



Issue no. 6 – December 2020

Message from our Regional Minister

The Christmas Story was brought to life at the Franciscan Grotto in Greccio; the site where St. Francis staged the first living Nativity enactment in 1223. An event that even eight hundred years later has not been forgotten. The Christmas Nativity scene continues to be a spiritually inspiring portrayal of Divine Love.

When I held my first newborn baby Grandchild who slept peacefully in my arms, I was astonished at the amazing miracle of new life! Looking tenderly upon this newborn, suddenly the Christmas Story came to life.



When I gaze upon the Nativity scene, I am again astonished at the Amazing Love of God through His only Son, Jesus, who came to us as an infant Baby. Baby Jesus, totally dependent upon Mary and Joseph for His care. Baby Jesus who lifts my soul out of the everyday concerns and helps me focus on the Miracle of New Life. The Miracle of Jesus assuring us that He is with us. My heart soars with Joy! May such Divine Love be experienced by everyone.

May the Love of Jesus fill your hearts....Secular Franciscans who are Instruments of Divine Love are strong Beacons of the Light of Jesus, dispelling darkness.....an astounding witness of the life of Jesus.

On behalf of Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity, to all fraternities and their Secular Franciscan members, Regional Council prays for all to experience a Holy and Awesome Mary Christ Mass.
Linda Adams, ofs

Franciscan Saints and Feast in January:

1. Solemnity of the Mother of God
3. Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
- [7. Bl. Angela of Foligno](#)
- [12. St. Bernard of Corleone](#)
- [14. Bl. Oderic de Pordenone](#)
- [16. Sts. Berard and Companions](#)
24. St. Francis de Sales
- [27. St. Angela Merici](#)
- [30. St. Hyacinth de Mariscotti](#)
- [31. St. John Bosco](#)

OLOTA ZOOM Account

Since the pandemic, a lot of us have become more reliant on the digital world to do our activities: to work, to attend mass, to shop groceries, to stay in touch with others, and to attend many lectures. If you are ambitious, you can be busier than pre-pandemic period by filling your days with all sorts of webinars, online retreats, and meetings from around the world.

Did you know that your fraternity can book a ZOOM meeting for free through the OLOTA ZOOM Account? The regional council has purchased a licensed professional ZOOM account to help fraternities keeping in touch. The account has been used for regional council meetings, BC Coastal Chapter of Mats, Franciscan Youth Workshop, Advent Retreat, OLOTA online courses, fraternity meetings, formation of candidates/inquirers, and council meetings by the following fraternities:

- St. Anthony of Padua, Richmond, BC
- St. Clare of Assisi, Coquitlam, BC
- St. Francis of Assisi, Vancouver, BC
- St. Francis of Assisi Korean Fraternity, Vancouver, BC
- St. Louis and Zellie Martin, Edmonton, AB

- St. Mary's, Calgary, AB
- St. Maximilian Kolbe, Red Deer, AB
- St. Padre Pio Korean Fraternity, Calgary, AB
- St. Pio Fraternity, Red Deer, AB

If your fraternity has not been in contact with each other or has not had a meeting since the pandemic started, please consider attending an online meeting with another fraternity as a guest.

What if you do not have access to a computer or a smart phone or a tablet? No problem, you can still join a meeting using a regular phone by dialing a local number then entering a meeting ID number and a pass code.

For more info, booking, and getting familiar with ZOOM please contact Lanny Hui at lanny.hui@gmail.com or 778-999-7097.

Message from our Regional Spiritual Assistant

Christmas - a Love Story ever lived

Dear brothers and sisters in St. Francis of Assisi, we are almost at the threshold of Christmas. Christmas is here and we are called to celebrate. Have we prepared ourselves for His coming? Whether we are ready or not, He is ready and willing to come to us if we only let Him in our hearts. He is in our midst; His name is Emmanuel, God with us, a God who came as the savior, a God who came to share His love with us and a God who came to live with us always as Emmanuel.

Christmas is a Love Story; the greatest Love story ever told and ever lived, the story of God's love for us. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). The primary reason for the incarnation of God's son is Love, as our Franciscan spirituality teaches us. Love needs no reason but to love. God in love with humanity humbled himself to make a dwelling among us. This act of God is unfathomable. The almighty God came to live with us, so that we the weak and fragile humans could learn to live as children of God the loving father. The savior was born in the silence of the night and not in the splendor of the day. Mary and Joseph with the baby in the manger with the company of few shepherds and their herd speak of the poverty, humility and simplicity of God. To this St. Francis of Assisi was passionately in love with and he wanted to recall the memory of that Child who was born in Bethlehem, to see with bodily eyes the inconveniences of his infancy, how he lay in the manger, and how the ox and ass stood by and share that experience with the people of Greccio, thus created the first nativity scene on Christmas Eve of the year 1223.

"No room in the inn" replied the innkeeper. Whatever may be our judgment about the innkeeper, but it does not suggest that he was a bad guy, he just did not have a room, he was fully booked for the night, and he already had all he could handle. Once, a group of students were scheduled for the Christmas pageant. The student, who was given the role of the innkeeper, did not show up on the scheduled day for the Christmas pageant. The teacher was in panic and chose a new student (John) to play the role of the innkeeper and told him that when Mary and Joseph ask for a room in the inn, he has to just say "No room in the inn." Mary and Joseph approached the innkeeper and asked for a room, the student replied, "No room in the inn." As Mary and Joseph left the place, John was in tears and moved with compassion, ran after them and said there is no room in the inn but I have a room in my house. That's a genuine love for the needy; John made a space for them. He made a space for Jesus in his life and house. At times our hearts and lives are too full for Christ to have a place. Our life is full and booked up for all secondary reasons that the primary does not have a room. Not only at Christmas but every day we are called to make room for God in our lives like John who played the role of the innkeeper.

The Christmas story tells us that there is a way out of our sinfulness and hopelessness, because God is with us. We are not alone. As Emmanuel, Jesus lives in the sacraments (especially in the Holy Eucharist), in the Holy Bible, in the praying community and in each believer. Christmas celebrates the entry of God into the world as a bright light shining in the darkness. So, like Jesus the light, we are then to be lights amid darkness and rays of hope amid despair. Covid-19 pandemic cannot stop the light and hope that we have in Jesus. Now that we have the vaccine, we will be able to win the battle in the coming future. But as said before, more than the vaccine, we need the pandemic of love around us to end all the virus of evil around us.

So, in celebrating Christmas, let us be ever mindful and grateful for the Love of a God who came as the Savior, a God who came to share His Love and a God who came to live with us as Emmanuel.

Merry Christmas!
Fr. Manoj Xalxo, OFM

Year of St. Joseph

As we celebrate 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as the patron of the Universal Church, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special “Year of St Joseph,” beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021. Link: [Pope Francis’ Apostolic Letter: *Patris Corde*](#).

Social Corner



Message from St. Elizabeth of Hungary Saskatoon

I need a little Christmas right this very moment - it has been a rough year.

So here I am sitting in the middle of my quiet living room with piles of Christmas boxes around me.

I grab the first box inside I find a varnished crib.

My mind drifted back to Francis who is believed created the very first crib scene in the year 1223.

And I thought how Francis would look at my tiny crib and smile, although he would probably prefer and outdoor crib with live animals and the town folks.

I can see him with his head bending low and praying to the Infant Jesus in the crib.

We know Francis wanted everyone to recall the child born in Bethlehem.

The crib in not just scene but a sign of how Francis loved nature and the people he met along his journey.

But there more: here it is Francis unbending love for the babe born in a manger so many years ago.

My mind comes back to the present and I realize that the babe born in a manger is still here with us during this troubling time.

He is our lullaby of peace and love.

Have a great Christmas.

May the babe in the manger bless us and keep us safe.

Yvonne Armstrong, ofs