



Issue no. 9 – March 2021

Message from our Regional Minister

Lent, our 40-day journey, will culminate into the joy of the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus lives! Indeed, Jesus lives today, now, through you and me! St. Paul, in the scripture states: “yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20a) and that is our statement as well. Through the Holy Eucharist, Jesus comes to us, into us, renews his life in us.

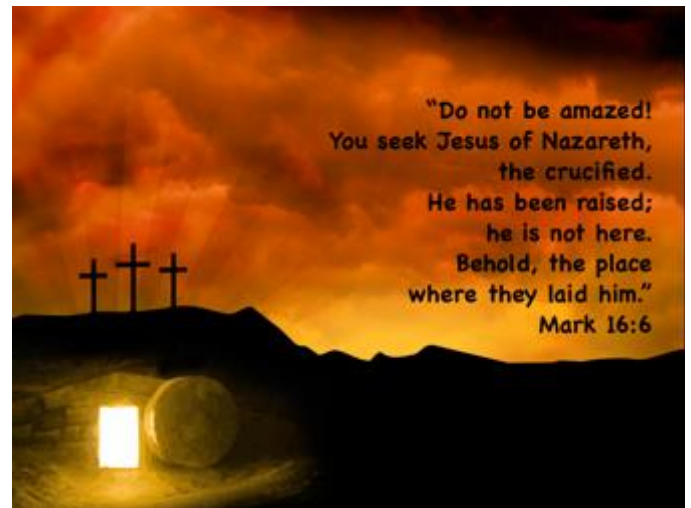
During my Lenten journey, the Holy Spirit inspired me to ask: How do I stay positive in such a negative world? For negativity can wax a heart cold toward God (“and because of the increase of evildoing, the love of many will grow cold” -- Mt 24:12). Voices of strife, unrest, worry, pressures are some traits that can have the effect of drowning out God’s voice. Jesus says: “I am the good shepherd” (Jn 10:11a). “My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (Jn 11:27). A question for reflection: what voice do I choose to hear? God’s words are life-giving, uplifting, encouraging, calling each of us to be salt of the earth, to be his light, to be his instrument of peace, hope, love, joy, and to manifest all of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. God challenges us to not be troubled (cf. Jn 16:33) despite the tribulations in this world. Be a good cheer for Jesus has overcome the world. We are invited to seek his grace of mercy and forgiveness which are fresh to us every morning. What a blessed way to start each new day! Put God first in everything and God will manifest his blessings to us... “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Mt 6:33)

Another question: Am I plugged into God? Or am I plugged more into the world? The OFS Rule #4 invites us that we are to live from Gospel to life and life to Gospel. More of God’s great and redeeming grace awaits as Lent draws to a close and we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. I wish you blessings of the risen Jesus.

Looking ahead, the regional council will send you information regarding our Regional Chapter of

Elections which will be held on **April 27 to May 1, 2022** in Calgary. Please mark your calendars. There is hope ahead! We have the hope to be together in community, to meet and greet each other, to laugh together, to share with each other, to encourage one another. Let us begin to pray for this exciting upcoming event. Watch for more information as plans unfold!

Linda Adams, ofs



April 2, 2021 (Good Friday) at 7pm BC / 8pm AB / 9pm MB: Vespers and Crown Rosary

Join us at ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EybWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310

Passcode: 741246

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.

Franciscan Saints and Feast in March – April – Month of the Holy Face and the Redemption

1. Bl. Elisabeth Vendramini
2. St. Francois de Paule
3. [St. Benedict the Moor](#)
4. Bl. Guillaume de Sicli
5. [St. Crescentia Hoess](#)
6. Bl. Angele Salawa
7. [Bl. Mary Assunta](#)
8. [Bl. Julian of St. Augustine](#)
9. [Bl. Thomas of Tolentino and Companions](#)
11. [Bl. Angelo of Chivasso](#)
12. Bl. Boniface Zukowski
13. Bl. Isabelle Rovira
14. Bl. Lidwyne de Schiedam
15. [Bl. Gandolph of Binasco](#)
16. [St. Benedict-Joseph Labre](#)
17. Bl. Paul de St. Madeleine
18. [Bl. Andre Hibernon](#)
19. [Bl. Conrad of Ascoli](#)
20. Bl. Anastase Pankewicz
21. [Bl. Francis of Fabriano](#)
22. [St. Conrad de Parzham](#)
23. [Bl. Gilles of Assisi](#)
24. [St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen](#)
25. St. Marc
26. Bl. Pierre De Pethancourt
27. [St. Zita of Lucca](#)
28. St. Paul of the Cross and [Bl. Luchesius.](#)
29. [Bl. Benedict of Urbino](#)
30. [St. Joseph Benedict Cottolengo](#)

“Reading the lives of the saints is a great means to preserve piety” – St. Philip Neri

As you see above, almost every day in April is a day to celebrate a saint or a feast! What a joy that we have many Franciscan saints from whom we can ask to intercede for us and we can learn to become one. See if you can identify the seven saintly characteristics (listed below) when you read their lives.

Seven Characteristics of Saints:
(from franciscanmedia.org)

- 1) They are filled with the love of God.
- 2) They love other human beings.
- 3) They are risk-takers.
- 4) They are humble.
- 5) They are people of prayer.
- 6) They are not perfect.
- 7) They are people of their times.

OLOTA ZOOM Account Booking

If your fraternity would like to book a ZOOM meeting using OLOTA Account (free), please check the schedule [here](#) before making any ZOOM booking. The link is also available at www.olota.org (close to the top).

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

Message from our Regional Spiritual Assistant



Jesus, speaking about his approaching death, says “the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (Jn 12:23). When Jesus was approached by the Greeks, he knew for sure that his time had come as it was foretold in the Old Testament – that when the non-Jews (not chosen people) come to worship God on Zion, the hour is at hand for the Son of Man to be glorified (Is 2:3, 66:18-21). The non-Jews coming to Jerusalem was a clear indication for Jesus that the prophecy was about to be fulfilled. He made it clear to the Greeks who approached him and his disciples (Jn 12:20-30) that only through death, will he be glorified. “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (Jn 12:24). Using the imagery of “grain of wheat”, he is speaking about his own impending death on the Cross and

his resurrection; a kind of death and rebirth that his disciples also have to go through. His death and resurrection makes eternal life in communion with God available to all.

The “Hour” for Jesus, is to glorify his Father through his death. As a death that gives Life, Jesus’ death will yield a life which nourishes and sustains others; he is being obedient unto death for the love of sinful humanity. Secondly, he will be glorified by the Father for the sacrifice he makes - resurrection and exaltation to heaven where he will be seated at the right hand of the Father. And thirdly, through his death, he will open the gates of heaven for all believers, for all nations. He will open the divine communion to all people. Jesus’ hour provides for all of us, open access to eternal life if we choose to have it. By being “lifted up” in his finest hour, Jesus will draw everyone to himself (Jn 12:32) who chooses to be so drawn.

The truth that we should never forget even in our sleep is that “We were worth the Cross.” For the love of the Father and for us humans, Jesus accepted the Cross. It caused him his life, as he remained true and faithful to his call. He did not avoid the Cross but was obedient to it because “We were worth the Cross.” Did Jesus have his inner struggle to give away the cross? Yes, he did, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done” (Lk 22:42). He was troubled in his soul, but in the end willingly surrenders himself to his Father’s will. Jesus accepts the Cross as his hour, meaning the stepping stone to his passion, death, resurrection and exaltation. Jesus’s movement from death to resurrected life provides the basic pattern for the Christian life. We all must die before we can live. It doesn’t mean physically, although we will die physically. It means we must die to our selfishness and self-centeredness, to our rebellious sinful nature and willful rejection of God’s commands. This dying to self is an ongoing process and happens in little ways. Whenever we die to our Pride, we give birth to Humility. Whenever we die to Selfishness, we give birth to Love. Whenever we die to Anger, we give birth to Peace. Whenever we die to Despair, we give birth to Hope. Whenever we die to Cruelty, we give birth to Kindness. Whenever we die to Indifference, we give birth to Acceptance. Whenever we die to I, Me and Mine, we give birth to We and Ours. When our false self dies, true self made in God’s image is born and nurtured. These ‘daily deaths’ strengthen us spiritually. Anything contrary to God’s will and commands must be put to death. “For it is in giving that we receive, it is in forgiving that we are forgiven and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life” (St. Francis of Assisi).

Jesus gives his life for other’s good on the Cross and his disciples participate in the saving dynamic by replicating this pattern of loving self-sacrifice; “Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (Jn 12:25). ‘World’ here in John’s Gospel means human beings and their world as they are in rebellion against God and under the spiritual powers of sin, while ‘hate’ is a Semitic expression meaning to love less or to prefer less. To hate life in this world does not mean that we should disdain our earthly existence as such. Rather, it means detachment from sin and all things in life that lead us away from and cause us to rebel against God. We love less ourselves and love God and the other more. Nothing should get in the way of our preferring God and his will first. He is above all. If we embrace the attitude that Jesus prescribes and put them into practice, we will keep our life for eternal life. To follow Jesus means to embrace the Cross, because the Cross is obedience to God and loving, total self-sacrifice for others. All walks of Christian life take the shape of the Cross, and when faithfully and lovingly lived out, lead to the glory of the resurrection and the honor given by the Father.

Fr. Manoj Xalxo, OFM

Social Corner

Hi from St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Saskatoon, SK.

How is everyone doing?

I have realized that social distancing can be a really hard for some people but it does not mean we cannot be together. We just have to find other means to be together like phone calls, e-mails, video-conferencing, and even written letters. Let us not limit ourselves to be in touch to only our fraternity members but also our brothers and sisters from other fraternities. Let us spiritually support each other. After all, we are all walking this Covid journey together. May this spring bring into your life lots of joy and happiness.

Yvonne Armstrong ofS



OLOTA Formators Course Participants Sep. 2020 - Mar. 2021