



Issue no. 22 – June 1, 2022

Message from our Regional Minister

May I share the following reflection with you which came into my heart during prayer time this morning:

“Silence” brings refreshment to one’s being. In the Spring of Season, with all of nature bursting into life, I am recalling there is a season for everything. The Lord calls us “Be still and know that I am God”, herein is new life.

With a torrent of words inundating us, where can we flee to relish silence; to be restored; to be prepared for God’s next move in our lives. Where can one go to be free from such a chatty world from life’s demands? The desert fathers proclaimed: flee from the world. Such a move is not possible for most of us. Prayer and places of prayer can become the profound places to connect with God in Silence. To sit quietly before the Lord and with open heart to just listen in silence. Silence guards the fire of the Holy Spirit within. Silence teaches us to speak. Silence refreshes the soul. Silence is a treasured gift shared with God.

May this spring be a season of renewal for all Secular Franciscans, finding spaces to be still and to know God in the depth of His Love. Silence.

In weeks to come, more information will be sent to fraternities with regard to the plans of the OLOTA Regional Chapter of Elections. Please mark your calendar for September 16-18, 2022. Voting delegates and observers, all Secular Franciscans and Spiritual Assistants, your prayers are invited for the success of the Chapter and for the election of a new OLOTA council to represent fraternities. Thank you for your faithfulness to Pray. May the JOY of Jesus continue to flame in our hearts.

Peace and all good,
Linda Adams, ofs

Upcoming Events

Wednesdays June 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2022

**Lectio: Mary: The Bible and the Mother of God
6pm BC / 7pm AB / 8pm MB**

Why is Mary so important to Catholics, and why have so many people been devoted to her over the centuries? In this 8-part series, Dr. Brant Pitre examines what the Old and New Testaments, the life of Christ, and the early Church fathers reveal about the life and identity of Mary.

Upcoming topics: 4) The Queen Mother, 5) The Perpetual Virgin, 6) Mother of Sorrow, 7) The New Rachel, and 8) Question and Answer.

Join us at ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82444348222?pwd=MjMwdmFlZnFGbmVHeG1FR3pIcWRKUT09>

Meeting ID: 824 4434 8222

Passcode: 352375

Or, call any of the following numbers from any phone and enter the meeting ID and passcode.

AB: 587 328 1099 BC: 778 907 2071 MB: 204 272 7920

When using telephone, press *6 to mute/unmute and press *9 to raise hand.

Saturday, June 4, 2022

Vespers and Crown Rosary

7pm BC / 8pm AB / 9pm MB

Join us at ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EybWMrG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310

Passcode: 741246

Saturday, June 18, 2022

In-Person Chapter of Mats 9:30am

St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Red Deer, AB

Theme: "Where do we go from here?" lead by Fr. Dan Gurnick, OFM. Please bring your own lunch.

The Chapter of Mats will start at 9.30 am. with Mass at St. Mary's Church celebrated by Friar Dan followed by a continental breakfast and short social time. We will have one half hour talk followed by reflection time and small and large group discussion.

We will have lunch from 12 to 1pm and an opportunity to enjoy a short walk with Fr. Dan. He will then lead us in a "Song Circle" so we are not too sleepy for his second talk, reflection time, small and large group discussion!

Please register by June 15 by contacting

- Sharon Sutherland at tobysmom@telusplanet.net or by telephone 403-341-3032 OR
- Catherine McNiff at catherineofs@gmail.com or by telephone/text 403 358 4530

Message from Our Director of Formation

Are you interested in the OLOTA formators' course 2022-2023? Please contact me at ms.999@shaw.ca This course

is a wonderful formation for anyone interested in the 'why' and 'how' of initial and ongoing formation. You do not need to be the formation person in your fraternity, rather you have an interest in deepening your understanding of Franciscan formation. The 6-module course is completed on line with 3 ZOOM meetings throughout. The course runs from September through March/April. Registration is open now and closes August 15, 2022. So, think about it!

Peace and all good,
Lynda Black

Message from Our Director of Youth

Soon my two terms as Director of Youth for OLOTA will be over and I want to say a big THANK YOU to all of you for your encouragement, ideas, feedback and kindness during the past six years.

My goal was to increase awareness of and support to our youth as part of our Franciscan Family and I pray that I achieved this goal. Now I am asking you to encourage the youth to follow the lead of Blessed Carlos Acutis and continue his work in our communities.

Who is Blessed Carlo Acutis?

Carlo is a youth who is being fast-tracked to sainthood by Pope Francis because of his communication skills and

positive influence on the youth of the world. Carlo was a fifteen-year-old computer whiz who died of leukemia in 2006. Called the Saint of the Millennials, Carlo used his internet skills to spread the love of God to millions of young people.

What I am asking you to do is to follow the lead of Pope Francis and pray to Blessed Carlo Acutis. Let's ask Carlo to introduce Jesus and Mary to our young people, to let them know that they are loved with an everlasting love!

Good things happen and fraternities grow in many ways when Secular Franciscans invite and guide our youth to service work with us in our churches and communities. This can be as easy as becoming a proclaimer at Mass, accompanying the choir with musical instruments, helping with children's liturgy and baptism prep classes, planting a Franciscan Garden with seniors, helping stock shelves at the local food bank, serving a meal to the homeless at the Mustard Seed Ministry, and so on.

During his short life in his community in Italy, Blessed Carlo met the youth where they were at, all over the world and used his gifts for the good of millions of young people.

Peace and Joy,
Catherine McNiff

Reflection

St. Francis for Pentecost: "desire to have the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity!"

The book *The Way of Francis (La Via di Francesco, 2016)*, written by friar Cesare Vaiani, actual Secretary for Formation and Studies of the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), suggests three pillars in understanding the spirituality of Saint Francis. Accordingly, these three are "to have the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity"; "*sine proprio*" (without anything of one's own); and "restitution" (giving back to the Lord).

To read the life of Francis according to these three pillars gives us a better understanding of the person and spirituality of Francis. While it is good to understand these pillars in one reading, it will take a longer time to explain everything. Since it's Pentecost Sunday, it is worthwhile to reflect on the first pillar, the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity.

In the Gospel ([John 20:22](#)), Jesus gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to his Apostles. It is freely given to us through the grace of God and we need to receive it freely. And Saint Francis of Assisi invites us to desire this gift from the Lord.

In Chapter X of the Definitive [Rule of Saint Francis \(Regula Bullata, Rb\)](#), Francis admonishes his brothers "*to desire above all else the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity*" (X,8). It comes at the last part of a block of the Rule titled as "*Admonitions and Correction of Brothers*".

After instructions on correcting erring brothers (1-6), Francis exhorts the brothers to avoid vices (7). Then, suddenly he is talking about friars who are illiterate. He does not instruct them to go learn more, rather, he warns them not to be anxious about learning. Then, he emphasizes what is to be desired above all: *the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity*.

In the [Testament of St. Francis \(Test\)](#), which shows us his authentic spiritual experience in his conversion and in the forming of the primitive Order, he identifies himself as illiterate (or simple) and subjected to all (no. 9). Truly, he was a simple man. We know that he studied what was needed for the merchant business of his family but he was not the learned person of his time.

He rightly knows the temptation of the non-learned brothers to develop themselves and their role in the Order by becoming learned. Francis himself had a bitter experience with the learned brothers, when they started to propose changes in the Order that drifts away from his ideals. But he learned to die from himself and renounce because he was guided by the Holy Spirit for sure.

Following his *Testament*, one can observe right away the centrality of the Lord in his life. His conversion was inspired by the Lord; the Lord led him to meet the lepers; the Lord gave him faith in churches and in priests; the Lord gave him brothers; the Most High revealed to him to live according to the form of the Holy Gospel; and others. Thus, in everything

he did it was first marked by the Lord. As such Francis exhorts his brothers to desire above all the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity because all things are possible if we have the Lord in us.

Does that mean that Francis was against learned brothers or studies? Certainly not! For Francis there is an order of priorities. In his *Letter to Brother Anthony of Padua*, after praising Anthony of his work to teach theology to the brothers, he emphasized that the *Spirit of prayer and devotion* is the priority of the life of a friar minor: “*I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers providing that, as is contained in the Rule, you do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion during study of this kind*” (no. 2).

Kneeling before the Lord will help the friars will learn more on any subject, especially the Scriptures. And with the grace of God, what a friar studies may also lead that friar into his knees to praise God. Anyone, not only Franciscans, should acknowledge that God is the source of everything and we ask him to give us especially the Spirit (desiring the Spirit). As we receive His gifts and graces, we acknowledge that we do not own them (*sine proprio*), thus it is only fitting that we give back to God all the graces received (restitution).

Desiring above all the Spirit of the Lord and His holy activity is giving priority to prayer and devotion. In fact, after exhorting to orient the desires of his brothers to the Spirit of the Lord, he adds the importance to “*pray to Him constantly with a pure heart*” (Rb X,8), and he almost repeats the Beatitudes of Jesus.

When Francis first encountered the Lord in a dream, it did not make him right away the Saint. It led him first to many hours of prayer alone, which also included that famous scene of the Crucifix of San Damiano talking to him. The prayer before that Crucifix that he composed starts with these words: “*Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart...*” Doesn’t that resound every other Prayer to the Holy Spirit that we know?

Prayer purified him and his perspective that what was bitter became for him sweetness (Test 1). From the start of his conversion until his death, he had a constant dialogue with the Lord. His virtuous life rooted in prayer desiring only the Lord elevated him to the ranks of the seraphim.

Therefore, the straightforwardness of the *Definitive Rule* makes sense when in the first line it says: “*The rule and life of the lesser brothers is this: To observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” The desire for the Spirit of the Lord leads us definitely to live the way of the Gospel because we cannot desire Him and His holy work if we are ignorant of who He is.

The primacy of the desire for the Spirit of the Lord is not actually an impediment for anyone to develop their state of life. Isn’t it that on Pentecost we ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the One who moves and plants the seed of inspiration in us, giving us the necessary graces to start any plan for our lives. Thus, giving oneself in to prayer desiring the Spirit of the Lord, if the Lord wills it that one proceeds to learning or doing other activities so be it. And it is inside the community that one discerns the will of the Lord because the graces and gifts of the Spirit does not serve for oneself but for the whole Church.

A Blessed Solemnity of Pentecost.

Mark Vertido, ofm of the Custody of the Holy Land.

Social Corner



Message from the Minister of St. Clare Fraternity, Pickardville, AB

Six of our fraternity members who went to St. Paul on Sunday, May 1, 2022 to attend the official Welcoming of the Poor Clare Sisters to our diocese. The even began with a mass at the St. Paul Cathedral followed by lunch at the St. Clare Monastery of Our Lady, Stella Maris and the Formal Enclosure Liturgy in their chapel. Afterwards, we were able to meet them in their parlour and have the picture below taken. Bishop Paul Terrio officiated both the mass and the liturgy and

we were able to visit with him also.

Please pass the following to the regional and national fraternity councils that

1. We as a fraternity do not have any resolutions to present.
2. Re: Restructuring of the boundaries of our western region: many of our members feel supported by the weekly Zoom meetings that are being sent by our BC fraternity and would like this to continue so we would like to have no change of boundaries at this time.
3. Our present executive declined nominations to the national fraternity council.

We are planning to join the parish Ladies and CWL of Pickardville at a Ladies Retreat on June 11, 2022 with the theme *Season of our Lives* organized by the Oblate retreat team from Star of the North. This will be our spring retreat. We hope that two members of our fraternity will be going to the Chapter of Mats in Red Deer on June 18, 2022. Blessings from our fraternity to you all. Peace and all good, Marlene Gerig, ofs