



Secular Franciscan

National Bulletin of the Secular Franciscan Order in Canada
May 2020

Prayers for Nova Scotia

Dear Members of the Secular Franciscan Order:

In light of the recent killings in Nova Scotia, I would ask you to please remember in prayer all who have been affected by this tragedy - those who have died, their surviving loved ones, neighbours and friends, the police and first responders, as well as the entire Nova Scotian community.

In the words of Eileen Izzard, local fraternity minister of St. Bonaventure Fraternity in Halifax, NS, "*This heart breaking violence strikes pain deep in all our hearts. While being unified in Christ through prayer, may He bring courage, healing and hope to all affected in any way.*"

Doug Clorey, ofs, National Minister



Preparing for Change

Doug Clorey, ofs, National Minister

"The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong." (GC, Art. 30.1)

The project to restructure the National Fraternity of Canada is well underway. All fraternities are now being consulted on how best to restructure our national fraternity and to revitalize the life of the sisters and brothers in their respective local and regional fraternities.

As a first step, the Commission to Restructure the National Fraternity is conducting an analysis of the current situation within all regional fraternities. To assist in this work, a list of key questions has been developed and is being circulated within each regional fraternity for input. The following questions are being asked:

- 1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the local fraternities in your region?**
- 2. What are the needs of local fraternities that you feel should be provided by a re-**

gional or national structure; for example, regional gatherings, regional bulletin, etc.)?

- 3. What services are currently being provided by your regional structure?**
- 4. Do you have any ideas around the updating of the national fraternity's current regional structure?**

On behalf of the Restructuring Commission, Richard Chamberland and Irene Manning are managing this part of the project and hope to receive all responses before June 30, 2020.

Because of the restrictions around gathering, regional and local ministers are being asked to use other methods to obtain this information, ie. telephone, teleconferences, videoconferences, etc.

As this project advances, know that each Secular Franciscan and their fraternity are important as we reflect on the future of the Secular Franciscan Order in Canada. This important matter requires the serious attention of all of us.



God Does Not Abandon Us

As the Covid-19 pandemic intensified around the world these past few months, we have experienced challenging times that has tested our faith. This coronavirus quarantine has prevented us from visiting our families, friends and loved ones; has put much of our activities on hold; many things we have taken for granted are simply not possible at the present time.

The pandemic has produced uncertainty—especially for those most vulnerable such as the elderly and those without support networks. The quarantine prevents from making physical visits to those who might need it the most—the elderly, isolated and particularly those who are infected with the coronavirus. On top of all this, on April 19, we saw our brothers and sisters in Nova Scotia experiencing the worst mass shooting in Canadian history where 22 victims died along with their shooter.

These events might make us want to cry out to the heavens, in the words of Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” We might ask the question, where is God in the midst of these times of uncertainty and sorrow?

Our faith tells us of a God who is near to us, who has not abandoned us. In the Scriptures,



we see how God walks with humanity as a pilgrim traveller; God walked with the Israelites during their exodus from Egypt; God was with them in their exile in Babylon; God revealed himself in his son Jesus Christ who walked in Galilee, preaching a message of salvation, forgiveness, and healing. This past Easter, we celebrated that Jesus passed through death to unite us in his resurrection. This hope for life beyond death can help us in this difficult time. God is among us, shouldering our grief and giving us hope.

Even though our solidarity as sisters and brothers in St. Francis has been reduced to small gestures, no matter how ordinary they may seem, let us remember that they are all ways we can be a witness of God’s love to our family, friends, neighbours, and those who are strangers to us. Making a phone call or using a computer program to keep in touch, supporting local businesses, volunteering your time—these daily gestures can renew our connections and remind us of God’s presence among us.

With trust and hope, we will feel the peace described in Psalm 121, “The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand.”

*Br. Benjamin Ripley, OFM
Trois-Rivières, QC*

Saint Francis’ Example

At the beginning of the year, we were told not only that we were at the start of a new year, but also of a new decade. On this occasion, those in futurology went with their predictions, but I noticed that most of the time they never saw the changes we are seeing this year. Certainly, the pandemic. Not only the pandemic. The confinement also.

In the last two months, two subjects have occupied us daily: the pandemic and the confinement. Would Francis of Assisi’s example have something to say to the secular Franciscans and the Franciscan Family? Of course!



During many years, it has often been insisted on the fact that the spirituality of Francis of Assisi was a break from the monastic spirituality of his time: that Francis and his brothers were on route And we often speak that we are "pilgrims and strangers". So, in these times of confinement, we are not on route. Our automobiles are used in the least, local transport is reduced to a minimum, various levels of government exhort us to stay at home, for the moment. (But until when?)

Francis of Assisi could directly inspire us again. Francis did not want a house that was called "his house" but on the other hand,



he would go to different hermitage areas in absolutely superb mountains. Anyone that has gone on pilgrimage to Assisi has undoubtedly learned that added to this marvelous city are numerous other areas where Francis went in total poverty: the Carceri, so close to the centre of Assisi; Mount Alverna, in Tuscany, probably as important as Assisi because Francis received the stigmata there; Greccio, where Francis was inspired to re-create the first nativity...

The hermitage experience, living 40 days on a high mountain or on an island in prayer and modest conditions are part of the Franciscan experience. Let us not also forget "the rule for hermitages." Are we completely out of line as Franciscans when we speak of a confinement lived in prayer? No, because Francis himself also lived this and numerous Franciscans have also. And also speaking of

Saint Clare and her sisters? We should not neglect all these examples that belong to the pure tradition of the Franciscan Family.

Fr Alix Poulin O.F.M. Cap

Lockdown

Yes there is fear. Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying. Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.

But, they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them....

Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic.
The birds are singing again. The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming, And we are always encom-
passed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

—Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM (a friar in Ireland), March 13, 2020



Communications Team May 2020

We have been focussing on making sure our website is current with some success -we had close to 200 hits last month! Both Michel David’s JPIC team and Jewel Jasmins’ Formation Team have been working diligently and have produced several documents which are now online. Françoise Malboeuf and her team produce Living Fraternity every month - an invaluable resource especially during these times. We remind readers that all Living Fraternity issues are archived so if you are working on a particular formation theme, you can look back through the archives for additional material.

One feature that we have added is a search button. This is helpful if you are not sure where to look for an item. For example, The Guidelines for Inactive Fraternities is available as a recent addition - you can currently see it on our Home page. Once we add more material, it may be a bit harder to find. The search button will help us find the document without spending a lot of time going through the whole website.

We have revamped the regional fraternities page so that viewers will know in which province(s) a particular region is located. The page provides a link to the website of each region (if they have one). We also have links to the International level. Generally, we don’t put material on the national website that is available on another level’s website. If you have suggestions for other materials you would like to see on the website, please let us know.

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Newsletter of the Secular Franciscan Order National Fraternity of Canada

May 2020

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Staying Connected With our National Minister and Vice Minister (Anglophone)

Doug and Marion Clorey share their musical talents and Franciscan musical spirit with us in some song videos:

- SONG #1 <https://youtu.be/MfO7SBIJ39g>
- SONG #2 <https://youtu.be/teQicAqUsDM>
- SONG #3 <https://youtu.be/nX024WcRWX0>
- SONG #4 <https://youtu.be/Qq5y9D2KJ1A>
- SONG #5 <https://youtu.be/gJ6UWfIWUj8>
- SONG #6 <https://youtu.be/DLFXVTn-s3c>
- SONG #7 <https://youtu.be/JFE551rZ8Q4>
- SONG #8 <https://youtu.be/xfcu2ZtZYY8>

Local Fraternities Staying Connected in the Our Lady of the Angels Region (Western Canada)



At the initiative of some members, our **St. Anthony de Padua fraternity Richmond**, have adopted the practice of daily praying the rosary. Those who can are encouraged to pray at 3:00 PM. We may not be physically present but we are one in spirit as we pray the rosary at the same time.

- Nerio Cervantes, ofs Minister of St. Anthony de Padua, Richmond BC

At **St. Anthony of Padua, Maple Ridge, BC**, we have casual contacts with each other by phone and e-mails during the pandemic. We have all adapted positively to the new way of social distance but we'll have to pray for the necessary patience in the future as we begin to miss our children, friends and Holy Communion.

In April, we prayed our usual litanies in the privacy of our homes, hoping to pray together in May by Zoom. I'm personally struggling with a new computer and with the new communication platform. I don't know how to use Zoom yet but other brothers and sisters do. I'll trust in their new found ability and generosity. I try to be in contact with as many as possible. There is a member that moved to Calgary, we meet on the phone three or four times a week, to do evening prayers.

– Betty Melik, ofs from discerning fraternity **Blessed Frederick Janssonne, Airdrie, AB**

The fraternity had set up a buddy system at our last meeting in March. Members are divided into 6 groups of 5 with a leader who calls those in his/her group weekly. The leaders will then update the Minister. Members are also encouraged to call others who are in different groups. Emails received from regional are also forwarded to all members who are on our mailing list. In addition to the above we are continuing with the monthly bulletin.

– Angelina Pang, ofs, **Saint Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Vancouver**

(Continued on page 6)

Our St Pio Fraternity members are endeavouring to stay in contact with each other during the pandemic. Our interactions these days have included exchange of emails to all our members to fill each other in on how individuals are faring. We also exchange phone calls. Every once in a while someone finds something of interest to share and sends it out to everyone electronically.



We are continuing our study of the Franciscan Virtues as an ongoing formation. We choose two or three specific virtues each month from the book entitled "Franciscan Virtues Through the Year: 52 Steps to Conversion from St Francis of Assisi". Each week we focus on one of these virtues and work through the study guide. We plan to share on our personal reflections when we gather again.

We traditionally gather the First Friday of each month for an hour of Adoration together at St Mary's Parish. We cannot gather right now at the church but we continue to share our Holy Hour together spiritually in our own homes when we pray from 1:00 - 2:00 pm on that day.

Joyce continues to prepare our monthly newsletter, "The St Pio Post" and sends it out to all our members. It keeps us with a common focus for the month. I have attached a copy of Joyce's May newsletter that she has just sent out to our fraternity members. –
Joyce Reilander, ofs, **St. Pio, Red Deer**

St. Pio's Fraternity (Delta) Virtual Meetings

...when one door closes, one looks for another opening... and ... enter ZOOM!



In the midst of a new reality ushered in by Covid-19 pandemic, with social distancing, our Fraternity could no longer gather for our monthly meetings and Formation meetings. Not good news for our community. We all agreed that we needed to keep in contact, and this was done through having members group together in threes to phone in and check up on each other. Although this helped, we wanted to get together as a full fraternity, so we had our first Zoom meeting this April,

which was great.

Those who did not have internet access, were able to join in by telephone, and others had the option of teleconference or video conference. Even our member in the Philippines joined our meeting. We sang a hymn from our breviary, prayed and Fr. Manoj's (SA) letter previously circulated to members, for reflection, followed by a good visit with everyone sharing.

So, all decided it was going to be our new way of having our General meetings. All Formation classes have switched to e-mail assignments and some classes done via Skype or Zoom. Our Franciscan Young Adult meetings have also gone virtual with Zoom and plan to *zoom* in speakers on the virtual platform.

Jewel Jasmins, ofs, Minister

**St. Clare
Fraternity
Coquitlam, BC
Zoom meeting**



Staying Connected in the Trillium Region (Ontario)



The Trillium Region has been trying various methods to stay connected with one another during this pandemic. Some fraternities are using the app Zoom, some are calling each other on the telephone and others are sending greeting cards to one another and still others are using email and text to send good wishes and checking in. Thanking the good Lord for this access to technology! Stay healthy!

Community of Love



Connecting with Youth: Franciscan Fine Arts and Poster Contest

In 2016, I approached the members of Our Lady Of The Angels Regional Council and asked about having an annual Franciscan Fine Arts and Poster Contest for kids in the region. Their support was (and still is) enthusiastic! The primary goal of the contest is to introduce children to different aspects of Franciscan Tradition.

In 2016 we asked the children, “*Who is Francis of Assisi?*” and asked the youth, “*Why did Pope Francis choose the name Francis?*” In 2017, the theme was “*Francis Meets the Leper;*” in 2018, “*Francis Meets the Sultan;*” and in 2019, “*Reaching Out to My Community*”



The contest is divided into the following age categories: “Little Friends of Francis” (age 5-8) draw or paint a picture or a poster; “Friends of Francis” (age 9-12) draw or paint, and write a 30 word explanation of their artwork; and “Franciscan Youth” (age 13-16) draw or paint, and write a poem or 250 word narrative.

The contest is open to all children and youth - of all religious beliefs. The winners receive first or second place prizes (\$80 down to \$25, depending on the age group.) OLOTA Regional Fraternity generously sponsors these prizes, and posts the winning entries on their website

Every February, entry forms and contest information are circulated to all Secular Franciscan Fraternities, and many schools, school boards, and parishes, and to home-schooled students in the OLOTA area. Entry forms have also gone to Ontario and Prince Edward Island!

Our judges are: a high school art teacher, and a graphic artist. The winners and their local Secular Fraternity are notified in writing. Some fraternities invite the winners to a celebration to share their work, some others present the prize at a school assembly. More than 700 students have participated in the Franciscan Poster Contest so far. We are hoping to have a great response again this year but that is uncertain as yet because of COVID -19.

The Franciscan Fine Arts and Poster Contest:

- introduces children, youth, teachers and parents to Franciscan Spirituality,
- fosters inter-generational community,
- helps Secular Franciscans make parish and community connections,
- and, shows the world our love for and dedication to our Franciscan charism!

Catherine McNiff, ofs, Director of Youth, Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity

Prayer to Christ on Calvary

By Gabriela Mistral - A Franciscan Poet

This afternoon, O Christ on Calvary
I came to plead with you for my ailing flesh,
but on seeing you my eyes went back and forth
from your body to my own with shame.

How can I complain about my weary feet
when I see yours utterly destroyed?
How can I show you my empty hands
when yours are covered with wounds?

How can I explain my loneliness to you
when you are hoisted and alone on the cross?
How can I tell you that I have no love
when your own heart has been torn?

Now, I no longer remember anything;
all my infirmities have fled from me.
The urgency of all pleading before you
has drowned in my imploring mouth.

Now I only plead to plead for nothing;
just to be here beside your dying image -
to learn that all pain is nothing but
the holy door-key to your holy gateway. Amen.

**

I came to plead with you, Lord.
But how can I plead my case after I beheld you on the cross?
I came to complain about my emptiness,
but all I can do is contemplate your wounds.
I came to tell you about my loneliness,
but you are so lonesome up on that tree.

I came to say that I miss my beloved,
but I can see your heart has been torn.
When I contemplate you, I unite my lonely heart to your pierced heart
and everything acquires a new perspective. I don't feel less lonely, but
suddenly my loneliness seems to have a purpose. Through you, O
Lord, the riddles of my sorrows grow meaningful. "*Now I rejoice in my
sufferings for your sake*" (Col 1:24). Beneath the cross on Calvary, my
life is transformed because I suffer together with you.



Submitted by: Mrs. Teodora S. La Madrid, ofs

Regional Fraternity Page

OLOTA Western Canada Regional

OLOTA NEWS

Covid19 "appeared" to isolate members of fraternities, however, with the use of virtual meetings, beginning with the Regional meeting on line, this meeting format has spread outward to one fraternity, then to two and now linking many fraternities. There is a sense of the soft blowing wind of the Holy Spirit overtaking isolation. Learning a new curve of technology and experiencing its dynamics through the platform of Zoom has been awesome! The Kelowna Fraternity (BC) in their recent Zoom Fraternity Meeting discovered the Christian Prayer to bloom with one to sing rather than many voices, 'antiphoners' took a more predominant role, however, all together, the Prayer was God designed nourishing the soul of each OFS. This virtual Fraternity Meeting blessed all members through the connection to see and to hear each other.

Indeed the virtual Fraternity meeting experience was heart warming and truly Franciscan.

Seems but awhile ago that the Secular Franciscans were together in a social climate (photo of S.A. for Kelowna from a Christmas Social) ... and now we are in Easter, celebrating the Risen Jesus!

Secular Franciscans who gather, not long ago face to face and now though virtual, it still remains a Fraternity Gathering is a sacramental place where Jesus is celebrated and HIS LOVE, JOY and PEACE shared. Now Secular Franciscans wait for Pentecost, the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit.

Let us join Pope Francis as he recently prayed: "*Come Holy Spirit, Rekindle Your Love and RENEW the face of the earth*"

Linda Adams, Minister, OLOTA

(On pages 5-7 of this newsletter) See how local fraternities in the Our Lady of the Angels Region are Keeping Connected: St. Pio in Delta BC, St. Anthony de Padua in Richmond BC, St. Francis of Assisi in Vancouver, St. Pio in Red Deer, Alberta, and St. Clare in Coquitlan, Bc.



Fr. Wayne Philger, Spiritual Assistant of the Kelowna, BC fraternity, with the grandchildren of the local fraternity Minister at the Christmas Social for the Secular Franciscans.(Dec. 2019) Through the wide geographic panorama of this Regional Fraternity, there is a strong bond of prayer, love and fraternity family life.

We entrust to your prayers:

Alicya Wlusek, ofs, member of St. Anne's Fraternity, Windsor/Tecumseh, died January 8, 2020 at the age of 85

Madame Pierrette Marinoff Hébert, professed for 39 years with the Fraternity of St. Therese, Arvida, QC, died January 26, 2020 at the age of 86



Rev. Lester Bach OFM, Cap, USA, died February 2, 2020 at the age of 92.

Bert Van Berlo, ofs, former Minister of St. Anne's Fraternity in Tecumseh, died April 4, 2020

Fr. Raymond Tremblay, OFM Cap, died May 1, 2020, at the age of 99

Fr. Pierre Viau, OFM Cap, Provincial Vicar, died May 5, 2020 at the age of 77

Fr. Rodrigue Dion, OFM Cap, died May 8, 2020 at the age of 92

Fr. Grégoire Pâquet, OFM Cap, died May 9, 2020 at the age of 90

Fr. Jocelyn Mitchell, OFM Cap, died May 9, 2020 at the age of 85

MEMORIALS

Alicya Wlusek, ofs, from St. Anne's Fraternity, Windsor/Tecumseh, Ontario was the mother of Father Steve Wlusek who is the rector at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica in London, Ontario.

Bert Van Berlo, ofs held many council positions within the St. Anne's Fraternity, including Minister. He was very devoted to the Secular Franciscan Order as well as the St. Vincent De Paul Society. Bert suffered a stroke a while back, and has had many health issues over the past several years. Bert and his wife Lillian made their profession March 20, 1999.

Rev. Lester Bach O.F.M., Cap.

For most of his religious life, Lester was involved in ministry to the Secular Franciscan Order. He was also involved in formation ministry in the 1960s, as well as the preaching ministry beginning in the 1970s. His ministries took him to Huntington and Crown Point, IN, Saginaw, MI, Madison and Marathon, WI and Chicago, IL. Lester would have celebrated 70 years of religious life this summer.



Fr. Raymond Tremblay, OFM Cap,

by : Marie-France Valton , Fraternité de Roberval, Qc , profession in 1992 and Marcel Munger , Fraternité de St. Georges de Jonquière, Qc , profession in 1992

We are OFS members whom Fr. Raymond accompanied on their path of profession. What we know about him is his full involvement in the formation of future members of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS). His attention, his encouragement and especially his Franciscan example inspired us. His leadership with us and with the professed groups persuaded us to continue our involvement in the movement. We can also highlight his great availability to the Secular Franciscan order in Saguenay Lac St Jean.

We have always kept in mind his recommendations concerning the Order: *that it may remain first in our hearts .. That we cherish the Rule and understand it well ... and that we put the gospel in our lives wherever we are.*

We have learned that his modest origins (Quebec) have always been present throughout his life (especially the simplicity that he always cherished,) and which were the values of Saint Francis of Assisi. He was close to nature and his hikes at the Hermitage Saint Antoine du Lac Bouchette in Lac-St-Jean surprised us, even in old age we would find him at the top of the new tower St. Antoine de l'Ermitage. We're not sure how serious he was when he told us that he went there every day.

In his spare time he was a chocolate lover.

We wish to thank him for his dedication to us and ask him to watch over us and the Fraternities that he had served so well. He should not be forgotten. He has done too much good around him for over 80 years with the Capuchins.



Fr. Pierre Viau, OFM Cap was a provincial pastor of our province since 2017 and celebrated 60 years of religious life this year. He was Coordinator of the SIAF (Franciscan Intercommunity Animation Service) since 2006, director of the RRSE (Group for Corporate Social Responsibility) since 2007, and president of the Foundation of the YCW since 2016.

www.capucin.org



Fr. Rodrigue Dion, OFM Cap. *submitted by Fr. Alix Poulin, OFM Cap.*

RIP Brother Rodrigue Dion called "Father Dion" in Ottawa.

At the beginning of my life as a Capuchin, I knew him as the parish priest of the St-Thomas parish of Lac-Bouchette. Then in Ottawa, part of my fraternity for a dozen years. I have so many memories associated with him, a lifetime friend of Fr. Charles-Auguste Morin, recognized for his interpersonal skills in the parish, a man of order and consistency.

May he rest in peace!

