



Secular Franciscan

National Bulletin of the Secular Franciscan Order in Canada
December 2019

Time of Change

Doug Clorey, ofs, National Minister

*“Let us begin again for up until now we have done little or nothing”
(St. Francis of Assisi, *The Life of Saint Francis* by Thomas of Celano, 103).*

While the composition of the National Fraternity has changed significantly during the past 25 years, there have been few structural changes during that time period. It is now time to explore other structural options that will better serve our Secular Franciscan family into the future.

Since it is the National Council’s responsibility to compose regional fraternities in accordance with Article 61.2 of the OFS General Constitutions, it is therefore the National Council’s responsibility to respond to the changes that have occurred in the composition of regional fraternities since their establishment in the early 90’s following regionalization.

To deal with this situation, the National Council has initiated a project to examine options for updating the regional structures of the National Fraternity. While the primary objective of this project is to restructure the National Fraternity, an equally important objective is to revitalize the life of the sisters and brothers of the National Fraternity so they can live their commitments to the Gospel life in the best way possible.

This project will include both anglophone and francophone sectors of the National Fraternity; that is, all regions of the National Fraternity. The project will be lead by the Commission to Restructure the National Fraternity of Canada, consisting of six members: the National Minister (Doug Clorey), the two National Vice-Ministers (Françoise Malboeuf and Marion Clorey), a representative from the anglophone sector (Irene Manning), a representative from the francophone sector (Richard Chamberland), and a National Spiritual Assistant (Benjamin Ripley, OFM). The Commission’s primary role will be to ensure that the project progresses in line with its objectives.

During the course of the project, the needs of Secular Franciscans and their local fraternities will be of primary importance. Members of the Restructuring Commission will meet with Secular Franciscans from all regional fraternities to discuss options that could be considered to better support them in living their Franciscan lives. Consultations associated with this project will also form part of the discussion during fraternal and pastoral visits to Regional Councils. Already, discussions have begun during the fraternal and pastoral visits to the Regional Fraternities of De la Trinité, St-François-de-Laval and Montreal. Meetings are also scheduled for the regional fraternities of Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières.

Before the next national elective chapter, a paper will be developed that will present options for updating the regional structure of the National Fraternity and will be circulated across the National Fraternity for comments and discussion. The National Council’s proposal will then be presented during the 2021 National Elective Chapter.

Let us pray, with our Father Francis, that the Most High and Glorious God will give us wisdom and insight to discern the correct path to follow.



National Spiritual Conference 2019

The National Spiritual Conference of the Secular Franciscan Order of Canada was held on October 10-13, 2019 at the Centre de Spiritualité des Ursulines in Loretteville, Quebec.

The theme of the conference was “The 800th Anniversary of the Encounter between Saint Francis and the Sultan” and was facilitated by Fr. Michael Cusato, OFM, one of the leading historians of medieval Franciscan history working in the field today. Fr. Michael is a member of the Sacred Heart Province of Friars Minor, St. Louis, Missouri, USA and is a past Director of the Franciscan Institute and Dean of the School of Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University.

Using the texts that have been written describing the event, Fr. Michael explored the encounter between Francis and the Sultan, and presented the significance of this event in today’s world. The conference was attended by 35 Secular Franciscans, representing 8 regions of the National Fraternity. Participants shared that they found the subject very relevant in the society of the 21st century and in light of the recent violence against Muslims. This conference also gave those attending an opportunity to really understand the nature of the encounter between Francis and Sultan Al-Kamil, and its significant implications on our lives as Franciscans.



Participants at the National Spiritual Conference 2019

From the Communications Team

Our communications team has had two meetings to date. A third meeting is planned for later this Fall.

We have focussed on keeping our webpage up to date, using social media as an additional communications tool and publishing this national newsletter on a regular basis.

Regarding the website, we have archived material that was dated, updated the JPIC site, updated the statistics (they are now current as of March, 2019), removed deadlinks, and created a table for the regional fraternities so it is clearer what area of the country they are located in. The front page has current information e.g. the latest edition of Living Fraternity, any new publications and new postings by National Council members. We hope to have the PowerPoint presentations from the National Spiritual Conference focussing on the “The Encounter between St. Francis and the Sultan” posted in the near future. We now have buttons on the national website linking to the Facebook and Twitter accounts.

We are encouraging members to follow us on Facebook (click the follow button). Here is the link:

<https://m.facebook.com/ofs.canada.5>

If anyone has suggestions for the communications team, please do not hesitate to contact either of the co-chairs - Marion Clorey (website and social media)

mgclorey@gmail.com

or Debbie Tessier (newsletter)

ofsnational@hotmail.com

What’s Inside

Message From The Minister	1
National Spiritual Conference 2019	2
From the communications Team	3
National Spiritual Assistant	4
My Week in Rome	4 - 5
OFS - Formation Corner	6
OFS - Youth and Young Adult	7
Mission in Guatemala	8 - 9



Newsletter of the
 Secular Franciscan Order
 National Fraternity
 of Canada

December 2019

Editor

Debbie Tessier, ofsnational@hotmail.com

National Spiritual Assistant

Fr. Peter Knaapen, OFM Conventual

During the month of November we remember our deceased loved one in many religious and civic celebrations. We begin the month celebrating the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls, recalling that our loved ones are with the Lord or are on the way to his heavenly kingdom. We celebrate Remembrance Day on November 11, recalling those who gave their lives during the great wars of the last century in order that we might live in freedom. As we wear the poppies once again we keep in mind the words “Lest we forget”.

As a society it is possible to forget the lessons of history. However it is impossible for us to forget our beloved deceased. It is impossible for us to forget a parent, a spouse, a brother, a sister, a relative or a friend because they were and are a great part of who we are.

One of the spiritual works of mercy is to pray for the living and the dead. During the month of November many parishes have “a book of the deceased” in which we write the names of our love ones who we wish the people to prayer for. I encourage each of you to make your own book of the deceased. Write the names of those you want to pray for during this month. Obviously names of parents, spouses, family members and friends will come to mind. Write them in this book. Also include the names of the deceased brothers and sisters of your fraternity and the names of parishioners who have died during the past year. Keep them all in your daily prayers. Think about them as you pray for them. Remember they are praying for you. Our Faith tells us we are still connected with them. Our Faith tells us that our deceased and we are the Mystical Body of Christ. We form one Body. One day we will be reunited with our loved ones when we are all gathered into the Father’s house where we will live with Jesus and the Father in love.



My Week in Rome

Br. Benjamin Ripley, OFM

From November 10 to November 15, I had the privilege of participating in the National Spiritual Assistants Formation course held at the Collegio Seraphico in Rome. The “Seraphicum” is the Pontifical college for the Conventual friars. This course was conceived and organized by the General Conference of Spiritual Assistants, the International governing body for OFS Spiritual Assistants around the world. I joined my Canadian counterpart, Alix Poulin, OFM, Cap and we were able to take in some sights of Rome together before the course started, including: the Coliseum, the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul, and several other interesting attractions.

There were 63 participants for this course representing National Spiritual Assistants from around the globe. It was wonderful to gather with friars from the 4 families of Franciscan friars: OFM, Capuchins, Conventuals, and TOR. There were participants from: Latin America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada.

Our workshop presentations covered the foundational topics relevant to the OFS. We refreshed ourselves on the history and identity of the OFS to rediscover the richness of the history of the Secular Franciscans and how it became a vital component of the Franciscan charism in communion with the Franciscan friar families. I gained a greater appreciation for the identity of the OFS and how it is a continual life project of conversion for each Secular Franciscan and

complemented by Fraternity and unity, while maintaining their autonomy as a Franciscan order. The workshop on OFS Spirituality reminded me how this spirituality leads Secular Franciscans to joy and life and to “*give life to Gospel and Gospel to Life*” in order to lead an authentic Franciscan life. I see how OFS Spirituality encourages Secular Franciscans to express it in the important issues of our time and living out the ordinary elements of everyday life.

We had the good fortune to meet the Minister General of the OFS, Tibor Kausar. I was impressed by his presentation ability and his passion for the OFS. He gave a workshop on the OFS documents, and spoke of how they were legislation which represented the common value of the OFS. In addition to being juridical documents, they are a reflection on OFS spirituality which has its roots in common with the Franciscan friar families: the Gospel.

Our class went together to St. Peter’s Square to take part in Pope Francis’ regular Wednesday general audience. It was rainy, but we persevered in good spirits. Francis spoke about Christian hospitality which prompted me to reflect on our role as Spiritual Assistants as guides for OFS fraternities: to be a beacon and presence of Franciscan and Christian hospitality to others, especially the peripheries of society.

Our workshops on the nature of spiritual assistance, and the role of the Spiritual Assistant in the formation process reinforced for me the importance of our roles. We are a presence for the fraternities in the OFS to promote the Secular Franciscan charism and the observance of the OFS Rule. We are a practical implementation of the Vatican II spirit where all of the faithful has been called equally to holiness.

The workshop on YouFra, by Ana (the international animator for Youfra,) was an educational experience for me. I confess that I did not know much about it and how it fit within the OFS order. I was especially touched on how young people in the world are hungry to bring the Franciscan spirit into their lives. I was amazed at YouFra presence and activities around the world and I hope that it will make a home in Canada and make an impact in our young people.

For each of our workshops, we had discussion groups that reflected on questions given by the presenters. These questions centred on sharing our particular perspectives and reflecting on how our collective experiences can strengthen the role of Spiritual Assistants to the OFS fraternities. I felt particularly enriched by the ideas and experience of SA’s from other parts of the world. I heard many testaments of faith and courage from those who work with the OFS often under difficult and hostile conditions, both physically and politically. It was also a real joy to share Eucharistic celebrations with them in different languages and to enjoy fraternal evenings with laughter and sharing the songs and dances of our home countries.

The end of our course came very fast, and I was sad to leave my newfound friends and brothers. This experience was very valuable for my spiritual nourishment and Franciscan vocation. I now look at my role as a Spiritual Assistant in a more complete way; I share a communion with my OFS sisters and brothers, and share common roots and bonds in the spirit of our Holy Father St. Francis in order to bring the Gospel to life in our lives and in the world around us.



Fr. Alix Poulin OFM Cap; the Minister General of the OFS, Tibor Kausar; Fr Ben Ripley OFM

OFS - Formation Corner

A recent development in the Formation corner has been the addition of a new text for Initial formation, *Guidelines for Initial Formation* from the Formation Commission – Presidency CIOFS (2017). This resource offers the main constructs of Candidacy formation, presented in an international flavor and published in a variety of languages. We have received online versions in English, French and Korean languages, which have been disseminated to respective Regional Formation Directors and Regional Ministers, following endorsement by the OFS National Council.

At a recent meeting in Quebec City of Regional and local Formation Directors, as well as Regional Ministers, members were given an update of the work of the National Formation Commission. There was a rich exchange of information sharing on the formation that was being done in various regions and local fraternities, and an opportunity to glean some new ideas that could be applied to the work of formation. Subsequent to the meeting, a minor revision to the French version of the new *Guidelines for Initial Formation* was completed for linguistic accuracy.

Starting this fall, some Francophone Regions will be trialing the new Initial Formation Manual, and additional trial will be conducted with a member from the Franciscan Young Adult cohort in OLOTA Region. An evaluation is being planned to follow the trial period of this new resource, and the results will be shared with the wider OFS community.

Access the French and English Guidelines for Initial Formation through the links below. For the Korean resource, contact me.

<http://www.ciofs.org/portal/en/main-page/ciofs-news/2007-guidelines-for-initial-formation-2017>

<http://www.ciofs.org/portal/en/library/official-documents/francais-6/784-lignes-directrices-pour-la-formation-initiale-2017-version-pdf>

The National Formation Commission team continues the work entrusted to them with great commitment and appreciates the ongoing support from Regional teams.

Jewel Jasmins, ofs Formation Director Chair of the National Formation Commission



OFS – Youth and Young Adult



At our recent National Spiritual Conference in Quebec City, Fr. Michael Cusato, OFM, in his presentation on *'The 800th Anniversary of the Encounter between Saint Francis and the Sultan'* portrayed how the young Francis life was influenced by the culture and values of the Middle Ages.

Through a series of experiences and an encounter with Christ, Francis' life took on a new direction, new values and new vision. A vision that would propel him to live radically the love of Christ, embracing all of God's creatures as brother/sister, and seeing all of God's creation as gift.

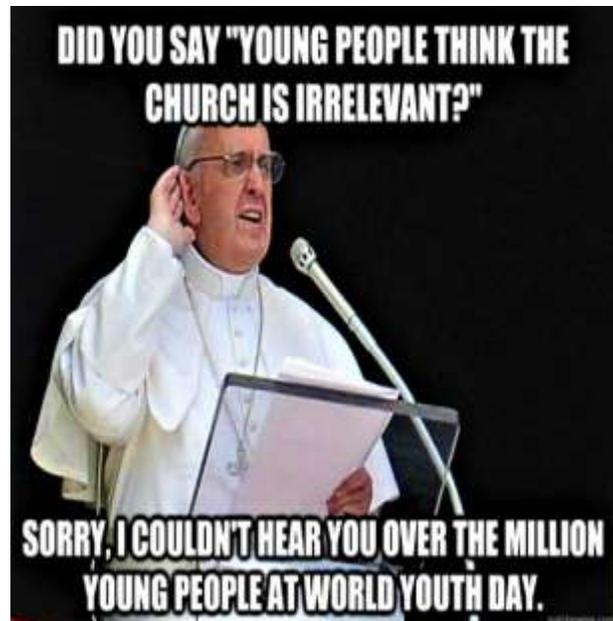
Our young people of today are no different in being shaped by influences of the modern world. We live in a global village where the cultural matrix of contemporary society continually evolves, yet man's quest to find meaning and purpose in life, love and happiness, never changes. Experiencing the joy of the gospel and its life changing power, has great appeal to many youths who have been introduced to the Christian Faith.

Outreach to Youth

The main objective for outreach to young people is to help them discover, develop, and deepen their vocation in life in the light of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the message of St. Francis of Assisi.

If you would like more information on outreaching to youth and young adults, please contact Jewel Jasmins, ofs, at:

jajasmins@gmail.com
(Youth & Young Adult Team Liaison - National Council)



Mission in Guatemala

I started volunteering at Valley of the Angels in March of 2014, when I brought a group of high school students there for a Mission Trip. After only 10 days at Valley, the children and people of Guatemala stole my heart and I have been coming back ever since during my summer break and assisting in a variety of ways, but primarily with the English as a Second Language program.

Throughout the years, many students have returned with me and this summer I had the opportunity to bring two of my three children. Sharing this place with young people is an amazing experience and I am blessed to have had the opportunity to do so. I consider Valley a second home and my experiences here have also shaped and transformed my teaching in Canada. I find, since coming to Guatemala, that I am more patient with my students and I truly look to see God in each and every one of them. The children here have taught me more about love than I could ever fully explain. They love without considering the cost. They love deeply and completely. Something that I feel we need to encourage more of in Canada because that is what the youth need most of all, to be loved without considering the cost. Many of our youth suffer with similar situations as some of the youth here in Guatemala; lack of love at home and no parental presence. It is crucial that we extend God's love to all youth. I always say it is the angriest and the quiet that we need to worry about most, for it is they who are in most need of our love and support. St. Francis' example with the leper showed us that to love completely will only bring us closer to God and from that, nothing is impossible.



Valley of the Angels originally started as an orphanage for Guatemalan children thanks to the love and vision of Father Rocco, a Franciscan priest from the OFM Immaculate Conception Province out of New York. In January of 1993, the doors were officially opened for the first group of 26 orphan children.



While Valley of the Angels was originally established to educate and care for abandoned children, the mission has expanded to include all children who come from at-risk and extremely poor homes. Over the years Valley transformed and now functions as a boarding school that houses, feeds and educates over 200 at-risk children ages 6-18. The campus houses 9 school-grades of students - who along with their formal studies - receive music, computer, physical education and vocational training classes. Valley also boasts a garden and bakery, which students have the opportunity to learn new trades which can lead to brighter futures.

Currently, Valley of the Angels is led by Fr. Rocco's successor, Fr. Michael Della Penna. In addition to carrying on the Franciscan ideals and charism, he has also transformed Valley of the Angels into a more efficient and modern organization, helping to strengthen the children's relationship with Christ and post-Valley opportunities.

My life has changed in so many ways since coming here and I know that my being here

and the visits from other missionaries have reinforced the dignity and worth of the children. Many of the children come from homes where love may be lacking, non-existent or mis-used. When they are here, they are loved, cared for and given the opportunity to feel that their lives are worth something.



Coming here, my heart has grown far larger than I ever thought possible. Mission work changed me. Mission has taught me the importance of detachment. Nothing is permanent. Everything is changing. Holding on to things only adds to our 'baggage.' As I continue to detach from this world, I am making more room in my heart for Him. His strength permeates my being, and I rest in the knowledge that I am worth more than the lilies of the field and the birds of the air (Matthew 6: 26-34).

I remember when I returned from my first mission trip, people noticed that I looked different. They asked me if I had changed my hair or had lost weight. I hadn't. What I had was 'a little Guatemala.' I finally looked how I felt inside: beautiful. Perhaps not in the way our society sees beauty, but I was finally able to look at myself and be happy. I had joy in my face. Many students have had similar experiences coming here with me. Some have returned almost as many times as I have. The want to be loved unconditionally is universal. Youth are youth, it doesn't matter where they are from, they just want to be loved.

This is not to say that I have not had my struggles with mission work. Throughout the years I have had to manoeuvre through some very difficult moments. I have met sides of myself that I did not like. Being an introvert is not always easy when you are thrust into large group situations or when unexpected situations arise. This is mission life. Nothing is scripted. Trust in God in key. Nothing else matters except how much more I can do for Him. Through Him all is possible. Mission work has taught me more about myself than I could have expected. It breaks us of our selfishness and shows us that all that matters is trust in God's goodness for us. My heart is a mission heart. Guatemala is my second home.



Lisa Theriault, ofs
St. Padre Pio Fraternity, North Bay Ontario

Regional Fraternity Page



Fortieth Anniversary

Our own Father Peter Knaapen celebrated his 40th Anniversary of ordination to the priesthood this past September.

He has served the Trillium Region as our Spiritual Assistant for many years and has been a wonderful shepherd to all the Secular Franciscans.

He is currently part of the National Conference of Spiritual Assistants for Canada.

We take this opportunity to thank him and wish him all God's graces on his Anniversary.



OLOTA

Western Canada Regional

Council features growth and changing fraternities. Nuggets of Gold appear!

Two Emerging Korean Fraternities celebrated Canonical Establishment:

St. Padre Pio in Calgary, Alberta on Sept. 23

St. Francis of Assisi in Surrey, BC. (photo of the signing)

Newly elected Councils were welcomed by three fraternities:

The Little Flowers of St. Francis Fraternity in Kelowna BC

St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Coquitlam, BC and

St. Padre Pio Fraternity in Calgary, Alberta

The Holy Spirit moves silently giving many reasons to be Grateful.

Blessings pour over and from the 25 established fraternities throughout Western Canada.

Linda Adams
Minister, OLOTA



This photo is the start of our Interfaith visits in the Kingston area for the Saint Maximilian Kolbe Secular Franciscan fraternity. It took place at the Muslin Mosque Sept 24 2019. In attendance, from left to right Walter Stock, Bob Howard, ofs, Minister; Diane Bruce, ofs, Vice Minister; Patrick Lublink ofs; Jman Ababukar Mulla; Brian Greigson; Friar Ed Debono, Spiritual Advisor; and John Walton.



St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity in Welland celebrated their 40th Anniversary as a Fraternity on Sunday May 5, 2019 and also the 40th Anniversary of Profession for 2 of their members: top left: Cathy Kruger ofs and Anne Matyuska ofs were presented their TRF certificates from their Minister, Debbie Tessier. Congratulations on this joy filled celebration.