



Issue Number 65

January 2026

### *From our REGIONAL MINISTER*

*Dear Franciscan Sisters and Brothers,*

As you have probably heard, the Servant Leadership workshop has been organized by the National Council. The event will be on Saturday, January 31 at 10am PT / 11am MT/ 12pm CT. I hope many of your fraternity council members have registered; please check with your council members and encourage them to participate. I would like to thank the National Fraternity Council, those who are helping them in this event, and those who have registered for the workshop.

I am glad to hear that some of you made the effort to join the live broadcast of "Liturgy of Light" at Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli (Our Lady of the Angels Basilica) in Assisi at 1am PT / 2am MT / 3am CT! Thanks to Colleen, our Director of Communications, for the information on the event and reminder. If you would like to see it, there is still a chance to see the recording on YouTube (starts at minute 25). To have a close caption (CC) in English, please go to the YouTube link provided at OLOTA website, at the lower right hand corner of the YouTube screen, click the cog picture (settings) and click Subtitles / CC, click "Auto-translate" and the language of your choice. The English text was circulated to your fraternities last week. I also encourage you to celebrate the Liturgy of Light with your fraternity, and perhaps discuss one (or more) of the 6 Stages of St. Francis' Legacy mentioned in the liturgy.

Please join us in our daily morning prayer (thanks to Miriam Liem, St. Clare Chilliwack, BC), to pray for the increased calling to the OFS and other intentions. Also, the monthly Vespers and Crown Rosary organized by Colleen Finlon and Marlene Welch. Praying for one another is extremely needed currently. As we pray for others, we lift up others, particularly when they are unable to pray to Jesus. The image that comes to mind is lowering the paralytic so that he can have a personal encounter with Jesus. When you do have an encounter with Jesus, please do not forget to thank Jesus for those who have been praying for you; so please pray for them in return. I would like to encourage you to pray for one another within your fraternity and beyond: the Franciscan families at all levels. When you attend the mass, pray the breviary, spend time with the Lord in adoration, please pray for our Franciscan brothers and sisters as they strive for holiness in their own ways.

Don't forget to also join the book club - we are on book 3 now of the Franciscan Heritage Series. Thanks, Marlene and Miriam for initiating the club! The discussion is at 6pm PT on 1st Sunday of the month.

With all these activities, I hope you get the hint: I am encouraging you (and your fraternities) to get connected with other Franciscans so that you (and your fraternity members) do not feel disconnected from other Franciscans. All of these online activities are, in some ways, to fill the desire to fill the gap in communications voiced out by the majority of the delegates at the regional and national levels.

On behalf of the regional council, I would express deep gratitude for your kind support in prayers and any form of help.

*Your servant, Lanny*



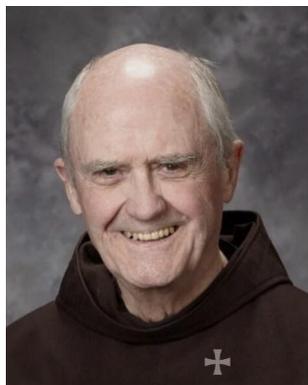
**St Berard of Carbio & Companions: Peter, Adjute, Accurs, Odo & Vitalis**

*Franciscan First Martyrs: Feast Day January 16*

**[Their Journey](#)**

**A LIFE WELL LIVED: Rev Kevin John Lynch, OFM: 1938-2025**

Father Kevin was born April 10th, 1938, to Laurence J. (Larry) and Margaret P. (Peggy) (Thompson) Lynch. He was named John Terence and known as Terry in his early years. The youngest of three boys, Kevin was born and grew up in the Peace River Country, in the town of McLennan, Alberta. He attended school there before following in his brothers' footsteps and heading to St. Anthony's College in Edmonton, where he graduated from high school and then stayed on to study philosophy and arts. Kevin made his vows with the Franciscan Friars in 1958, and studied theology in Montreal prior to his ordination to the priesthood. On June 16th, 1962, he was ordained at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in McLennan. Following his ordination, he completed a graduate degree in philosophy at the University of Ottawa, followed by an education degree at the University of Alberta. He taught science and religion at St. Anthony's College and Archbishop O'Leary High School in Edmonton for seven years. In 1972 Kevin spent a sabbatical year at Corpus Christi College, in London, England, where he completed a diploma in Religious Education. It was during this year he met, for the first time, his father's large Irish family. A deep bond formed and there were numerous visits with his Irish family over the years. Upon his return, Kevin was appointed Director of Religious Education for Edmonton Catholic Schools (1973-1995), as well as serving as Provincial Minister to the Franciscans of Western Canada (1982-1992). He served as the Guardian in retirement from Edmonton Catholic Schools, Kevin went back to studies and



graduated with a Masters of Theology at "Integration for Ministry" program. Kevin's latter years were spent in retreat ministry at St. Michael's Retreat Centre (Lumsden, SK), where he chaired an interchurch board composed of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, which operated the Centre. From 2007 he served at Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre (Cochrane, AB) in various capacities, including Director of the Centre (2007-2015). In a second retirement he continued to work with the addiction program and remained active with spiritual direction. Kevin touched many people along his journey. He enriched the lives of his family and friends presiding over many baptisms, weddings and funerals. He was humble, kind, charismatic, approachable, wise and had a special way of bringing people together. He had a gift of making everyone around him, no matter their age or beliefs, feel welcomed and loved embodying the Franciscan mission in his daily life.

Regis College in Toronto, through their latter years were spent in retreat ministry at from 1996-2007, where he founded and the Anglicans, Evangelical Lutherans and the

Fr Kevin died peacefully, with family at his side, in the Foothills Hospital during the early hours of December 19th. He was 87 years of age. Kevin was predeceased by his parents and his two brothers, Tom (Annette Laplante) and Michael (Betty Lou O'Rourke). He leaves to be mourned by his Franciscan brothers, his nieces and nephews - Kevin, Bryan, Larry and Erin Lynch, Nicole Mackenzie and Dawn Marie Crouse and their families, cousins in Saskatchewan, many Irish relatives and treasured friends. *Rest in Peace Brother Kevin.*

## *From our REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT*

“Go and check it out” ...and that is how my Franciscan vocation and journey began. In the year 1999, while visiting my paternal aunt and family next to my village, my aunt invited me to stay for dinner and asked me if I knew anything about the Franciscan Parish (50 miles away from my village) and vocation camp that was organized for the young men interested in religious life. I replied to her, I have no idea and have not heard anything about it. My aunt told me, then go and check it out... and long story short, I have been with the Franciscans since then. Franciscan journey has been with ups and downs but Franciscan vocation remains very lifegiving and core to me till today.

Franciscans as a family have been celebrating centenaries of Franciscans events since 2023 and this year we are at the climax, celebrating 800th anniversary of the Transitus of our Seraphic Father St. Francis of Assisi. Pope Leo XIV, to our surprise, proclaimed these great events ending with the Franciscan Jubilee Year. Truly, eight centuries after Francis passed from this world, the seed he planted continues to germinate in the Church and in the hearts of countless men and women who are inspired by his Gospel way of life. The Order has already given us enormous resources to read, reflect and renew our Franciscan vocation as we go through the year celebrating the Easter of St. Francis. Many might have already signed up for a trip or pilgrimage to Assisi to be part of some of the events celebrating this milestone in Franciscan history, to avail plenary indulgence and so on. We are all encouraged to make the best use of what’s being organized by the Order or the local fraternities to nourish and strengthen our own vocation. For me, all the events planned are not a spiritual shortcut to receive grace and blessing but an encounter with God and St. Francis of Assisi whose life, death and new life we celebrate. Hence, let us not just rush to do things without spiritual and interior preparation. Remember, what does it profit going through all these celebrations of events and history if it does not come from our heart and leads us to live a life that St. Francis calls us to. This Jubilee is not merely a commemoration of the past, but a grace-filled invitation to renew our Franciscan vocation today, to rediscover Francis as a man of mercy, a lover of Christ Crucified, a son of the Church, a brother without power, and a fearless witness of peace. I started with a short description of how my Franciscan vocation began. All the credit goes to my aunt who first sowed the seed of Franciscan life or interest in me through the unplanned dinner. I do not know how much she knows about St. Francis of Assisi and Franciscans but I believe it was the work of the Holy Spirit that simply came through her with a simple word of encouragement; go and check it out, an invitation for me to follow the example of St. Francis by living a life of holiness and being witness to the Gospel of our Lord. She not only initiated but supported that seed in every way possible and continues to this day. I am greatly indebted to her for her vision for my life. In this year of Franciscan Jubilee, I personally feel it's important for me to celebrate my beginnings, initial moments, people, formators, different stages of formation and inspirations that have played a great role to shape my Franciscan vocation.

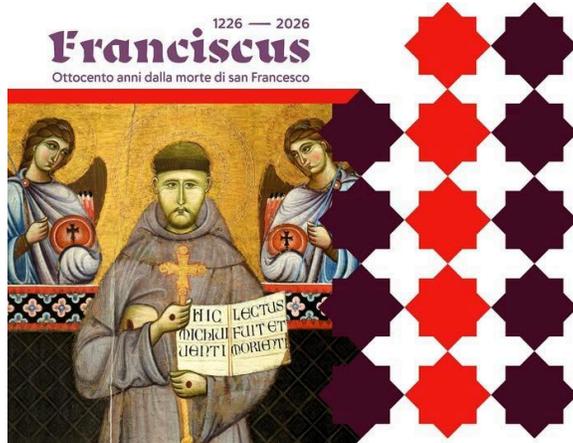
As we celebrate the Franciscan Jubilee Year, let us continue to learn from St. Francis’ life, encounter him in our brothers/sisters and truly celebrate our calling to be a Franciscan. Let us be grateful for those who first sowed the seed of Franciscan vocation in us. We give thanks to God for our Franciscan vocation. And, as we treasure and live our Franciscan vocation, we also continue to reflect on our vocation by asking a question; has the Franciscan seed germinated and born to a new life bearing abundant fruits or not? Therefore, I would think, we all need to go and check it out...time and time again for ourselves who is St. Francis of Assisi and what he was all about.

*Fr Manoj Xaxlo, OFM*

*From our REGIONAL DIRECTOR of FORMATION*  
**MORE WORDS OF WISDOM FROM OUR SISTER ILIA DELIO, OSF**

When I read Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio's book *A Franciscan View of Creation* Sister Ilia asks us some difficult questions ... like the question "How should Franciscans today relate to creation?" Sister Ilia reminds us that we are interconnected to creation. Then she asks us to think about how we can overcome violence towards creation and restore peace and justice in today's world. If we are to follow Francis and Franciscan spirituality, then we have to have a new focus as "brother" and "sister" to human and non-human creation. Sister Ilia tells us to "Gaze contemplatively on nature" thereby seeing a Christ-Centered Universe. That means that the work we do in the garden, a hike in the mountains and a swim in the ocean are an opportunity to have intimate contact with Christ. Sister Ilia tells us that "Our sinful actions are at the root of the ecological crisis" thus reminding us that we need daily conversion, that we are broken people in need of penance and humility. Sister Ilia wants us to develop an "environmental justice" or right relationship which means that we have to take a stand against exploitation of the poor ... that includes environmental hazards to the poor. As Secular Franciscans, are we ready to be more aware, to get involved? Do we realize that extinction of one species can affect an entire ecosystem? What Sister Ilia wants us to know is that "We live in an evolutionary universe with Christ as the centre and goal" and that "Our actions help move the universe in its fulfillment in Christ." She reassures us that "The world will not be destroyed" but "Brought to the conclusion that God intends for it from the beginning." Our wise Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, tells us that all creation is on a journey to God. As Secular Franciscans, we are called to be "one" with creation and able to reflect Francis's love of creation by our words and by our example.

Catherine McNiff, ofs



## 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Transitus Begins!

The 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations officially began on January 10, 2026, at 10 am European time (1 am PST). The opening ceremony was broadcast live from the Porziuncola Chapel in Assisi, Italy. The Basilica of St Mary of the Angels, which houses the Porziuncola, became the centre of celebrations marking the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Transitus* of St Francis of Assisi (1226/2026). The entire opening ceremony was streamed live on the official channels of the Seraphic Province of St. Francis of the OFM and on the Franciscan Centenaries websites.

Ceremony: Youtube [VIDEO](#), [ENGLISH TEXT](#)  
 FC website: [www.centenarifrancescani.org](http://www.centenarifrancescani.org)

Our new **OLOTA Daily Morning Prayer Circle** is now on Zoom!

(We are no longer gathering on WhatsApp.)

**Our shared intention is simple & deeply Franciscan:** to pray for an increase in vocations to the First, Second, Third Orders & YouFra

**What We Pray Together** (30 minutes)

Morning Offering - Liturgy of the Hours - Prayer to Attract Hearts of the OFS

Franciscan Family Chaplet Prayer - Secular Franciscan Prayer for the Youth

Psalm from the Little Office of the Passion

6:30 AM (BC), 7:30 AM (AB), 8:30 AM (MT/SK)

Contact: [ofsmiriam@gmail.com](mailto:ofsmiriam@gmail.com) 6048191204

## FOR THE SEASON OF LENT

beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Link to [OFS Examination of Conscience](#)

### Prayer Intentions for Vocations (from CIOFS)

Jan 2026: For all OFS brothers and sisters that they may fully embrace their vocation to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. Feb 2026: For new vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order.

[All Intentions for 2026 from: the Holy Father, OFS/YouFra, OFS Vocations.](#)

## Save the Date

**- Pray the Franciscan CROWN ROSARY together!**

On the first Saturday of each month.

Next... 2026 Feb 7th @ 7pm PST/8pm MST/9pm CST

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EvdWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 8310 Passcode: 741246

## - OLOTA Franciscan Book Club

Next.. Feb 1st 2026 @ 6pm PST: discussions of the book *A Franciscan View of Creation* by Ilia Delio (OSF)

Contact Miriam Liem at [ofsmiriam@gmail.com](mailto:ofsmiriam@gmail.com) or Marlene Welch at [Patmarlocel@gmail.com](mailto:Patmarlocel@gmail.com)

## Servant Leadership Workshop



January 31, 2026 on zoom

10 am PT/11 am MT/12 pm CT/1 pm ET/2 pm AT

A Two Hour/Two-Part Workshop on the  
Servant Leadership roles of fraternity council

**Part One:** animated by Marion Clorey, ofs, former National OFS Vice Minister

**Part Two:** Break out rooms for each role on council: Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, Lay Spiritual Assistant. There will be an animator for each break out room & participants will have time to share aspects of their roles & responsibilities.

**Translator:** Sr. Claire-Monique Lerman, fmm

**Registration:** Please contact Debbie Tessier, ofs: [deborahTessiers7@gmail.com](mailto:deborahTessiers7@gmail.com)

Deadline for registration: January 24, 2026

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING ACROSS OUR REGION



A newly elected council for Little Portion Fraternity of Victoria, BC. L to R - *Bill Bertrand*: Minister, *Moira Walters*: Vice Minister, *Lidia Moodie*: Formation Director & *Paul Dwyer*: Treasurer.

Spiritual Director Fr. Vince Fink (seated), passed away in early December. This is the last photo of him at the November meeting with the new council. RIP Fr. Vince.

A few young men, age 30 & over, have been joining in the fraternity meetings. They call themselves *Franciscan Fridays*, because on Friday evenings they go downtown to visit the homeless people & give them meals, toiletries & religious items. They have been doing this for a year.



St Mary's Fraternity of Calgary welcomed new inquirers with Minister Ericka Bancila as animator & Sr Diane as presenter. Padre Pio Fraternity of Calgary joined with St Mary's Fraternity for the gathering.

**Our Lady of the Angels Messenger, Secular Franciscan Order of Western Canada Region**

January 2026 Minister Lanny Hui, ofs [lanny.hui@gmail.com](mailto:lanny.hui@gmail.com)

Editor Colleen Finlon, ofs [cmariiefinlon@gmail.com](mailto:cmariiefinlon@gmail.com)

