

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS MESSENGER

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From Our Regional Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to express my gratitude for the newly elected council members in the fraternities. If possible, please have frequent communication with the previous council members. In addition, your resources also include your regional vice minister, council members from other fraternities, regional, national council members, and of course, your own fraternity members. You are not alone as council members, we are here to help you and to walk with you, just let us know.

As I visit fraternities, I feel very blessed to witness fraternal spirit among members. Members attend Mass together, carpool to Franciscan events, active in ministries/apostolate together, checking on one another, visiting the sick members, and so on. Interactions with other members beyond fraternity meetings would enhance the fraternal spirit. We need to remind ourselves not to worry if there are challenges in the fraternity, our Lord has been very good indeed in giving us what we need. All we need to do is to be faithful to our Franciscan profession and the teaching of the Catholic Church, to love our Lord wherever we go, and to love, as much as we can, those who are presented by the Lord to be right in front of us.

I would like to thank Paul Vanderham from St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Edmonton for his initiatives to put forward a resolution to change the



...He Ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty...



Pope Leo XIV
Vicar of Christ

general constitution article 23.2 so that it follows rule 19. Bible stories and history have shown that prayers and faith are more effective and powerful than human weapons. Here are some updates:

-There will be a Workshop on May 31 at 9 am PT. If you have not registered, please register ASAP by contacting Colleen Finlon.

-Fraternities from Alberta will celebrate the Chapter of Mats on June 14, 2025 - I will be there!

-BC fraternities will have an annual retreat at Westminster Abbey, Mission, June 20-22, 2025

-The National Fraternity is going to have a Chapter of Election on June 26-29, 2025. Please keep them in your prayers. Anna O'Hagan (VM BC Interior and interim help of BC Coastal fraternities), David Bouchard (VM of AB South), Fr. Manoj Xalxo OFM (Regional Spiritual Assistant), and I are going as delegates. Erika Bancila (St. Mary's, Calgary) and Shirley Henderson (St. Clare, Pickardville) will be going as observers.

-Festival of Tents will happen on Labour Day weekend at Our Lady of Victory near Edmonton. I am planning to go and hope to see some of you. Our regional fraternity council will financially support one from each province.

-Please continue to pray for one another, particularly for some of our friars as they have been reassigned to take on new roles.

*Your servant,
Lanny*

From Our Regional Spiritual Assistant

The command of love...In Jesus' last supper discourse he speaks of the love he has for his disciples and of his Father's love. He prepares his disciples for his imminent departure to return to his Father by exhorting them to prove their love for him through their loyalty and obedience to his word. Jesus reveals to his apostles the secret to ensure his presence in their midst, and the light to discover him: the observance of his command of love. If they fulfill his command of mutual love, they will be saved and his promises will come true. That is, not he alone, but his Father and the Spirit too will come and establish their abode, not just in their midst, but within their own hearts. Secondly, the Holy Spirit will take them under his personal care and become their teacher and guide. He will make clear to them the meaning of all that he had taught them during his preaching and prompt them what to do in every situation. The Holy Spirit helps us to grow in the knowledge of God and his great love. The Spirit enables us to experience the love of God and to be assured of the Lord's abiding presence with us. And thirdly, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit will not come to them empty handed, they will fill their hearts with peace, God's own peace, such peace as no one ever experienced; and with joy, a joy so deep that no suffering, grief, danger or trial could ever do away with. The world's approach to peace is avoidance of trouble and a refusal to face unpleasant things. Jesus offers the peace which conquers our fears and anxieties. The peace of Christ is more than the absence of trouble. It includes everything which makes for our highest good.

More than ever, we need to observe Jesus' command of love in our lives. God created us in love, to love and to be loved. Jesus has shown us what love means through his life and through the cross. Can we do our part to live in mutual love? If we do that, the new city of God, where everyone is welcome and belongs, will become a reality. We are children of God the Father; thus, we are brothers and sisters to each other, we belong to his family. Let love be the foundation that binds and holds this family of God together and stronger than ever.

Br Manoj Xaxlo, OFM

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION in Lourdes, France

It is a Sunday evening in May 2025, the first of five nights we are spending in Lourdes in France. We are two of the five million pilgrims who will visit this holy place in the Jubilee Year as "Pilgrims of Hope." The air is cool in the evening in the mountains. Many people are gathering for the candle light procession at dusk. Liam is waiting for hip surgery in July and finds a place to sit on one of the metal benches in the open area near the basilica to participate as the procession passes by. I am wondering who to walk with, to pray the Rosary with and sing the Marion hymns with? Is anyone from Canada here or maybe a group from Ireland? Then I see the familiar brown habit in the distance. A Franciscan friar is standing with a group of people from India. I approach the friar and tell him I am a Secular Franciscan. He welcomes me and the group welcomes me .. Father Abin, OFM is from Kerala, South India. He is doing parish work in Kuwait for a month and the group of twenty pilgrims from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and is leading their pilgrimage to Rome, Lourdes, Avila and Fatima. We meet again the following morning for Mass at 6.15 am. in the little chapel of Saint Joan D'Arc in the upper level of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception before they leave for their flight to Avila in Spain on the next leg of their pilgrimage. Thank God for our Franciscan Family!

Why do so many of us come to Lourdes? My mother came to Lourdes with her sister twice when I was a young child in Ireland. She had a heart condition and perhaps she hoped for a miracle. There are now seventy-two proven miracles in Lourdes to 2025. Earlier that day the tour guide tells us that Our Lady of Lourdes appears to Saint Bernadette Soubirous – a fourteen-year-old peasant girl - eighteen times in 1858 and asks her to have a church built in the same area and to dig in the ground nearby, from which comes a spring with healing properties, still active today. Our Lady prays the Rosary with Bernadette, moving the beads along between her fingers as Bernadette says the prayers "An Our Father, ten Hail Mary's, one Glory be." She tells Bernadette "I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who recite the Rosary." Mary tells young Bernadette "I do not promise all happiness in this world, but in the next." She encourages us to live joyfully in the "valley of tears" and delight in the gifts and good things we may experience in it.

We light the long, narrow candles with the familiar golden paper torches that keep the breezes away from the candle flames. The air is quiet. The clear voice on the loudspeaker leads the group in singing:

"Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium et invisibilium."

A life-sized statue of Mary - in a beautiful lit glass case - leads the procession in front of the basilica as she is carried on the shoulders of four strong volunteers. She is followed by the disabled and infirm in wheelchairs and the international groups of pilgrims with flags from many countries, all praying the Rosary and singing Marian hymns in their own languages. After each decade of the Rosary the golden torches are raised high in the twilight as the voices sing the words and refrain of "Ave Maria."

Now, the Rosary has been prayed by the people, young and old, healthy and infirm, and the hymns have been sung. A chill is in the air as the golden globes flicker in the dark. I have tears in my eyes and peace fills my heart. The people have gathered to show their love and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.

Catherine McNiff, ofs

LIBERATION – BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

If you want Peace work for Justice

The true bringer of peace knows that nothing is possible without the work of the Prince of Peace Jesus. When Francis set off on his mission, what did he do? He made the Sign of the Cross. When he approached the wolf, he made the Sign of the Cross. What this shows is that everything Francis did was grounded in faith. He knew that if reconciliation was to come from his work, it wasn't because of his efforts alone. Jesus was at work in him.

When Jesus speaks of peace, he is not talking about manners or niceties, working to keep everyone comfortable in the way things are. Instead, he speaks of the ancient Hebrew shalom, a call to avoid violence, yes but more importantly, a call to uphold the goodness of the whole person and to promote everything that contributes to a good life. It's about truth. It's about justice.

To look only at violence without considering what caused it will always fail to bring true peace. Francis did not show hate toward the wolf. He made no attempt to conquer or humiliate it. He recognized the wolf as a brother, bruised and broken, in need of justice as were the townspeople. He saw that the wolf acted violently, not because it was evil in itself, but because it was hungry. Recognizing this he brokered a deal: feed the wolf and peace will be felt by all. In the end what brought about peace for the people wasn't a larger weapon or severe punishment; it was genuine care for the enemy.

When Jesus speaks of the blessedness of peacemakers, this is what he means: they don't just avoid violence; they commit their lives to freeing those trapped by it. They see evil, and instead of trying to destroy their enemy, as their enemy has tried to do to them, they love. Desiring peace and justice for all of God's creatures, not just themselves, they risk their own comfort, ground themselves in prayer and speak truth to power, all the while caring for evildoers as they would their friends. Blessed are those who liberate their enemies, for they will be children of God.

HATE DOESN'T EVANGELIZE: For Christians, the end never justifies the means. Never, it doesn't matter if we're going up against a wolf, a politician, a family member, or the devil himself, when we approach our enemy in an attempt to destroy them, when we are motivated by hate, when we allow ourselves to become so inflamed by an issue that we're willing to ignore the commands of Christ to love our neighbor and not to judge, we will always lose. Why? Because we will have ceased to be that which we proclaim: people of peace. The only thing that evangelizes is LOVE.

Sometimes, it may seem impossible to care for someone who causes us so much harm. If this is the case, we must rely on Francis's second step: turning to prayer.

Our faith tells us that each; and every creature bears the mark of God; we know that every human, no matter how tarnished with sin, is created in the image and likeness of God. There is nothing we could ever do to lose the love of Christ because Christ can see who we are beneath our brokenness. What if we could look at our enemies this way? Given the resentment we bear toward those who have hurt us, it may seem like an impossible task, but it's one that a peacemaker willingly takes on. Without a desire to make peace, without Christ guiding the way, no correction will make a difference, no matter how true it is.

This is what it means to be a peacemaker. It's not just about avoiding violence and keeping our inner calm; it's about being so absolutely committed to the justice of the kingdom that we can't bear to see even our enemies suffer. Having felt the hopelessness of sin and having been stuck in the cycle of violence ourselves, we no longer seek revenge on our enemies because we know what pain they feel. All we can feel is pity; resolving ourselves to set them free. When we can approach those who harm us with compassion, risking our own life and comfort for the justice of all, we are on the way of Beatitude.

Taken from the book "The Way of Beatitude" by Casey Cole, OFM



Holy Mary,
Mother of God
Pray for us!

Mothers Never Really Die-They Just Keep House Up in the Sky

*Death beckoned her with outstretched hand
And whispered softly of "an unknown land"-
But she was not afraid to go
For though the path she did not know,
She took death's hand without a fear
For He who safely brought her here
Had told her He would lead the way
Into eternity's bright day...
And so, she did not go alone
Into the "Valley that's unknown"-
She gently took death by the hand
And journeyed to the "Promised Land"...
And there, with step so light and gay,
She polishes the sun by day
And lights the stars that shine at night
And keeps the moonbeams silvery bright...
For Mothers really never die,
They just "keep house up in the sky"...
And in the heavenly home above
They wait to "welcome" those they love.*

Author Unknown

Submitted by Linda Adams, ofs

Saint Angela of Foligno

Born of a leading family in Foligno, Italy, she became immersed in the quest for wealth and social position. As a wife and mother, she continued this life of distraction. Around the age of 40, she recognized the emptiness of her life and sought God's help in the Sacrament of Penance. Her Franciscan confessor helped Angelina to seek God's pardon for her previous life and to dedicate herself to prayer and the works of charity. Shortly after her conversion, her mother, husband and children died. Selling most of her possessions, she entered the **Secular Franciscan Order (Tertiary)**. She was alternately absorbed by meditating on the crucified Christ and by serving the poor of Foligno as a nurse and beggar for their needs. Other women joined her in a religious community. At her confessor's advice, Angela wrote her Book of Visions and Instructions. In it she recalls some of the temptations she suffered after her conversion; she also expresses her thanks to God for the Incarnation of Jesus. This book and her life earned for Angela the title "*Teacher of Theologians*." She was beatified in 1693, and canonized in 2013. (Franciscan Media)



Saint Angela of Foligno
1248-1309

Prayer Intentions for Vocations in OFS 2025 (from CIOFS)

MAY: For the development of the culture of vocations in our fraternities.

JUNE: For those OFS brothers and sisters who experience crisis in vocation.

Save the Date

- Franciscan CROWN ROSARY

On the first Saturday of each month.

Next.. 2025 June 7th @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT

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

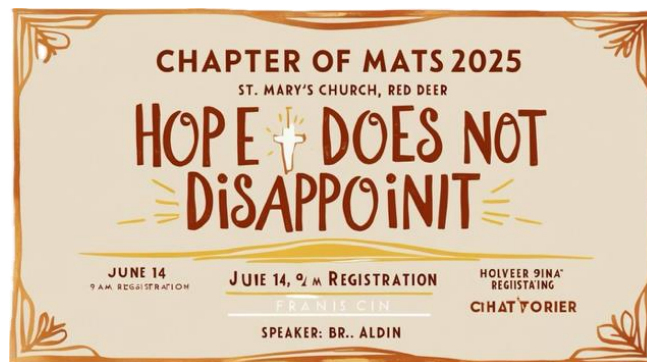
Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

-Franciscan Book Club

In the Fall of 2025, the Franciscan Book Club will begin discussing **Volume Two of the Franciscan Heritage Series** entitled *A Franciscan View of Creation* by Ilia Delio, OSF. Members are asked to read 1) the General Editor's Introduction and 2) the Author's Introduction for the first discussion on **September 7, 2025**. The zoom meeting link will be sent out on September 3, 2025. Anyone wishing to join the book club or obtain more information is asked to contact Miriam Liem ofsmiriam@gmail.com or Marlene Welch Patmarlocel@gmail.com

-Chapter of Mats 2025: *Hope Does Not Disappoint*

June 14th in Red Deer, AB (see poster below)



OFS: Who are we and where did we come from?

The Secular Franciscan Order began with Saint Francis of Assisi. From the very beginning of his ministry Saint Francis found people who desired to follow his way of life and spirituality — yet were married or did not want to become religious. Saint Francis responded by writing *"The First Letter to all the Faithful"* around 1215. So many people wanted to follow Saint Francis that the *Rule of the Secular Franciscans* was approved in 1221 — at that time, they were called the *Brothers and Sisters of Penance* later called the **Third Order of St. Francis**. One of the earliest Secular Franciscans was Lady Jacoba de Settesoli who was present when Saint Francis died in 1226. In the 15th Century from this Order the *Third Order Regulars, Religious (TOR)* emerged. The **Third Order of St. Francis, Secular (TOS)** continued under their name. In 1978, its name was changed to the *Secular Franciscan Order (SFO)*. The acronym was changed in 2011 from *SFO* to **OFS** (*Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis*) after a General Chapter meeting in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where the document *"THE OFFICIAL NAME OF OUR ORDER"* was approved, clarifying the Order's name and new acronym.

Social Corner



St Anthony of Padua Fraternity of Richmond, BC celebrated the **8th Centenary of the *Canticle of Creatures*** on April 28 & 29 with guest speaker Father Joe Glaab, OFM from Mt St Francis, Cochrane, AB. The 2-day event began with a welcome luncheon for Father Joe followed by two evenings of talks on A Centenary Reflection of the *Canticle of Creatures* with a message on the environment for our time.

Fr Wayne Pfliger, Chaplain to Little Flowers of St Francis Fraternity in Kelowna, BC celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Priesthood with family & friends on May 9, 2025 celebrating Holy Mass followed by a banquet at ICC Parish.



The new council members of St Agnes of Assisi Fraternity, Coquitlam, BC for 2025 to 2028. *L to R*: Gary (Treasurer), Karen (Vice Minister), Margaret (Minister), Margaret (Director of Formation) and Joy (Secretary).

Our Lady of the Angels Messenger, Secular Franciscan Order of Western Canada Region
 May 2025 Minister Lanny Hui, ofs lanny.hui@gmail.com
 Editor Colleen Finlon, ofs cmariiefinlon@gmail.com

