietro Maranesi OFM Cap begins by highlighting two aspects of the documentation of the Stigmata of St Francis. He first mentions that the stigmata were never mentioned by: St Francis himself, by Pope Gregory IX during the canonization of St Francis, in the accounts narrated by the first companions present in the *Assisi Compilation* and St Clare never wrote about or was documented speaking of the stigmata.

Secondly, Fr Pietro discusses the documentation that exists regarding the stigmata and compares their similarities and differences. They are: the first witness account of *The Letter of Brother Elia* (1226), the official memoirs of Thomas of Celano in *I Celano*, 91-96 (1229), *Vita brevior* by Celano, 70-74 (1239) and *III Celano*, 2-4 (1253), St Bonaventure’s *Major Life*, ch 13 (1263), Dialogue with Brother Leo in *The True and Perfect Joy, The Assisi Compilation* (1245) and Brother Leo’s rubrics on the *Parchment* - 1271.

[1226: The Letter of Brother Elia](#) [See text](#)

The text was written on the back of a letter and does not say when, where or how the event happened while the stigmata are described as holes.

[1229: I Celano](#) (91-96) [See text](#)

Celano creates the setting in the hermitage where Francis sought the Gospel about the passion of Christ in imitation of suffering for compassion. The time and place is confirmed: LaVerna and two years before his death. The description of the seraph with six wings, hovering over Francis. And how Francis was surprised and overwhelmed by the event. Celano describes the same nails as the crucifix where the heads and curved tips emerge in the palms and feet.

[1239: Vita brevior/ Rediscovered Life of St. Francis of Assisi/ The Life of our Blessed Father Francis](#) by Thomas of Celano (70-74) [See text](#)

Recounts in short form the same narrative as the *First Life* (*I Celano*).

[1250-1252: III Celano / The Treatise on the Miracles of Saint Francis](#) (2-4)

Anticipates a theology of the cross on its presence during the life of Saint Francis. Repeats a narration of the event as in *I Celano*. [See text](#)

[1263: Major Life](#) by St Bonaventure (ch 13) [See text](#)

Provides the same times, places and motivations as Celano with the only addition of making a Lent for St Michael the Archangel. In the event he describes the seraph with six fiery wings flying over Francis with the effigy of a

crucifix between the wings. Francis became the *alter christus* where the beloved and lover become equal. The description of the stigmata follows according to the narration of Celano. Bonaventure adds the theology of the value of the experience: Francis the pinnacle of evangelical perfection. This fulfillment of Christian wisdom should be taken without challenge as the work of God.

1300s: *The True and Perfect Joy/ Dialogue with Brother Leo/ The Little Flowers of St Francis* (ch 8)

by Br Ugolino [See text](#)

This narrative suggests that the arrival at LaVerna was to find an answer. He must go to the house of the lepers at the beginning of his conversion and continue from there to seek the crucified face.

1245: *The Assisi Compilation* [See text](#)

The place and time of the experience in LaVerna is in agreement with that of Celano. The prayer of request is different: was it better to stay there instead of going to evangelize. The apparition of the seraph consoles Francis without mentioning the stigmata. Francis entrusts the news of events to his companion (Leo?) and perhaps the parchment.

1271: *Brother Leo's rubrics on the Parchment* [See text](#)

Time, place and motives are the same as those of Bonaventure. The vision of the seraph is described with the stigmata without a direct rapport. Francis' praise of the experience is more central in the setting. They mark the healing of Francis: from wounds to praise.

**The Praises of God** by St Francis (written just after he received the stigmata)

*1 You are holy, Lord, only God, who works wonderful things.*

*2 You are strong, You are great, You are the highest,*

*You are the almighty king, you, holy Father, king of heaven and earth.*

*3 You are three and one, Lord God of gods,*

*You are the good, every good, the supreme good,*

*the Lord God, living and true.*

Fr Pietro concludes that, after close examination of the accounts made of the stigmata, the highly sought after encounter with the crucified face of Christ is not solely a mystical experience. It is about a wounded man of God who was born anew through reconciliation with his brothers.

MC Br Arokiam thanked Prof Fr Pietro Maranesi for exploring the stigmata in the early narrations and their meaning for us today. Though Francis and Clare never wrote about or mentioned the Stigmata, Prof. Pietro Maranesi's talk has enlightened us on how the earliest accounts of the Franciscan authors are crucial to rediscovering the image of Francis, who followed the Crucified One and radically lived the Passion of Christ.

MC extended an invitation to participants for a Question & Answer Session.

The session concluded with a closing hymn in honour of Our Holy Father Saint Francis of Assisi, performed in the Urdu language by OFM theology students from St John the Baptist Custody of Pakistan.

Prepared by Colleen Finlon, ofs

## Social Corner



St Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity of Saskatoon held a Lenten Retreat on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Spiritual advisor, Fr Denis Phaneuf began the day with presentations referenced by Scripture for personal reflection. The day retreat included Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, Silence, Rosary Prayer and Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Participants had time to share during breaks and lunchtime. Fr Joseph Jacek helped with Holy Mass and Confessions. Fr Denis closed the retreat with a blessing.

St Agnes of Assisi & St Clare of Assisi  
Fraternities of Coquitlam, BC  
celebrated June Harris' 90th Birthday of  
February 8<sup>th</sup>. June has been professed  
over 30 years and continues to be a  
very active member of the fraternity.  
(front row, 3<sup>rd</sup> from left)



Little Flowers of St Francis Fraternity in Kelowna celebrated three permanent professions on February 24, 2024. Newly professed are (right photo, l to r) Anne Engel, Wilma Suarez-Pinzon and Paulet Froh. Bishop Greg Bittman was the main celebrant with Fr Wayne Fliker, Fr Gerald Sekanga and Fr Cerlouie Jimenez as concelebrants.



On March 9, 2024, nine BC Coastal Fraternities gathered together at Our Lady of Fatima parish in Coquitlam, BC for the Spring Chapter of Mats. A member of the Little Portion fraternity joined us via zoom. The morning began with prayer and talk about Reconciliation with God & Neighbours, followed by Fr. Larry Lynn's movie In the Spirit of Reconciliation (more about the movie), and ended with Korean dance and Nanta performance. It was a day filled with fraternal spirit. Many thanks to St. Agnes fraternity who hosted the event, Joy Jose, Margaret Ross, Fr. Larry Lynn, Carmen Moorhouse, the Korean dance and drum performers, and all BC Coastal fraternity members who were there. It was truly a memorable event. Here are the YouTube links for the performances: <https://youtu.be/k-vO9ls8r3M> <https://youtu.be/bAO0I-HC694>



**Left/Right:** St Mary's Fraternity of Calgary celebrated the Rite of Admission for seven inquirers. One was unable to be present. Special thanks to Heather Shilling and Sr Anne Adoukpe, FMM for accompanying them in their journey.  
**Centre:** Sr Dianne Turner, OSE led St. Mary's Fraternity in discernment for their upcoming Chapter of Election in April.



St. Pio Fraternity from Red Deer concluded their Lenten activity on March 20 with the completion of six Wednesday evening Soup Suppers where they shared reflections on the upcoming Sunday Gospel, then sat to enjoy their 'soup of the week'. With the different numbers of people attending each week, and the different items brought to be put into the soup, each meal was different. It was a time to journey together during Lent and fellowship for those who were able to attend.

Our Lady of the Angels Messenger, Secular Franciscan Order of Western Canada Region, March 2024  
Minister Lanny Hui, ofs [lanny.hui@gmail.com](mailto:lanny.hui@gmail.com) Editor Colleen Finlon, ofs [cmfinlon@hotmail.com](mailto:cmfinlon@hotmail.com)

