

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS MESSENGER

Issue Number 58

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From Our Regional Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Here is my report to the National Chapter of Election for the period of 2022 – 2025. Eleven regional council members were elected in September 2022: regional minister, 5 vice ministers (Manitoba & Saskatchewan, Alberta North, Alberta South, BC Interior, BC Coastal), Secretary, Treasurer, Directors of Formation, Youth, and JPIC. Fr. Manoj Xalxo, ofm continues his role as Spiritual Assistant. Director of Communications was changed from an elected position to an appointed position. Two council members are from Korean fraternities. Since then, two council members (Director of JPIC and Vice Minister of BC Coastal) have resigned due to personal issues. Currently, the position of JPIC is replaced by a committee from each sub-region and a liaison from the regional council. The regional minister, with the help of local fraternity ministers, has taken over the responsibilities of Vice Minister of BC Coastal. The council members were asked and agreed to postpone the Regional Chapter of Election to 2026 to allow the discernment of restructuring. Here are some highlights:

- Members from fraternities in Alberta and British Columbia continue to participate in their local Chapter of Mats. Annual retreats for the secular Franciscans take place at Mount Saint Francis (Cochrane, AB), Seton House



And there appeared to them tongues of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...Acts 2:3-4



*Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me...*

(Kelowna, BC), and Westminster Abbey (Mission, BC).

-In March 2023, St. Clare Korean Fraternity (Edmonton, AB) was Canonically Established, while St. Francis fraternity (Prince George, BC) became inactive.

- Colleen Finlon (Director of Communications) has routinely updated www.olota.org. She and Marlene Welch (a fraternity member from St. Mary's fraternity, Calgary) have worked in the following areas:

*Monthly newsletter which includes regional updates, events, and news from local fraternities

*Support for online National Formator's and Spiritual Assistant Courses

*Monthly Zoom Vespers and Crown Rosary

*Novena to St. Francis and Our Lady of the Angels

*Faith studies using materials from formed.org

*Book club discussion on The Franciscan Heritage series.

- Catherine McNiff (Director of Formation) facilitated inquiry sessions across the region for individuals physically distant from the fraternity.

- Our Regional Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Manoj, and the regional minister have physically visited fraternities outside their home province.

- David and Cathy Bouchard organized a pilgrimage to Assisi, Greccio, La Verna, San Giovanni Rotondo, and Rome in October 2024.

- The National Restructuring Committee facilitated discussions between the local fraternity ministers in British Columbia, then Alberta and Manitoba-Saskatchewan. We are waiting for the complete report and are open to any decision made at the National Elective Chapter.

- In ministering the youth and young adults,

*Maritza Chouza (Director of Youth) and Fr. Daniel Gurnick, OFM have organized Annual Winter Retreat and Annual Franciscan Art Contest. This year the art work was done on the 3"x 3" tiles with the theme of Canticle of the Creatures. The tiles are all at Mt. St. Francis (Cochrane, AB) and will be displayed permanently.

*David Bouchard (Vice Minister of Alberta South) and Maritza Chouza, with the help of Friars Guylain Prince, Daniel Gurnick, Michael Peras, and Joachim Yoon and three young adults (Clare, Arlene, and Adam), organized the first Annual Festival of Tents at 2024 Labour Day Weekend at Our Lady of Victory Camp in Lacombe County, AB.

*Fr. Joachim Yoon and the regional minister served the young adults at Simon Fraser University. Activities include weekly faith studies and daily mass, local pilgrimages, hiking, participating with St. Francis of Assisi Korean fraternity, picnic, and board games.

In the remaining term of the present regional council, we plan to continue annual/monthly activities, organize a conference/workshop for the local fraternity ministers, and update the local fraternity handbook (policy manual).

On behalf of the regional council, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all prayers and assistance received.

Your servant,

Lanny Hui

From Our Regional Spiritual Assistant

But Jesus said to them, "You give them something to eat" (Lk 9:13). And later we know Jesus offered himself as our spiritual food. The celebration of the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord is to rejoice and to praise our Lord for having given himself as our own spiritual food and drink in the Eucharist. And is also to help us realize ever better the absolute need we have of the Eucharist for our Christian life, both as individuals and as a community. The Body and Blood of Christ are offered as a sacrifice for us, and every time we reenact this sacrifice, we renew his sacrifice for us. The bread that is broken is the bread of thanksgiving sacrifice, and the blood that is consumed is the blood that ratifies the covenant between God and us. The Eucharistic meal is a reenactment of Christ's death, an anticipatory celebration of his coming and a thanksgiving banquet with him present.

St. Bonaventure says that St. Francis of Assisi burned with love for the Sacrament of our Lord's Body with all his heart, and was lost in wonder at the thought of such condescending love, such loving condescension. The Eucharist, for St. Francis, was the foundation on which his faith life was built. In his "Letter to All Clerics," in fact, Francis wrote that, "in this world there is nothing of the Most High Himself that we can possess and contemplate with our eyes, except His Body and Blood." For the poor man of Assisi, the Eucharist was both his compass and his journey's end. For St. Francis, then, the Eucharist is the primary way in which he sees Christ's continuing Incarnation in the world. It is the sign of the presence of Christ with the Church in His continuing salvific role.

Such is the importance of the Eucharist in our life. Just as food becomes part of the body of one who eats it, the same way when we eat the Body of our Lord from the Altar, we become what we eat; the Body of Christ, the Eucharistic people. The Eucharist is a call to and a grace for service. The Eucharist is meant to send us out into the world ready to give expression to Christ's hospitality, humility and self-effacement. We go out as individuals and as a community embodying Christ; his love, gospel, mercy and compassion.

Br Manoj Xaxlo, OFM

From Our Regional Formation Director

THE NOVENA: As a young child I remember my mother and I taking the green double decker Number 11 bus downtown to Whitefriar Street to pray the Novena to Saint Jude. The Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, better known as the “Whitefriar Street Church” is a bustling place this evening. Many people are lighting candles at the Shrines of Our Lady of Dublin, Our Lady of Lourdes, Saint Anne, Saint Valentine, Saint Therese of Lisieux and Saint Jude. Others are sitting quietly praying or absorbed in their own thoughts.

For many years the Saint Jude Novena is celebrated at this Church in the heart of the cobblestoned city of Dublin every Tuesday evening at 8:00 pm. The Church is old, solid, beautiful. The Carmelites settled here when they came from the Holy Land around 1279. The Franciscans had already formed a Community in this old city in 1233 in an area known as The Liberties, Merchant’s Quay, across the river Liffey in the dockside area of Dublin.

This evening the people come to the Whitefriars Street Church to ask the intercession of Saint Jude and other saints associated with the church. Many more who cannot attend the Novena write their intercessions and leave them in the church or email mail them to the Carmelite friars, some of which are read out each week. Those who cannot come to the church may also participate each week livestreamthrough the website <https://whitefriarstreetchurch.com/>.

Before the start of the Mass, Father Eanna, the Carmelite Prior, reads out the variety of favours requested through the intercession of the Saints. One person may ask for help to find a job, while another prays for his wife to stop drinking, another prays for peace in the family and and yet another prays that his greyhound will win the next race... Father Eanna reminds us that all the petitions are included in the Novena Mass every Tuesday at 8 pm. I sit and listen to the requests of the people and I feel their faith in God all around me.

The organist accompanies the younger man at the side of the of the altar as he leads the song:

*I'll sing a hymn to Mary,
The mother of my God,
The virgin of all virgins,
Of David's royal blood.
O holy Mother Mary,
Ask Christ your son, we pray,
To grant us his forgiveness,
And guide us on his way.*

*Rejoice O holy Mary,
O Virgin full of grace,
The Lord is ever with you,
Most blessed of your race.
O holy Mother Mary,
Ask Christ your son, we pray,
To grant us his forgiveness,
and guide us on his way.*

Father Eanna blesses us with the relics of Saint Jude, Saint Anne, Saint Therese and Saint Valentine as we pray together that God will help us in our needs and petitions.

PRAYER TO SAINT JUDE

*Saint Jude, Glorious apostle,
faithful servant and friend of Jesus,
the Church honours you and invokes you
as the patron of hopeless cases,
bringing help when we are most tempted to
despair. Pray for us. Come to our assistance
in all of our necessities and particularly in our
present needs (pause and call to mind your request).*

*Blessed Apostle,
with confidence we call upon you.
Saint Jude, help of the hopeless,
aid us in our distress. Pray for us that,
at the end of our lives on earth,
we may enter into the company of the saints
to rejoice in the presence of God forever,
Amen*

Then the Novena Mass begins. Father Eanna leads us in the Introductory Rites *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* and we respond *Amen*. I am glad I have taken the green double decker Number 11 bus downtown tonight to pray the Novena and the Mass to Saint Jude and the other saints with the people of God. It's been a long time since I have been at the Novena to Saint Jude and it's the little things I miss when I am away from here - the gentle hearts and ways of the people - from the older man who shows me where to make the offerings and light the candles for our grandchildren to the younger woman who hands out the prayer cards with a smile and to Father Eanna who asks, “And where might you be from?”

Catherine McNiff, ofs



From a Sermon by Saint Anthony of Padua

Actions speak louder than words

The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience and obedience; we speak in those languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others. Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak. We are full of words but empty of actions, and therefore are cursed

by the Lord, since he himself cursed the fig tree when he found no fruit but only leaves. Gregory says: "A law is laid upon the preacher to practice what he preaches." It is useless for a man to flaunt his knowledge of the law if he undermines its teaching by his actions.

But the apostles *spoke as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech*. Happy the man whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself! For some men speak as their own character dictates, but steal the words of others and present them as their own and claim the credit for them. The Lord refers to such men and others like them in Jeremiah: *So, then, I have a quarrel with the prophets that steal my words from each other. I have a quarrel with the prophets, says the Lord, who have only to move their tongues to utter oracles. I have a quarrel with the prophets who make prophecies out of lying dreams, who recount them and lead my people astray with their lies and their pretensions. I certainly never sent them or commissioned them, and they serve no good purpose for this people, says the Lord.*

We should speak, then, as the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of speech. Our humble and sincere request to the Spirit for ourselves should be that we may bring the day of Pentecost to fulfillment, insofar as he infuses us with his grace, by using our bodily senses in a perfect manner and by keeping the commandments. Likewise, we shall request that we may be filled with a keen sense of sorrow and with fiery tongues for confessing the faith, so that our deserved reward may be to stand in the blazing splendor of the saints and to look upon the triune God.

READ ARTICLE: [St Anthony of Padua: Drawn to a Life With God by Dominic Monti, OFM](#)

NATIONAL FRANCISCAN WORKSHOP

On May 31, 2025 the workshop ***FOLLOWING THE BEATITUDES: A blueprint for Franciscan Living*** was held on zoom by the Secular Franciscans of Canada, National Formation Commission for Franciscans all across Canada. One hundred forty-five Franciscans registered to attend from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans. The workshop was given by Martha Gabriel, ofs of Prince Edward Island. Martha led the participants through each Beatitude to contemplate the words coming from the mouth of Jesus Christ on a mountain top overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The workshop was paced to allow the participants to listen carefully how God is calling them to live in the Beatitudes. Participants had the experience of discussion in zoom breakout groups with other Franciscans. The workshop was followed by Martha providing a resource list and reference document along with links to talks on the Beatitudes by Pope Francis. Martha will create a video of the teaching to share among fraternities as a resource for ongoing formation. The workshop opened the door for a deeper understanding of how to live the Franciscan life in following the Beatitudes. Thank you, Martha!

Prayer Intentions for Vocations in OFS 2025 (from CIOFS)

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

JULY: For young people to find clarity and courage as they follow Jesus
in the footsteps of St. Francis

Save the Date

- Pray the Franciscan CROWN ROSARY together!

On the first Saturday of each month.

Next.. 2025 July 5th @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT

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

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

- Franciscan Book Club

The Franciscan Book Club will resume meetings on Sunday **September 7, 2025** with discussions of the book *A Franciscan View of Creation* by Ilia Delio (OSF). Those wishing to join the book club or obtain additional information may contact Miriam Liem at ofsmiriam@gmail.com or Marlene Welch at Patmarlocel@gmail.com.



FRANCISCAN FESTIVAL OF TENTS

Please pass this invitation on to the **young adults** in your community. If you or your fraternity would like to sponsor a **young adult** from your parish or fraternity, please contact maritzachouza@gmail.com or davidandcathybouchard@gmail.com

**Thank you! Peace and joy,
Maritza Chouza, ofs**

Social Corner



Alberta Chapter of Mats 2025: Sixty-eight OFS brothers and sisters gathered for a day of reflection with Br Aldin on the Jubilee theme of *Pilgrims of Hope*. He paired the three theological virtues with Franciscan Lectio. Br Aldin offered several thoughtful discussion questions to engage the participants.



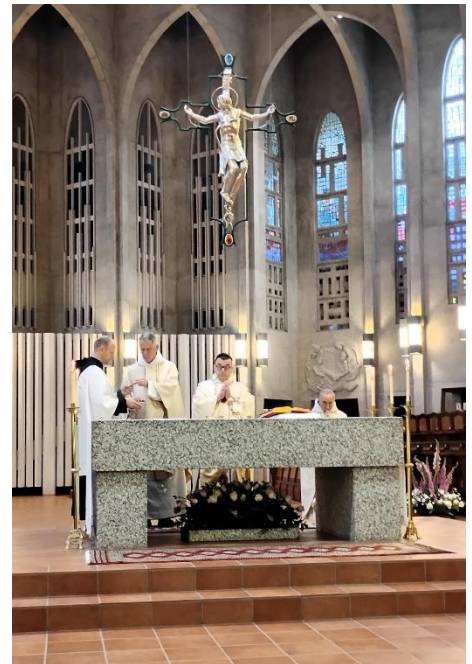


St Mary's Fraternity of Calgary gathered to celebrate temporary & permanent professions on June 22, 2025. (Above l to r) Sr Anne Adoukpe (Formator), Fr Dennis Vavrek (Celebrant), Temp Profession: Celso Ruy, Ceciley Ruy, Susan Cua, Elaine Schnitzler, May Depositat, Permanent Profession: Karla Subero, Formators: Marie Semenoff, Ron Semenoff, Heather Shilling (Formation Director), Erika Bancila (Minister)

St Anthony of Padua Fraternity of Richmond, BC sponsored the planting of a new tree on their parish grounds marking the 8th Centenary of the Cantic of Creatures.



St Anthony of Padua Fraternity of Richmond, BC join with Fr Dan Gurnick to celebrate Fr Manoj Xaxlo's birthday before summer break.



The June 2025 Retreat by BC Coastal was held at the Westminster Abbey in Mission, BC. The retreat was led by Fr Dan Gurnick, OSM with the theme *Radiant Passion & Compassion*. Holy Mass on Sunday, the Feast of Corpus Christi, was celebrated by Abbot Fr Alban Riley, OSB at the Abbey Church.

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