



Issue no. 28 – CHRISTMAS 2022



## Message from our Regional Minister

My dear Franciscan Brothers and Sisters,

Christmas is fast approaching. Some of us associate Christmas with writing Christmas cards, Christmas gatherings with family and/or friends or other groups, Christmas mass, caroling, days, taking a break, travelling, etc. Some of us, particularly those who are involved in any degree of preparation, may think "I am not prepared yet. I wish there were more time to prepare." Some of us can't wait to celebrate Christmas. Or some of us can't wait for Christmas to be over for whatever reasons.

Whatever your circumstance is, we are facing the image of Joseph and pregnant Mary. Their presence may touch our hearts: is my heart available enough for them? Or am I just going to focus on the busyness of the season (all the rooms in my heart are taken; no more room is available)? Don't beat yourself up if you have not had much time to be available. Going deeper: how would you respond to pregnant Mary as she stands right in front of you and says: *My child will one day die for your sins.*

Notice how you react to these images and pray for God's grace as you celebrate this Christmas. May you experience the depth of God's love for you, as did Francis.

Peace and all good, Lanny



## St. Bonaventure's Account of St Francis Creating the First Live Creche in 1223



*It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed.*

*The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise." The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem." A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and became a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant*

*marvelously beautiful, sleeping in the manger, whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep.*

*This vision of the devout soldier is credible, not only by reason of the sanctity of him that saw it, but by reason of the miracles which afterwards confirmed its truth. For example of Francis, if it be considered by the world, is doubtless sufficient to excite all hearts which are negligent in the faith of Christ; and the hay of that manger, being preserved by the people, miraculously cured all diseases of cattle, and many other pestilences; God thus in all things glorifying his servant, and witnessing to the great efficacy of his holy prayers by manifest prodigies and miracles."*



### Message from our Regional Spiritual Assistant

Around the Advent and Christmas season it's very common to see the post **"Keep Christ in Christmas."** Do we really need to be reminded of this? Sounds kind of strange to me, celebrating Christmas and not knowing the reason for it! Secular world today tends to make all our celebrations of faith secular in nature as well. As strange as it may sound but, definitely people need to be reminded of the true message of Christmas. Christmas has been commercialized to the degree that the real message is lost and forgotten. Christmas shopping till the last minute makes a good success for many businesses. There is nothing wrong with Christmas shopping, gifts, food, fun, etc. But all is done to the point of removing the real reason which is Jesus then all is in vain. Remove Jesus from Christmas and all you have is nothing but a secular celebration.

Jesus is the primary reason for Christmas, without His birth there would be no Christmas celebration. Christmas is celebrating the Incarnation-the fact that "the Word became flesh and lived among us." Christmas is God's love for humans. God gave His Son to us as a gift. He gave Jesus to us because we are His beloved. We are so dear to Him that His Son came from heaven to us as plan A and not plan B to combat sin. He came to show and share the love of His Father to us. How blessed we are that Almighty and Powerful God, He humbled in His Son, took the human flesh for the sake of sinful humanity. Christmas is an invitation to be humble like our Almighty God.

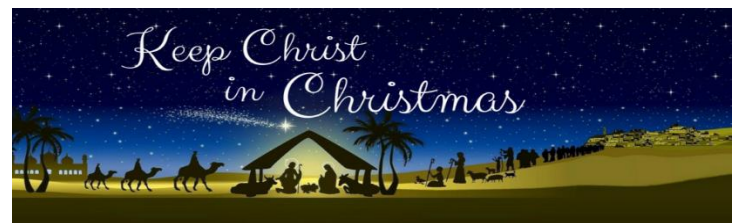
Ten months since the bloody war in Ukraine and yet no signs of stopping it. There is a hard cry of the

earth everywhere and ecological crises are at rise at record breaks. Thousands of lives have been lost because of war and ecological disasters. Such evils prevail in our world as a result of not keeping Christ and His teachings as the guiding principles in our lives. Is it right to celebrate Christmas amidst such evils? Yes, we should celebrate Christmas with its true spirit because 'Incarnation' gives us HOPE to live for God. Keep Christ not only in Christmas but all through life as the Lord of life. Allow Him to rule and reign in life. As long as the world fails to keep God and His ordinances as the guiding principles to a holy and worthy life, the world will keep on moving in the wrong direction. God does not condemn us because we sin, we condemn ourselves because we do not repent.

St. Francis of Assisi prior to his conversion lived a worldly life but the very moment he embraced Christ in the leper, everything bitter and nauseating turned into sweetness of his soul. From that moment in everything he saw the work of God. His old self died leading him to become a new creation. He experienced the love of God and shared this love by inviting the people of Greccio to behold the poor Christ in the manger and sing with him like the choirs of angels the praises of God Almighty.

We need to celebrate Christmas in the way the Church intends, as a way to grow in our relationship with God, keeping Him in the center of life, taking His love from the manger to where we live and sharing joy, peace and forgiveness. **Let everything we do; every gift we send, every party we attend, every meal we share-remind us of God's love and gift of His Son Jesus whose birthday we celebrate.** Wish you a Merry Christmas...God Bless.

Br. Manoj Xalxo, OFM



### Save the Dates

**Vespers and CROWN ROSARY** on Sat. Jan 7th,  
7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT

ZOOM link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EvbWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246



**Winter YOUNG ADULT RETREAT** on Sat. Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, 1pm MT to Sun. Jan 8<sup>th</sup>, 1pm MT at Mount Saint Francis Retreat Centre in Cochrane, Alberta. Contact [maritzachouza@gmail.com](mailto:maritzachouza@gmail.com) for further information and details.

**Zoom DROP IN** on Sat. Jan 14, 2pm PT/ 3pm MT/4pm CT (for one hour)

ZOOM link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82134049106?pwd=d2lXWVYB5d3Z0M2U3Q3F5enhM3YxQT09>

ID: 821 3404 9106 Passcode: 13417

>>>**CLICK HERE TO SEE [ZOOM DROP-IN POSTER](#)**

## Social Corner

### St. Pio Fraternity in Red Deer, Alberta Contribute Items to Catholic Social Services



Rachel and Jill (l to r) from Catholic Social Services along with Joyce Reilander from St. Pio Fraternity with donated items for the Morning Star program.

On December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the St. Pio Fraternity from Red Deer, Alberta had the privilege of providing a number of much needed items to Catholic Social Services in support of their Morning Star program. Morning Star supports vulnerable women in Red Deer and the surrounding communities by working to address their most critical and immediate needs. They provide: a safe and welcoming centrally-located drop-in centre just for women, free shower and laundry facilities, access to outreach and support services, help accessing health services, snacks, coffee, personal care and hygiene products, referrals to doctors, lawyers and counsellors, as well as housing and financial supports. Among the many and varied items were 60 pairs of socks.

### St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Coquitlam, BC Newly Elected Council, Oct 26, 2022



(l to r) Clemence, John, Carmen, Lanny, Denise, Catherine

**The Role of the BLESSED VIRGIN in the Secular Franciscan Life** on Sat. Jan 7, at 8:45am PT/9:45am MT/10:45am CT by Br Arokiam John, OFM.

Br Arokiam has a PhD in Franciscan Spirituality and is currently a professor of the Pontifical University of Antonianum, Rome.

ZOOM link:

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/84464358757?pwd=MTNwZkgySGpDM3LvYXZJbKN4TWJJUT09>

ID: 84464358757 Passcode: 137060

>>>**CLICK HERE TO SEE [BVM in the SF Life POSTER](#)**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Elective Chapter of St. Pio Fraternity in Delta, BC on Nov 17, 2022



New Council Members for 2022-2025 (l to r): *Vice-Minister* John Kalley, *Treasurer* Bill Birch, *Minister* Ed Yee, *Formation Director* Jewel Jasmins, *Secretary* Marla Poirier, *Regional Vice-Minister, BC Coastal* Lynda Black

## St. Pio Fraternity Celebrates at Immaculate Conception Church in Delta, BC on Nov 3, 2022



**Rite of Admission:** Gemma Lee (front of Fr. Abundo)  
**Permanent Profession:** James Kingsley (l of celebrant) and Praveen Sonichen (r of celebrant)  
Fraternity members in attendance and *Spiritual Assistant* Fr. Amador Abundo

## St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity in Richmond, BC Newly Elected Council on Nov 27, 2022



(l to r) Stefanie, Irene, Dulce, Ray, Anita