



Issue Number 42

February 2024

From Our Regional Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we are in the Lenten season, let us not forget each day what the Lord is asking us to do everyday: prayer, almsgiving and fasting. If you haven't started, it is not too late to now begin your Lenten journey in these areas.

In prayer life, as Secular Franciscans, we are asked to attend daily Mass as often as we can, pray the Liturgy of the Hours, and other forms of personal prayers. Let's not forget that in prayer, we encounter our Creator, Redeemer and the Holy Spirit who is Love that we receive from and give to others. St Clare and St Francis made it their habit to contemplate God's love for us in Jesus born in the lowly manger, Jesus crucified and Jesus the Eucharist in the course of their days. Their prayer habit brought them to holiness and sainthood because in it, their saintly virtues were born, nurtured and protected.

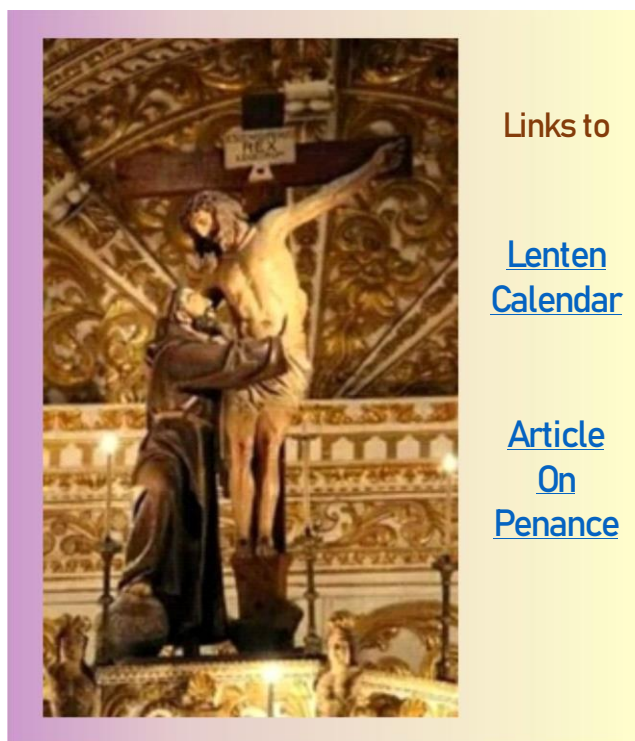
Almsgiving is a powerful tool to overcome our sinful nature of selfishness and pride. Almsgiving is not just in the form of giving money to the needy, but it also shows the generosity of loving others placed before us. Our affirming words, encouraging one another or just simply asking, "What can I do for you?" Just a smile can be what is needed by people around us.

In fasting, please choose a type of fasting that would address your bad habits such as ruminating negative thoughts of others, being unkind to family members and/or others you don't like or spending a lot of time on your mobile device watching or playing games or on social media. I am praying that the Lord gives each of you guidance as you go through this journey

of conversion and that the conversion towards holiness will last beyond Easter and become our daily habits.

By this time, your fraternity should have submitted the annual report with the annual contribution. For those fraternities who have not submitted the contribution and/or the annual report, please do so in the near future, or at least let me know the number of active members and candidates in your fraternities so that the regional council can send a cheque to the National Council so that it has enough money to send the contribution to the CIOFS by April 1st. Many thanks for your continued support.

Your servant,
Lanny Hui



Links to

[Lenten Calendar](#)

[Article On Penance](#)

From Our Director of Formation

During the Season of Lent, spend some time in contemplation of this prayer from the Secular Franciscan Companion prayer book by Franciscan Press.

Prayer Before an Image of Jesus Crucified

Behold me, O good and gentle Jesus, while before your face I humbly kneel, and with burning soul, pray and beseech you to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity, true contrition for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment, while I contemplate with great love and tender pity your five wounds, pondering over them within me, calling to mind the words which David, your prophet, said of you, my Jesus: *"They have pierced my hands and my feet, they have numbered all my bones."* (Ps 21: 17-18).

God bless you,
Catherine McNiff, ofs

Save the Dates

-VESPERS and FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY

On first Saturday of each month. **Next session:**

March 2nd @ 7pm PT/8pm MT/9pm CT
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86486098310?pwd=R1VOZ3EvdWMraG1PTTYxb1p1WllvQT09>

Meeting ID: 864 8609 Centre 8310 Passcode: 741246

-Next FRANCISCAN VISION GLOBAL SUMMIT

March 30th 2024 on *Saint Francis as Alter Christus: conduit of divine love to suffering humanity* - in Bonaventure's *Stigmata* (Major Legend – c. XIII). **Registration is free.**

For Info see [BROCHURE](#)



Links to Resources on the STIGMATA

[MAJOR LEGEND: Chapter 13: The Sacred Stigmata](#) by Saint Bonaventure

[REFLECTIONS ON THE STIGMATA](#) by Jack Wintz, OFM

[STIGMATIZATION: Bearing the Wounds of Jesus Christ](#) from 2021 General Chapter, Order of Friars Minor

There will be more links each month on the Stigmata. They will also be posted on the OLOTA.org website.

FRANCISCAN VISION GLOBAL SUMMIT January 27, 2024

FVGS is organized by TAU a Franciscan International Journal (OFM-India). Master of Ceremonies Br Arokiam John, OFM introduced the 2024 program with: *May the Lord give you peace dear Brothers and Sisters!!* Br Arokiam invited participants to choose from six different languages that the summit session was available in by respective translators. To begin the inauguration of the FVGS 2024 online monthly sessions, the Brothers of Saint Francis of Assisi Foundation of North-East India lead all in worship

with a hymn to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit. Br Roberto Genuin, Minister General of the Order of the Friars Minor Capuchins, was invited to give an introductory message for the inauguration. The message is from a pre-recorded video due to his other engagements in Africa.

You are Love: 800 Years of the Gift of the Stigmata by Br Roberto Genuin, OFM Cap.

Br Roberto begins by acknowledging the gathering on January 5, 2024 at LaVerna to open the *eighth centennial of the gift of the stigmata* of Father St Francis as a window of grace for a better understanding of the Franciscan charism to face the realities of our world. He continues that together with the other centennials we move toward the centennial of Francis' transitus to better understand through our charism, the past through toward the future

with wisdom from more than 60 countries. Br Roberto notes that St Bonaventure reminds us that the stigmata is the conclusion of what began in the ruins of San Damiano in Francis first encounter with the crucified Christ. His encounters with lepers were also integrated for his understanding of Christ's passion: the stigmata. Francis left a prayer after he received the stigmata: *God is Good, all Good, the Supreme Good; he is the living and true God*. The beauty of the cross invites us to follow Christ and our encounters with Him transform us to live for others. *By His wounds we are healed*. 1 Peter 2:25 Through contemplating Christ's wounds we recognize and accept the wounds in ourselves and others. Together with remembering Francis and closeness to the poor we are truly healed. Br Roberto congratulates the creators of the program and asks everyone including participants to do their best to actualize the meaning of the gift of the stigmata of St Francis for our world today. Br Roberto concludes his message with a blessing.

Br Arokiam introduced Sr Princy Rose, the General Councillor of the Franciscan Clarist Congregation, India.

Welcome Address by Sr Princy Rose, FCC

Sr Princy began by expressing a warm welcome to such an event that connects all under the evangelical vision of our Father - St Francis of Assisi. After rediscovering the significance of the Rule of 1223 and the Crib at Greccio through 2023 we now endeavor walking through 2024 of discovering more deeply how Father Francis followed the crucified Lord and radically lived the passion of Christ. Sr Princy thanked the speakers and moderators for sharing their expertise with us that will inspire our Franciscan heritage and legacy. The FVGS will continue up until 2026 to celebrate the Centenary together as a Franciscan family. Sr Princy especially thanked Br Arokiam John, OFM the Coordinator and his team, Br John Sekar, OFM, Br Mathew Joseph, OFM and Sr Francisco Nirmala, FMM for their hard work and dedication to make the FVGS possible. TAU of OFM India is a Franciscan family publication, with Br Arokiam as editor, that organized the FVGS. Sr Princy encouraged participants in active engagement so this event becomes a catalyst for our contemporary Franciscan living. Again, Sr Princy most cordially welcomed everyone. Thank you.

Moderator of the Session, Br Xavier Durairaj, the Minister Provincial of the Province of St Thomas the Apostle and president of the FVGS introduced the speaker Br David Gagrčić, OFM. Originally from Croatia, Fr David has Italian citizenship and belongs to the Italian Franciscan Tuscan Province of St Francis Stigmatized. Since 2020 he is the Vicar of La Verna Franciscan Sanctuary.

The Site of the Stigmata by Br David Gagrčić, OFM

Br David noted that the Pope's approval of the Rule of 1223, the Crib at Greccio and the Stigmatization of St Francis at La Verna all occurred between 1223 and 1224. 800 years later we continue to receive of the outpouring of supernatural grace through the life of St Francis of Assisi. La Verna was one of the first Franciscan hermitages. Francis was always in search of places for solitude and penance for their five different Lents (200 days out of 365). The hermitage became a place of reform for the order, a place for the infirmed, a place where spirituality and nature found balance. The stigmata are the signs of Christ's passion that appeared in the body of St Francis at La Verna around the Feast of the Holy Cross (Sept 17, 1224) and were always kept hidden by him except for a few friends. No one else knew until two years later when he died in 1226. There are accounts by Brother Elijah, Minister General written in 1226, Thomas of Celano written in 1228, Brother Leo written in 1224 and who was possibly a direct witness. Whatever differences in the testimonies, in all accounts the wounds on Francis body corresponded to those of Christ crucified. A message that began at the crucifix in San Damiano, the message at La Verna points to Christiformity more than a miracle. Francis was suffering a dark night of the soul in the last two years of his life due to rejection from his own Order. He retired into the woods and experienced the abandonment of the cross. It is at this precipice that he received the stigmatization. Anyone who pursues the way of the cross understands the marks and wounds that loving others entails. *"...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."* John 12:24

Question and Answer Session on Br David's presentation moderated and followed with Thanksgiving by Br Xavier Durairaj. MC Br Arokiam thanks both Brs Xavier and David.

Closing Hymn in honour of Our Holy Father Saint Francis of Assisi by the 1st Year Novices of the Society of Sisters of St Anne's, Madras sung in the Tamil language.

Report prepared by
Colleen Finlon, ofs

Social Corner



St Pio Fraternity of Red Deer, AB model their new Saint Pio t-shirts.
They will help any fraternity order t-shirts with their own patron saint at \$40 each.

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