



ORDINIS FRANCISCANI SAECULARIS
St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, Welland.
Newsletter #163 October 2019

Minister's Letter

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ and Francis,

Thank you to Nellie for chairing the meeting on September 1st ! It was heartening to not have to be concerned for how the meeting would go, because I knew it was in capable hands!

Bonnie, although I was not there, you were in my prayers! So happy to hear that God had prepared such a special day for you! And many thanks to our fraternity members and Spiritual Assistant for their care and efforts!

In this letter I would like to share with you some thoughts on being a Secular Franciscan, especially with St. Francis' Feast Day coming up, the 60th Anniversary of Frank and Isobel Flood's professions and the National Spiritual Conference in Loretteville with the theme Francis and the Sultan.

Growing up, I discovered that I was very different from the average person around me. It was difficult to accept this, but eventually I did, and learned that the differences should not be a burden to be carried, but instead a tool for making a difference (that is the cross, is it not? A tool for making a difference). The Church and the Secular Franciscan Order helped me to grow into that kind of service, of trusting in God and saying 'yes' when I was asked to serve in any kind of capacity (often to the dismay of family and friends!). And being different did not mean I had to go it alone. St. Francis showed the way. He carried the love of God to all around him, even to God's creatures, but even went further and reached out to the non-Christians, expressing that he was willing to die to bring the love and Word of God to the Sultan and his people. St. Francis and the saints have an openness to God and doing his will. God's will manifests itself differently in all of our lives. For me, it was saying yes to serving on council at the many levels of the Order. The experience was/is challenging but enriching, sometimes painful but truly formative, and has very much deepened my sense of fraternity. I did not think that being fraternity Minister could add much to many years of experience, but it has after all! And I thank the fraternity members for sharing in that process and journey with me!

And so, Bonnie, there is still much for you to experience on this journey in the Secular Franciscan Order! God willing, we will walk with you, and as you grow, so will we!

Peace and all good,
Debbie

Coming Events:

- ~ Sun. Oct. 6th 1:30 p.m. Regular meeting at St. Kevin's Hospitality Room.
- ~ Mon. Sep. 30th Council Meeting 1:00 p.m. at St. Kevin's Hospitality Room.
- ~ Fri. Oct. 4th 1:00 p.m. in Burlington. 60th Anniv. of Profession for Frank & Isobel Flood. Rides are being organized, call Debbie for details.

Pope's Monthly Intentions: October

A Missionary "Spring" in the Church

That the breath of the Holy Spirit engender a new missionary "spring" in the Church.

Monthly Devotions: October

The Holy Rosary

The Holy Rosary (feast of the Holy Rosary, first Sunday in October). Leo XIII personally instituted this practice in an Encyclical (1 Sept., 1883) in which he admonished the faithful to dedicate the month of October to the Queen of the Holy Rosary in order to obtain through her intercession the grace that God may console and defend His Church in her sufferings, and for nineteen years he published an encyclical on this subject.

Profession Anniversaries

October 4th Zenaida Manalastas
20th

St. Francis Fraternity, Burlington

October 4th Isobel & Frank Flood.
60th

Congratulations, Peace & all Good!

Gospel to Rule &

General Constitutions Leaders

October: 6/19 Louise

November: 3/19 Anne

Birthdays

October 16th **Valerie Norris**

Happy Birthday,
Valerie!

November ...None this month

From our Spiritual Assistant:

These are two separate but related texts.

The first is a reflection of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

The annual celebration of the Transitus pulls our hearts to the hour of Francis' death (Mother of God, pray for us sinners... at the hour of our death) ... but his final words turn us to his life (Mother of God, pray for us sinners now)

When St. Francis says in his hour of death, "I have done what was mine to do, may God teach you what is yours," he teaches us to be more aware of how we live than of how we will die: not to make ourselves into perfect imitations of how Francis lived, (that was his to do) but, like him: to own our sinfulness... to humbly beg the prayers of our mother, Mary... to choose God's will in our life ("your will not mine be done") and to live with such joy that the light of Jesus (not our light) shines for all to see and glorify the Father. That is ours to do.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now..."

The second is a reflection of the Canadian Martyrs. This is included because it is the grain of wheat from which the text above (on St. Francis) grew.

"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

The grain of wheat that falls in the earth can mean actual physical death as in the deaths of the eight French Jesuits who we call the Canadian martyrs. They died in order to plant faith... here, for us. The Canadian Church and our faith are the fruit of their suffering and death.

But, their 'physical deaths' inspire us also to die (not physically) but in other ways: self-sacrifice and dying to selfishness and self: dying to apathy and hatred - so as to live in compassion and love.

Even if we are not called to give our physical lives, the Martyrs inspire us to give our hearts, our talents, our energy to the faith.

Without the ultimate sacrifice of life blood, our lives could bear so much fruit. By radiating the joy of a life of faith we could light the way to faith for the faithless. By loving others as God loves us we could bring comfort to the suffering, hope to the hopeless, consolation to the sorrowing. By being the hands and feet of Jesus we could bring healing to the sick. By refusing to ignore lies - we could bear the fruit of truth - for others and for our culture.

Our grain of wheat does not have to physically die in order to bear much fruit, but unless we are ready and willing to be martyrs, we won't bear the fruit in our lives that we were created to bear. The Canadian martyrs would not have had faith enough to suffer torture and death unless they already had faith enough to cross the sea, leaving comfort and security behind. They would not have faith to suffer and die if they were not already men who gave love and compassion for people they had not met - and who did not (yet) love them.

One remarkable story of persistent love even in the face of danger demonstrates life lived for others. In 1642, René Goupil, and Father Isaac Jogues were captured and... (at the village of Ossernenon,) they were both ritually tortured and Goupil was killed. After several months of captivity, Father Isaac Jogues was ransomed by Dutch traders from ... New Netherland (later Albany). Jogues returned for a time to France, but then sailed back to Quebec. In 1646, he and Jean de Lalande (while trying to achieve peace between the French and the Mohawk) visited the same village where Jogues had been tortured... and both Jogues and de laLande were tortured and killed there.

Let us be inspired not just by how the Canadian martyrs died, but by how they lived, so that they inspire us to live with greater courage and joy... powerfully committed to doing the most we can to do the will of God in our lives, and to live willing to be martyred ... if necessary, for love of God.

"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)

deacon Maurice, ofs

HOLY LAND 2019

With great joy I travelled again to the Holy Land, following “in the footsteps of Jesus”. Franciscans are everywhere in Israel, having held custody of the Holy Land for 800 years! I felt a close affinity for those places, and for those Franciscans I met each day.

We were blessed to be led by two Holy Cross priests, Fathers Vijai Amirtharaj and Norm Bordages, who concelebrated daily Mass at Capernaum, Magdala, Nazareth, Jericho, St. Peter in Galllicantu, Ein Karem, Bethlehem, and Notre Dame in Jerusalem.

The thousands of people from all over the world at Bethlehem and at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were unbelievable! Shoulder to shoulder, for hours on end, in 38’ heat!

I found great peace on the Mount of Beatitudes, awe on Mount Tabor, and deep sadness at the Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem. At St. Peter Gallicantu we descended into the pit where Jesus was held overnight following His arrest, and we listened to Psalm 88; this was a special moment for me – I felt His presence!

I felt Him also on the Sea of Galilee, and in the Jordan River, where I chose to re-affirm my Baptismal vows by full immersion.

Truly, this spiritual journey will continue to change the way I read scripture, and will deepen my faith life, and my desire to live the Gospel, in ways I can’t imagine.

Shalom, Israel! On Israel, peace!

Bonnie Vadaccino

Editor’s Note:

Many thanks to Bonnie for her piece on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Bonnie is a Candidate in the Franciscan fraternity of St. Mary of the Angels, Welland.



Stigmata of St. Francis

***St. Francis,
pray for us!***



I took this stained-glass window photo of St. Francis of Assisi in the Church of the Good Shepherd, in Jericho. There are many such photos, statues, and windows in Israel, since the Franciscans have Custody of the Holy Land. I liked this one, because it shows the Stigmata, and by chance, this pic was taken on the Feast of the Stigmata of St Francis.

Bonnie