



Issue no. 15 – September 2021

Message from our Regional Minister

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

So much is transpiring in our world: earthquakes, floods, fires, difficult weather patterns all around the world. Appears so much is working against us to keep us from the Path of Peace.

God sent Jesus to bring Peace to us all, yet there is so much working against the very nature of God. God is Good even when storms assail. Ps 103 reminds me that as far as the Heavens are high, so Great is our God's Mercy. It makes no sense, yet in the midst of turmoil, tribulations, we are to understand that God is at work. As far as the East is from the West and North from the South, God's Love is steadfast and everlasting. Through these anxious days, God is encouraging us to live by Faith. God is building his Kingdom. God has our backs! Let the Peace of God flood our hearts, keeping our face upon Jesus. God wants us to pass through these anxious days by looking to Him and knowing deep in our hearts HE is holding us in the Palm of His Hand. Let all the words of my mouth bring God Glory and Honour and may my lips always whisper the Mighty Name of Jesus.

So, when all does not appear to make sense, remember God has the Perfect Plan and He continually invites to walk His Path of Peace. If I want Peace in the world, it must start with me.

Come Holy Spirit, fill my heart the Fire of Your Divine Love, fill my fuel tank up with Divine Peace.

OLOTA is planning its Fall Meeting for October... early October will be the JPIC workshop. Be certain to watch for JPIC details within this edition of the Messenger. Young Adults gathered for a Retreat at Mt. St. Francis the end of August. All reports of this Retreat relate moments of spiritual success. Question: How does a fraternity reach out to our young people?

Fraternities are planning Fall Retreats and being creative in planning their fraternity meetings. God is Good...all the time...God is Good. Blessings...

Peace and joy,
Linda Adams, ofs

Upcoming Events

Sun Oct. 3, 2021 at 5pm Transitus of St. Francis, at St. Joseph the Worker parish in Richmond, BC (livestream available). Those who would like to attend in person are invited - there is dinner afterwards; RSVP

for dinner tel.: 604-277-8353 during office hours. Email: parish.stjw@rcav.org

Live-stream at: [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook](#)

Transitus documents of St. Francis: [in the fraternity](#), [at home](#)

Sat. Oct. 9, 2021 at 9-4pm Pacific JPIC workshop: ONE GOD, ONE MOTHER EARTH.

You are all invited to attend. Speaker: Sr. John Mary Sullivan, FSE. To register, please contact Lourdes von Burg (email: letecia78@telus.net or tel.: (250) 495- 2477).

Schedule:

- 9am live-streamed mass youtu.be/Kvv30D1oA0k
- 10am Welcome and Introduction, Talk 1, Q&A
- 12pm Lunch break
- 1pm OFS Rules on Care of Common Home, Talk 2, Q&A, Group Discussions

Wed. Oct 13, 2021 for 11 weeks: Listening to Indigenous Voices. Tentative time: 6:30pm Pacific

You are all invited to online group discussion touching on different subjects related to our indigenous brothers and sisters. We will be using the book: *Listening to Indigenous Voices* which can be purchased through ltiv.ca or Novalis or order through your local Catholic bookstore to avoid shipping charges. First two chapters will be scanned and sent to participants. To register, please contact Lourdes (email: letecia78@telus.net or tel.: (250) 495- 2477) or Lanny (email: lanny.hui@gmail.com).

Message from our Director of Youth

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE AUGUST, 2021 YOUNG ADULT RETREAT AT MOUNT ST. FRANCIS?

Almost a year ago one of the members of the Youth & Young Adult Secular Franciscan National Commission – David - mentions the idea of a Weekend Retreat for young people across Canada. The rest of us – Jewel, Maritza, Catherine, Colleen, Martha and Heather - jump on board thinking this will be the impetus for young people to deepen their relationship with God and give them a taste of Franciscan spirituality at the same time.

Well, that turns out to be a bit of a roller-coaster ride! COVID will not go away and the May, 2021 the dream of inviting kids from across Canada to meet in Alberta changes into a plan for a BC/Alberta smaller group

encounter of ten to fifteen young people at Mount Saint Francis in August, 2021 when COVID rules are relaxed a little.

Brother Michael Perras, OFM agrees to be the Retreat Master and Friar Dan Gurnick, Maritza and Jewel put their thinking caps on and use Facebook to get the word out to young people they know and we end up with twelve retreatants and three Franciscan Vocation Inquirers on the weekend of August 27, 2021 at Mount Saint Francis, Cochrane, Alberta.

We all know that the cost of a Weekend Retreat is an expensive venture for any Retreat Centre and for cash-strapped students so David approaches the Knights of Columbus who sponsor three students. OLOTA and National give some financial support and three fraternities and some private donors help out too so we know that God is with us and we can now go ahead.

The retreat turns out to be amazing! The Rocky Mountains sparkle like diamonds in the distance, the sun is warm, the friary atmosphere is prayerful. The young people are engaged by Brother Michael's presentations

and Jewel's leading of the music and song. They love the skits and appreciate the opportunity to spend quiet time with Jesus during prayer, Reconciliation, Mass and Adoration. They enjoy the drumming and the campfire and Fr. Dan's stories by moonlight under a starry sky.

The question remains – Where do we go from here? Do we want to show young people a way of life that's different from the world? Do we want to entice them to a life of peace and joy and servant leadership as Secular Franciscans?

If this is what we want for the 50% who are under forty years of age in Canada, how do we make our fraternities a welcoming place for them to come to? Are we willing to move over for them, are we willing to set some money aside in our yearly budgets to support activities like this retreat? Are we willing to show them that we love them as brothers and sisters like Saint Francis, like Christ himself?

Catherine McNiff, ofs

Excerpts from

Francis as the Model of Authentic Reform

Francis once said that, "the saints lived lives of heroic virtue, [but] we are satisfied to talk about them." Francis himself wasn't satisfied with pious words. He wanted to act on the things he believed. He called his brothers to live the Gospel with simplicity and honesty. And that's why he used the words *sine glossa*—without gloss—in his Testament. He saw that the Gospel wasn't complicated, but it *was* demanding and difficult. The theologians and Church lawyers of his day had written commentaries called glosses. And these glosses were very good at either explaining away the hard parts of the Gospel, or diminishing our need to follow Christ's demands. Francis wanted none of that. He was a *radical* in the truest sense. He wanted to experience discipleship at its *root*.

Francis lived in a time at least as complicated as our own. It was an age of Christians killing Christians, Muslims and Christians killing each other, wars between cities and states, and corruption both within and outside the Church. Views of society and the Church were changing, and both were experiencing upheaval. The feudal system was falling apart. For much of his life, Francis was lost in the confusion. But in his experience of faith and prayer, he came to some basic insights that gave him a very powerful inner freedom. And this enabled him to live the Gospel with simplicity and clarity in such a way that he not only was converted himself, but also became the leader of a movement of conversion in the Church and society at large.

The insight of Francis was very simple. He experienced God as a personal, loving Father—and knowing that a father would not give his son a scorpion when he asks for bread, Francis decided to live in the world as God's trusting child. Of course, this led him to identify with Jesus Christ, the Son in whom we become God's sons—male and female alike—and in that experience, Francis began to graft his own life onto the way of Jesus Christ.

Right away that had consequences. Because of his relationship with God as his Father and Jesus as his Brother, Francis began to experience other people in a new way. They became his sisters and brothers because they were sons and daughters of God and sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ—and this relationship was not just one of words. It was a reality. Everyone and all creation that flows from the Fatherhood of God are somehow "children" of God. And that explains Francis' reverence toward nature, because nature also flows from the hand of a loving Father. Francis' ability to seek real holiness and to be a poor man came directly from this understanding of God's personal love. He wanted to depend on nothing but the providential care of God, his Father.

Not all of his brothers saw things in the same clear way. Francis had a lot of struggles in his order. He was a man of great gentleness and charity, but he could also be very tough. He fought with his brothers quite frequently, especially when they wanted to water down what he knew was the inspiration that God had given him. The Franciscan Order, right from its origins, was the place where the struggle was joined. And Francis was always right at the heart of the battle. In the year 1221, just a few years after the Franciscan community began, some 3,000 friars gathered with Francis for a general chapter. And the ministers, the ones who were the leaders of the community, wanted to change the Rule. They wanted to accommodate it to the times, so it wouldn't be so demanding.

Of course, St. Francis fought that. And this man of peace chose the following verse from Scripture as the theme for his preaching that day: "Blessed be the Lord my God, who trains my hands for war." Those were the words that he spoke to his brothers as he began his homily. And he won the day. The Rule was later modified anyway, but not that day, because Francis knew how to fight hard for what he believed was right. Like Mother Teresa and many other saints all through Church history, Francis was holy and good and kind—but when it came to fighting for matters of faith and principle, he was not necessarily nice, and he was never soft.

The chapter of 1221 tells us something else about St. Francis very useful for our own day: his humility and obedience. After the chapter, the ministers of the Franciscan community did succeed in wresting control of the Order away from Francis' hands. For a while, in some ways, he just gave up. Francis got tired of the battle and went off to the hermitage with a few of his friends. But he was angry and badly depressed. From time to time he still wanted to fight. He's quoted as saying—or shouting actually, at one point—"If I go to the chapter, I'll show them who I am!" He was going to straighten the brothers out, and teach them what was right.

But eventually the Church, in the person of the Holy Father, approved the Order's modified Rule. And once the Church had approved it, Francis had a peace-giving dream in which Jesus spoke to him. Tradition tells us that the Lord said to Francis, "Poor little man, why are you so sad? Is not your order, *My* order? Is it not I who am its chief shepherd? Cease to be afflicted, then, and take care rather of your own salvation." We're told that after Francis had this dream, the peace and joy that were so characteristic of his early life returned to him, and he died in that spirit of grace.

That peace Francis experienced is something we need to reflect on very carefully today, because many of us are probably worried about the Church. We have experienced a kind of corporate demoralization as Catholics over the past year.

The political life of the Church seems to be in disarray. We have all sorts of factions fighting each other, among priests, among bishops, and certainly among our laypeople. We're humiliated and shaken by the criminal sexual behavior of some of our clergy. And this has led, even for some who are deeply loyal to the Church, to a lack of confidence in ourselves as individuals, in our priests, in the Church and her future, and even sometimes to a lack of confidence in Jesus Christ. We wonder if the Gospel is really true or if the Church is just a fraud. We have struggles with our faith.

Francis certainly felt many of the same sentiments, and he faced many of the same questions. And yet a very clear part of his spirituality was his love for the Church, his obedience to her pastors, his unwillingness to be critical of the Church. Instead of tearing her down because of the sins of her leaders, Francis chose to love the Church and serve her—and because of that love and by his simple living of the Gospel without compromise, he became the means God used for the conversion and renewal of a whole age of faith.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, OFM

Social Corner

Message from St. Pio of Pietrelcina Fraternity, Kamloops, BC



The canonical establishment of St. Pio of Pietrelcina Fraternity took place with much joy, Monday, September 20, 2021, at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Kamloops. Father Manoj Xalxo and Monsignor Jerry Desmond concelebrated Mass. Linda Adams, our regional minister, came to witness the event and welcomed St Pio of Pietrelcina as the 27th fraternity in OLOTA region. Also pictured here are Mary, Lyn, Isabelle, Therese, and Michelle. Grateful, after many years of discerning and setbacks the nine members of St Pio of Pietrelcina fraternity are ready to 'begin again' in responding to God's call to love and to serve. The mother fraternity, San Damiano wishes St. Pio of Pietrelcina fraternity peace and all good.

BC Interior Retreat: September 17-19, 2021

