



Issue no. 23 – July 6, 2022

Message from our Regional Minister

May the Joys of July burst fully into all of Summer's Elegance and may you take the time to smell the roses!

“Everything Francis does or says has its center in Jesus. He embraces himself and others because he has first embraced the Lord, whose love makes it possible for Francis to reach out, even to what is repulsive in himself and others. It is Jesus who shows Francis what it means to overcome.” (*The Way of St. Francis* by Murray Bodo.) There is so much to learn from St. Francis. The life of St. Francis is proof that Christ's words effect union and peace in ourselves and in the world around us if we are brave enough, like St. Francis, to put God's Word into practice. St. Francis saw God in everyone and in all of nature. His prayer: “Most High, all powerful, all good Lord” hurled him upward and outward away from being self-centered. “Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:2). Be joyful over everything and every person. Joy is the infallible sign of the Presence of God. Secular Franciscans are called to be instruments of joy.

Regional Council members are pooling talents to host the Regional Chapter of Elections on September 15-18 at the FCJ Centre in Calgary, Alberta. Early June, a letter was sent to every fraternity attaching the Registration form that is to be completed and returned by mid-August to the Regional Secretary, Miriam Liem. The Delegates package should be completed for electronic distribution to fraternities by the later part of August. Keep an eye for this document.

The Nomination Committee Chairperson, Irene Manning will be inviting fraternities to propose names of persons who will agree to stand for election to the Regional Council. Your input, vote and prayers are vitally important.

Let this Chapter be a time to celebrate Secular Franciscans... a coming together in friendship, rest, fun, a fraternal family reunion, companions on the Journey. The Holy Spirit will guide the elections.

With gratitude,
Linda Adams, ofs

Upcoming Events

Wednesdays starting July 20, 2022

Lectio: Peter – Cornerstone of Catholicism

6pm BC / 7pm AB / 8pm MB

The character of St. Peter is both inspiring and confounding to many of us. How could a stubborn and impulsive fisherman become the "rock" upon which Jesus would build his Church? Bringing together biblical accounts, historical evidence, Church teaching, classical art, and personal insights, Dr. Tim Gray gives a fresh perspective on Simon Peter that is immediately informative and relevant to our lives. After all, if Jesus could bring out the very best in someone like Peter, then there is hope for the rest of us.

Join us at ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82444348222?pwd=MjMwdmFIZnFGbmVHeG1FR3pIcWRKUT09>

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.

First Saturday of the month Vespers and Crown Rosary 7pm BC / 8pm AB / 9pm MB

Join us at ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EvdWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310

Passcode: 741246

August 13, 2022 at 10:30am BC: Picnic

San Damiano fraternity is hosting a pot luck picnic Saturday, August 13th, 2022, at the Carmel of St Joseph in Armstrong, BC. Arrival 10:30, Mass at 11:00, followed by lunch and fellowship, closing with prayer.

Franciscans, friends, and family are welcome, especially from interior BC.

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 BC Coastal Vice Minister BC Coastal Retreat at Westminster Abbey, Mission

19 of us attended the OFS BC Coastal - Annual retreat with Sr. John Mary Sullivan. Being able to come back together after all this time was truly special, and I am sure restful and fruitful for each one of us.

Peace and all good,
Heather Thompson, ofs

PS: Check out some of our pictures below at the social corner

Message from Our Director of Youth ALBERTA CHAPTER OF MATS

On Saturday, June 18, 2022 forty-seven of us attended the Chapter of Mats at St. Mary's Church, Red Deer hosted by St. Pio & St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternities. Friar Dan Gurnick, OFM from Mount Saint Francis, Cochrane, AB is our Retreat Master for the day. We had a Mass celebrated by Fr. Dan and assisted by Deacon Roger Reilander and a beautiful choir assembled just for the occasion.

This was followed by a Continental Breakfast with orange juice and fruit and many muffins and scones, jam and butter. After this we get down to the "nitty-gritty" of the day with Friar Dan as he guides us through the title "Where do we go from here?" Friar Dan reminded us that Jesus responds to the people and we too, as Secular Franciscans, also respond to the needs of the people in our own small ways. He reminded us that it is a gift to respond and so we do not have to worry as God "Keeps our lamps burning" (Psalm 10:28).

Friar Dan reminded us that faith comes from hearing "thru' our ear" of the love of Christ and suggested that we replace "Love is patient, love is kind" with "God is patient, God is kind" and see love as a commitment to the

wellbeing of others without conditions, "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear, I will help you" (Isaiah 41:13). Friar Dan reiterates that the will of God is more about "how" rather than "what" we do to answer the will of God. He asks us to ask ourselves "Who am I?" and prompts us to answer "I know who I am" i.e., a child of God, blessed, forgiven, His, accepted, chosen.

He also asks one to think about the possibility that "God is leading me in a different direction?" and do the two "R"s ... Retreat, Reflect and then to Ponder ... Maybe I can let go of my opinions and "Let each of you not look only to your own interest but also to the interest of others" in Philippians 2:4

Friar Dan asks "What experience in the life of Francis or Clare encourages you in your life today?" and reflects on the early life of Francis when he was ego-bound and how the war and his injuries caused him to reflect and open up to the spirit of God in his life. Friar Dan asks this question of us "What is God teaching me to do at this moment?" and has a few suggestions .. be humble, be kind, do not judge, be generous, enjoy a simple life.

Our day with Friar Dan is not all deep, philosophical or theological discussion but also a walk in the beautiful, crisp Central Alberta air after our "bag" lunches followed by half an hour of communal singing led by Friar Dan on the guitar - Bob Dylan style - what fun!

After that we are back to looking at more reference points from the lives of Francis and Clare and a couple of door prizes - yellow or white flowers in pots - won by the longest and most recently professed Secular Franciscans at today's chapter of Mats and Greetings from Ron Seminoff - Vice Minister for Southern Alberta - to Irene Manning, Minister of St. Pio Fraternity and members to celebrate fifteen years as a Fraternity.

We are blessed to be Secular Franciscans, to have Friar Dan as our Retreat Master for the Day, to be able to see everyone "face to face" and sing, pray, laugh and listen together once again. God is indeed good. St, Francis & St. Clare, pray for us people.

Peace and Joy,
Catherine McNiff

Reflection

Our Franciscan Senses

When we were very young, we learned that we have five basic senses that help us collect information and process the world around us. We see, we hear, we smell, we touch, and we taste. Our senses give us an awareness of the world around us. As Franciscans, we strive daily to live a Gospel life and follow Jesus in the footsteps of our Seraphic Father Francis. We have the opportunity and responsibility to preach the Gospel with every encounter and interaction we have. Daily conversion calls us to do just that. We are called by our profession to let the Gospel values guide the way we perceive, interpret, and interact with the world around us. With our basic senses in mind, let us ask ourselves these questions and reflect on our answers.

Do I see others with Franciscan eyes? Do I use a Franciscan lens as I take in the world and see the imprint of the Most High? Especially when I meet others who are different and hold different beliefs, do I see and accept them "as a gift of the Lord

and an image of Christ?" (OFS Rule: Art.5) What do people see when they see me? Are my actions an observable example of Christ? What does God see as he looks into my heart?

Do I hear with Franciscan ears of love? Do I hear and answer the call of the Spirit? Do I hear the cry of the poor? Let us hear "The option for those who are least, those whom society discards" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 195). What do people hear when I speak? Are my words of love and a proclamation of Christ? What does God hear when he listens to my prayers?

Do I smell with a Franciscan nose? Do I recognize the fragrant beauty of creation? In 2 Corinthians 2:14-15, the apostle Paul tells us "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ and manifests through us the odor of the knowledge of him in every place. For we are the aroma of Christ for God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." Do I smell of the fragrance of Christ's love?

Do I touch with Franciscan compassion? Do I reach out and relate to others with love? Am I willing to open my heart to love others with the same acceptance St. Francis gave as he embraced the leper? Do I keep in touch with my Franciscan brothers and sisters and participate in fraternity life?

Do I taste with a Franciscan tongue? Do my thoughts and ideals have the flavor of the Franciscan? Consider my Franciscan palate. Do I savor the Gospel? Do I pray for vocations and ask others to taste and see? We are reminded and reassured in Psalm 34:9 to "Taste and see that the LORD is good." Do I trust in the Lord? Has what seemed bitter "changed... into sweetness of body and soul?" (Testament of St. Francis) Do I taste the sweetness of body and soul?

Sisters and Brothers, we are called to be messengers of perfect joy as Secular Franciscans, members of an evangelical order. We must ask ourselves, do our words, thoughts and actions exude Franciscan love and mercy so others experience Christ's love? Are you using your Franciscan senses?

(This article originally appeared in the Spring 2020 Issue of the TAU-USA)

Layna Maher, OFS

Social Corner

Council Election of St. Agnes Fraternity, Coquitlam, BC – May 2022



New council members: Peter, Gillian, Margaret, Margaret, Karen (missing from the picture)

Annual BC Coastal Retreat in June 2022 at Westminster Abbey, Mission

