



Issue no. 30 – February 2023

## Message from our Regional Minister

My dear Franciscan family,

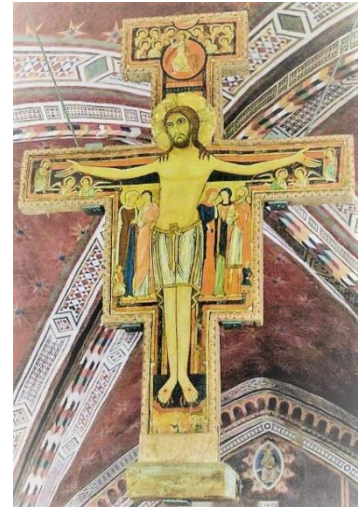
As we are entering Lent, we are reminded once more the importance of praying, fasting, and almsgiving. All of them are important not only for the salvation of our souls, but for building personal relationships with God and others.

Let me take a detour. As long as we are awake, our minds are ever active. Every second, while we can, our free will can "choose" what we would like to fill our minds with: from to do lists, our appointments, our worries, our grudges, our sufferings, and so on. Why don't we make efforts to fill our minds with something of God, like being thankful to God for the graces we receive today, thanking our guardian angels, asking God what he would like us to do or to learn today. We can offer our suffering and actions today for the salvations of souls, and so on? If thinking of God is a challenge, perhaps we can ask God this way: God, we are too weak to focus our minds on you now, can you help us by sending us your Holy Spirit? God does not deny us the gift of the Holy Spirit; By focusing our minds on God, praying, fasting, and almsgiving begin as result. In other words, by praying we focus our minds on God. By focusing our minds on God, we are fasting from negative thoughts and earthly desires, i.e. disordered attachments. The fruits of focusing our minds on God is almsgiving: charity towards others. No wonder, Francis was able to have a radical conversion: from a party goer to a lover of lepers. May God grant us the grace we need this Lent to focus on Him.

Recent financial expenses from the regional council:

- \$200 was donated to help with the stipend of two young adults for the winter retreat in Cochrane in January

*Most High  
glorious God,  
enlighten  
the darkness of  
my heart  
and give me  
correct faith,  
certain  
hope, and  
perfect love,  
sense and  
knowledge,*



*Lord, that I may carry out  
your holy and true command.*

St Francis of Assisi

- \$3233 was sent to the National Fraternity to cover \$9 per professed member in the region (each fraternity was asked to contribute \$9 per member).
- \$397.95 was paid to purchase the tau crosses for the professions across the regions
- \$200 for the stipend of Br. Arokiam John, ofm, in the form of a 140-euro gift card from Amazon Italy.
- \$150 for the stipend of Br. Dan Gurnick, ofm in order to reach out to young adults in BC Coastal.
- \$36.81 for registered mails to send Canonical Establishment documents to OFM provincial, bishop of Edmonton and St. Clare Emerging Korean Fraternity.

With gratitude, the regional council members thank the following fraternities for contributions and the annual reports.

- Saskatchewan and Manitoba: St. Anthony (Winnipeg), St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Saskatoon), and Immaculate Conception (Winnipeg)

- Alberta North: St. Clare (Pickardville), St. Clare Emerging Korean Fraternity (Edmonton), St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Edmonton)
- Alberta South: Holy Spirit, St. Maximillian Kolbe (Red Deer), St. Pio (Red Deer)
- BC Interior: Little Flowers of St. Francis (Kelowna)
- BC Coastal: Little Portion (Victoria), St. Agnes of Assisi (Coquitlam), St. Clare of Assisi (Coquitlam)

Last but not least: in September 2022 Regional Chapter of Elections, a resolution to propose a restructuring in Western Canada was tabled. Thorough study and discernment are needed. Therefore, George Guimond, the National Vice Minister of Anglophone, is initiating and chairing the Committee of Discernment of Regional Options for Western Canada. The following people have been willing to help in the committee (in alphabetical order of first names): Anna-Maria O'Hagan, David Bouchard, Isaac Reyes, Kate Klassen, Lanny Hui, Lynda Black, Miriam Liem, Paulette Matovich, and Warren Postma. Please pray for the committee members and all of us, as we are discerning together to find what is best for all of us.

Peace and all good,  
Lanny

## Message from our Director of Formation

In the book "Franciscan Prayer" by Ilia Delio, osf we read the words of Saint Bonaventure as he says:

*Believing, hoping and loving  
With my whole heart, with my whole mind  
And with my whole strength,  
May I be carried to you, beloved Jesus,  
As the goal of all things,  
Because you alone are sufficient,  
You alone are good and pleasing  
To those who seek you  
and love your name.*

During the Season of Lent, like Bonaventure, may all Secular Franciscans be brought closer to Jesus.

DID YOU KNOW: We have sent fourteen Franciscan Journey books and Little Red Rule Books out to fraternities in the Region and have six left right now.

QUESTION: *Do you have any candidates and/or new enquirers in your fraternity?*

Each Franciscan Journey book costs \$31.50 and each Little Red Rule Book costs \$2.05. A Small Mailing

Box from Canada Post costs \$19.95 which fits 4 Franciscan Journey books and 4 Little Red Rule Books. The medium sized Mailing Box from Canada Post fits 6 Franciscan Journey books and 6+ Little Red Rule books and costs \$25.19. I order 20 Franciscan Journey books at a time from Smoky Valley Printing in the USA - The company gives me a discount when I order 14 or more books. The cost to fraternities is in Canadian dollars plus a tariff & GST as well as the cost of mailing the books to you from Alberta. GOOD NEWS: No PST in AB and OLOTA provides profession Crosses & chains free of charge plus free mailing to OLOTA fraternities prior to the candidate's profession.

Peace and all good,  
Catherine McNiff, ofs

## Save the Dates

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

Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT

ZOOM link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EybWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

**Zoom DROP IN** next on Wednesday, MAY 17<sup>th</sup> at 6pm PT/7pm MT/8pm CT for an hour or so. Choose a *Break Out Room* for various topics: Finance, Formation, JPIC, Youth, Fraternity Life, OLOTA Website

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

**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. March 25<sup>th</sup> at 2am PT/3am MT/4am CT by **Br Noel Muscat, OFM** on: *The spirit of the Rule of 1223: Minor's grace of work, the use of money & goods to promote care of the "common home" today.*

Register to receive ZOOM link. Registration is free.

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

*My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you.  
My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you.  
My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you.  
CCC #226 (St Nicholas of Flüe)*

>>>>[CLICK HERE FOR WHY IS LENT FORTY DAYS](#)

>>>>[CLICK HERE FOR LENTEN CALENDAR 2023](#)

## Social Corner

### Franciscan Vision Global Summit 2023: January Session

In early January, we were privileged to meet Br. Arokiam John, OFM, editor of the Franciscan journal *Tau* published in India. He spoke to us on *The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Secular Franciscan* (available for viewing on OLOTA.org). As *Tau* is co-planner of the **Summit 2023**, activities for the 8th Centenary of the Rule of 1223 & The Crib of Greccio, Br. Arokiam graciously extended an invitation to us to attend the worldwide zoom sessions. For those of us in Western Canada, that meant waking up in the wee hours of the morning to join with worldwide groups of the Franciscan Family to listen to a lecture with a somewhat daunting title: *Rule of the Friars Minor 1223: An Evangelical Antidote to the Contemporary Philosophy and Praxis of Life*. For Colleen Finlon and I, from the OLOTA Communication Team, making that little sacrifice was well worth the effort. We were treated to the joyful singing of the Franciscan Friars of India and the uplifting welcome addresses of the Minister General and Minister Provincial, before we settled into a truly inspirational presentation by Br. Gerry Lobo, OFM.

Br Gerry noted that Francis' rule had both juridical and gospel overtones; and that though the 13th Century juridical aspect may be somewhat irrelevant to today's world, the gospel components remain very relevant and applicable. Many of the socio-economic issues that plagued the lives of those in Francis' day exist today, albeit in a computerised, digital realm. The poor are still marginalised, consumerism is rampant as we strive to accumulate more and more of the "things" of this world. Everyone is focussed on himself with little time or thought for the good of others.

The Rule, which begins and ends with the Gospel, provides a Pathway to Life; a space to build interpersonal relationships without judgement and fear of reprisal. The acceptance of the Rule is a choice to impose limits upon oneself so as to gain the freedom of a Life in Christ. He offered as an example to us, the freedom from avarice which Francis enjoyed as a result of his self-imposed limit to his clothing. The Rule, Br Gerry noted, is an inspirational text that must be lived in the context of the world today and should be used as a strategy to avoid the problems of contemporary living. Though this presentation addressed the Rule of the Friars Minor, the nuggets of wisdom shine through and can be a lamp for anyone walking a Franciscan path. May you be encouraged to make the small sacrifice of early rising to attend the next 11 sessions which promise to be equally inspiring!

Original Clothes  
of St Francis &  
St Clare



Pax et bonum,  
Marlene Welch,  
ofs

## Reinstating the Onlookers Program at St. Mary's Fraternity in Calgary

The question was, *where can I find out about Secular Franciscans?* We realized that people were having difficulty finding out about our meetings. In our Archdiocese of Calgary, we have a weekly online magazine called *Faithfully Yours*. I noticed that the Benedictines and Carmelites had their meetings posted in the event calendar section of the magazine along with what is happening during the upcoming week in the main part of the magazine. I met with Fr. Adrian Martens for permission to have our meetings published in the magazine. With the help of the receptionist of the Catholic Pastoral Center we entered our meeting dates for the year along with a short explanation of the meeting. On the first monthly meeting after this posting, four onlookers joined us. We also received emails from others asking for more information and hoping to attend the next meeting. For those sending emails requesting more information, we send out a general outline as follows.

### Onlookers Program of St. Mary's Fraternity

- All over the age of 18 are welcome to come and participate in our monthly meetings.
- It is a time of open discernment. To listen to the Holy Spirit as to whether you are being drawn to the Secular Franciscan Order.
- There is no specific timeline as God works in His own time.

Each person will be able to learn about the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare; to learn how to live the values of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi: *Gospel to life and life to Gospel*. Participating in the meeting, each person will discover the communal life within the Order of Secular Franciscan (OFS) community. During the meeting, Vespers (Liturgy of the Hours) and/or Holy Mass will be prayed. Liturgical celebrations from the *Rituals of the Secular Franciscan Order* will be prayed. In our Fraternity, we use the book *Live Like Francis* to study Franciscan spirituality and become acquainted with some of the writings along with the *OFS Rule* under the guidance of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor (OFM) from Mount St. Francis in Cochrane. There will also be opportunities to study Scripture and to foster a deepening of your prayer life. **Just come and see!!!**

Lauretta Dearing, ofs  
Dir. Formation, St. Mary's

## Walk With Nerio



**Walk With Nerio** was initiated by the Fraternity of St. Anthony of Padua in Richmond, BC for our brother Nerio, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. The walk is held after the 9 a.m. Tuesday Mass at our parish of St. Joseph the Worker in all kinds of weather. Nerio is seen in the photo holding a walking stick.

*Pax et Bonum!*