



Issue no. 5 – November 2020

Message from our Regional Minister

Mary was chosen by God to be the Mother of Jesus. How would this be possible? First by Mary's Fiat, followed by the Power of the Holy Spirit! Mary provides us an example of faith. Apart from the Holy Spirit, Mary could do nothing nor can we. For what is impossible with man, is only possible with God.

We are each chosen by God. God's Grace is sufficient for us to do what is asked of us. God's Great Love is breathtaking, awesome, astonishing. Jesus, in our heart, radiates Divine Peace, Joy, Gentleness, Kindness, Tolerance, Patience and over us Divine Love overshadows. The Holy Spirit embellishes, saturates, fills us full of the very fragrance and essence of Jesus Himself. No matter where we go, we take Jesus. The Presence of Jesus through us is imminent. My Prayer lately has been: "Jesus, You take over" and Jesus responds: "I've got this!" God has a plan and a purpose within His perfect timing for every matter.

This Season of Advent, let us be astonished at the Wonder of Jesus. Let our hearts be set afire with the Burning Love of the Holy Spirit. May all of Jesus radiate through each of us. May the Light of Jesus dispel every darkness. May the Love of Jesus be rivers of new life, flowing forth with healings, restoring relationships, renewing commitments to surrender all to Jesus. May all who see us, see "Jesus".

Your elected Regional Councillors have been encouraged to find quiet spaces over the next couple of months to be refreshed by the Heart of God. The tender Love of God to cradle and for God to speak softly from His Heart to all Secular Franciscans.

On a business note, sent to all fraternities were the Contribution form and the Annual Report.

Please ensure you give these documents your attention by the end of this year, 2020. To complete the Contribution form, your members are to be counted from the Fraternity Register. This exercise may present some challenges. Please refer to the package that was sent to you last August encouraging Ministers that if your Fraternity Register is in need of updating, this could be a "work in progress".

Another note, if your Fraternity has an election forthcoming and your Fraternity Council deems the pandemic to continue to create a safety and health challenge, be certain to write to your Vice Minister requesting a postponement date. Salmon Arm, BC completed their elections in October and the Fraternity is applauded for their adherence to all health and safety measures imposed by their Parish. The Elections were successfully celebrated.

OLOTA held its virtual meeting on Oct 17, 2020. Highlights of this meeting are available on the OLOTA website. Of interest may be the 3-year vision statement that was presented to the OLOTA Regional Council. If access to the website is a challenge for you, please contact me or the OLOTA Secretary, Miriam for a copy of the Meeting Highlights to be sent to you.

You are chosen! Your Fiat has been given to God. The Holy Spirit overshadows and infills you. Jesus resides in you and Jesus shines! Jesus is making a big difference through each of us. Let us Rejoice and

Thank God every day for His many Blessings. Listen! Can you hear the Angels singing?

Blessings of Advent overtake hearts with much Peace and JOY!

Linda Adams, ofs



Dec. 5 at 9am Pacific Time / 10am Mountain Time 10am: ZOOM Morning Retreat. "Preparing Our Franciscan Hearts to Welcome Jesus this COVID Christmas" is a Morning Advent Retreat hosted by St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Red Deer, AB on Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 09:00 - 10:30 am Pacific Time or 10:00 am - 11:30 am Mountain Time. Our Presenter will be Sister John Mary Sullivan, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist. We will start with Morning Liturgy of the Hours, a greeting from Brother Gerry Clyne, OFM and a one-hour presentation by Sister John Mary - a dynamic, engaging speaker from the Archdiocese of Vancouver, BC. Please register with Sharon Sutherland by email: tobysmom@telusplanet.net by November 30, 2020 and she will send you the Zoom meeting info.

Franciscan Saints and Feast in December:
 8: Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patron and Queen of the Franciscan Orders
 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patron and Queen of the Americas
 15: Bl. Mary Frances Schervier
 25: Birth of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Regional Council Meeting on Oct. 17, 2020
 Where are we today and where are we going?
3-year Overview of OLOTA Region

- The Regional Council has completed most of the tasks list it adopted at the start of its mandate. In the past one and half years, OLOTA has introduced guidelines and checklists. Regional councillors will ensure they work properly and produce tangible benefits to fraternities, particularly in the areas of Fraternity Registers and Contribution form. The Contribution form could be a challenge because the data must come from local fraternity registers. Hence, proper recording of the status of Professed Members is paramount. The sample page

of the Fraternity Register was discussed at the regional meeting and it would serve as a guide to fraternities.

- The first stage of the OLOTA Handbook concerns reformatting the table of Contents to simplify finding the pages. The second stage is to update the Formation, JPIC, and Youth.
- A virtual regional council meeting has been scheduled in February 2021 to address our upcoming Elections in 2022 spring. Please pray to the Holy Spirit for the discernment of a theme and the selection of speakers.
- OLOTA has become more experienced with virtual meetings. Correspondingly, it has reduced its expenses and resulted in savings that may help fraternities that need financial assistance in attending the 2022 Regional Council Elections.

Miriam Liem, ofs

Message from our Director of Youth
DID YOU MISS THE WORKSHOP ON HOW TO START A FRANCISCAN YOUTH GROUP IN YOUR PARISH?

Ten of us met on in the afternoon on October 31, 2020 to explore how to start a Franciscan Youth Group in any parish.

We looked at first steps - introducing Franciscan Spirituality in the parish, talking to the pastor, advertising in the church bulletin, having information sessions after Masses, inviting parents to become involved, informing the local Catholic School principals.

We then looked at the needs of the different age groups with a template of how to organize a meeting. We looked at fun activities plus activities that centered on Franciscan spirituality – from five-year-old youngsters to the youth and young adults who will form YouFra groups - “stepping stones” to our Secular Franciscans of the future.

We had a group discussion on varied topics including engaging students during COVID-19 using platforms such as Zoom and forming inter-generational groups, an idea which has taken off in our communities during the pandemic.

Are you being called to start a Franciscan Youth Group in your parish?

The information is all there on www.olota.org – all you have to do is follow the link on the Franciscan Youth Page and you can download the information about the age group you will be working with.

Remember that God does not call the equipped but equips the called!

Catherine McNiff, ofs

Message from our Regional Spiritual Assistant



Dear brothers and sisters in St. Francis of Assisi, may the Lord give you Peace.

Advent wreaths are circular, representing God's infinite love, and are usually made of evergreen leaves, which "represent the hope of eternal life brought by Jesus Christ". The four traditional advent themes for the four advent Sundays are: Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace. Many Advent wreaths also have a white candle in the centre to symbolize the arrival of Christmastide, sometimes known as the "Christ candle."

As we journey into the season of Advent, I wish that all of us are renewed in the Love of God, who came down from Heaven to create Love on the Earth (among us). I am sure all us long to live in a loving relationship with each other. To do this, we need to be first in love with God who has given us life and every blessing to live this life on the earth, but never forgetting that our journey does not end here but in Heaven.

Let us live in such a way that we make the best use of the talents God has given us, so that at the hour of our death our Lord will say "Well done, my good and faithful servant, come and share the joy of your master" (Mt: 25:21). Jesus invites us to use our talents primarily to serve God and do everything we can to carry out God's will. He challenges us to do something positive, constructive and life affirming with our talents here and now. I would encourage all of us not to bury our talents (like the third servant), but trade, make use of them responsibly.

These months have been hard and challenging for all us, not able to meet our loved ones, social distancing in place, having to live life in your own space and time, not able to gather in person for worship in the Church and so many other limitations. But this is not going to be the end of our story, one day things will again turn in our favour, meanwhile stay positive, hopeful and never give in to despair.

Let us find ways to connect to God and fellow humans around us. Love should be the only motivation to do this. Love is our guiding principle and force in life. Be sure to dedicate time to pray personally and with family, set up the Christmas crib at home, decorate the house and of course exchange gifts to each other not forgetting the less fortunate one among us. These are few ways we can bring the spirit of Christmas alive around us. Never know if we will be able to celebrate Christmas Mass this year in person, but even if unfortunately happens, let our love for Jesus find an expression in our living, be the best Eucharist people that we can be.

Let us do everything that we can to prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus on the day of Christmas and give the Birthday Boy the best gift we can ever give, the gift of our hearts so that He can continue to shepherd our lives.



Fr. Manoj Xalxo, OFM

Message from our Director of JPIC

WAY to Care of the Common Home

Laudato Si Revolution: LIFESTYLE CHANGE

“Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction.” (Pope Francis, *LS*. 8. 23. 204)

Laudato Si Revolution promotes personal and community lifestyle change, which collectively can make a difference in the world. Brother Francis and his companions began a new lifestyle 800 years ago, and it became a social movement of peace and fraternity that changed the culture of the European continent. We believe in the power of such concrete practices, for when we pursue them with a sincere heart, we become an inspiration to others.



YouTube link about Lifestyle Change: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/dejPXwK9YnM>
Laudato Si Revolution Lifestyle Change: <https://www.laudatosirevolution.org/lifestyle-change/>

My Sisters and Brothers of St. Francis and St. Clare,

Pope Francis encyclical *Laudato Si* marks 5th anniversary. In it he says that “many things have to change course, but it is we human beings, above all, we need to change”. Pope Francis is talking about a change in both attitudes and actions.

Let our Advent resolution be: may we sincerely dedicate a lifestyle change of ecological conversion and spread our actions, by prayers and education.

Our assurance is on Mathew 28:20, Jesus says, “Behold, I am with you always.” God loves us unconditionally. May we abide in Him and His teachings! *Laudato Si Mi Signore!*

Peace and Joy,
Lourdes von Burg, ofs

Social Corner

We are both Friend and Stranger

We are both friend and stranger

In this sea of humanity

Families of faith

Enrich community

We are blessed in our differences

With flavour to share

In this banquet of love

From our Creator's care

Bring kindness to strangers

Who come by your way

Pardon for the sinner

Who offends you today

Bring guidance for the lost

And courage for the meek

Tenderness for the wounded

And strength for the weak

Bring peace to the conflict

Gentle rain for the drought

Wisdom for the confused

And faith for those who doubt

Bring patience for those who struggle

With their daily chores

Understanding and good deeds

As you have done before

The world is full

Of beautiful people

In mystery with

The kaleidoscope of life

God who lives

In between strangers

Bless the courtship of love

For husband and wife

William A.J. Bertrand, ofs

Little Portion Fraternity, Victoria, BC



Message from St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Edmonton, AB

Greetings from Edmonton! Although we are huddled inside to stay safe and warm (we just had our first snow storm), we celebrate our blessings this past year. We have started meeting via ZOOM, like many fraternities, but a small group of us met for our annual “Walk in the Woods” in September. We had a lovely socially distanced and masked walk in Provincial Park just east of Edmonton.



Some fraternity news is that it is with great joy that we celebrate our Korean fraternity members who have now been established as an emerging fraternity. We look forward to accompanying them on their journey to canonical establishment of “St. Clare” fraternity.

This summer we said good bye to one of our fraternities founding members. Due to COVID, we were not able to say farewell but we were able to have a Christmas celebration with her in December. I’ve included her obituary that reflects the life of our dear friend who was a humble and wise Franciscan model for us.

It is with deep sorrow and much love that we

mourn the passing of our beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and friend, Gwendolyn Ellen Robinson on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 91 years of age. She will be lovingly remembered by her children: Mary-Agnes Robinson Smyth (Tom), Garrett Robinson (Gordon), Frank Robinson, Jim (Tracey) Robinson and Janet (John) Zuk; brother, Gordon (Yvonne) Tidswell; sister-in-law, Ruth Robinson; grandchildren: Sean Tidey, Cathy Tidey (Garth), Andrew (Xuan) Robinson, Jordan Robinson, Rebecca Zuk, Sarah-Lynn Zuk; as well as numerous relatives and friends. Gwendolyn was predeceased by her loving husband of 28 years, Francis Robinson; grandson, Mark Robinson and her



Gwen Robinson, an academic, devoted Christian, mother of 5 and grandmother to many. Born and educated in Edmonton, Gwen attended U of A, graduated in the Faculty of

Science, married the love of her life Frank Robinson (deceased) and went on to achieve a degree in Education while her 5 children attended school. Gwen's first teaching experience was at the newly formed Terra School for pregnant high school students giving them an opportunity to continue their education during pregnancy and motherhood. This was followed with a position in the Christian Family Life program developed by the Catholic School System. During this period of her career, she began attending Newman Theological College and convocated in 1990. After retiring from the Catholic School System, Gwen became involved with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program (R.C.I.A.) at St. Matthew's Catholic Parish and continued well into her 80s. Professed into the Third Order of St. Francis in 1956, she lived her life following the teachings of St. Francis. Gwen was kind, generous and forgiving. She stood up for social justice and equality for all. She had an incredible zest for knowledge and willingly shared hers. Gwen touched countless lives, and all have been blessed to have been loved by her. Gwen Robinson, a life well lived.

Stay well and stay safe – peace and all good things
Renette Bertholet, ofs





Sep. 27, 2020: Admission Rite of Aann and Benita - St. Mary's Fraternity, Calgary, AB