



ORDINIS FRANCISCANI SAECULARIS

St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, Welland.

Newsletter #139 September 2017

Minister's letter Summer 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
St. Francis and St. Clare,

Blessings of peace and joy to my sisters and brothers in St. Francis and St. Clare!

So much to share with you in this newsletter! The month of August began with our Pilgrimage to various churches and chapels to celebrate in prayer the Feast of St. Mary of the Angels, or the Feast of the Portiuncula. We began with Mass at St. Kevin's Church, then proceeded to St. Anthony's Church, Rapelje Lodge to pray with Roly and Monique, St. Patrick's Church in Port Colborne, and then at Jericho House in Wainfleet, where Br. Bill gave us the history of the site, and prayed the Angelus with us outside when the chimes rang. We had lunch in Port Colborne to end a beautiful day of prayer.

The Feast of St. Clare was also spiritually enriching with the Eucharist at St. Kevin's followed by an excellent presentation by Deacon Maurice on the 'Mirror' referred to in St. Clare's writings. Those present went for breakfast at the Welland Café. Deacon Maurice, Louise and I then drove to Cobourg for a Picnic put on by the Oshawa fraternity in a park by the lake. It was a beautiful setting and day. We enjoyed seeing the OFS members there, along with our Regional Minister, Cathy Payne, and Fr. Peter Knaapen, Regional Spiritual Assistant. The fraternity had sponsored some young people to go to the Steubenville Conference in Toronto. The young men talked to the

gathering about their experiences. There was much food, fraternity and song!

On Saturday, August 26th, the newly elected TRF Council met at St. Bonaventure's Church in Toronto for the first time since the Chapter. I will share some of our discussions with you at the next meeting on Sunday, September 3rd, but will tell you that there are plans to celebrate two very special anniversaries next year: the 25th Anniversary of the Trillium Regional Fraternity; and the 40th Anniversary of our Rule of 1978. Thanks Louise for joining us!

Debbie

Dates to remember

► Sun. Sep. 3rd

Regular meeting: 1:30 p.m.
St. Kevin's Hospitality room.

► Monday, September 11:

Council Meeting at 1:00 p.m.
St. Kevin's Hospitality room.

► Monday, September 18:

Formation Session at 1:00 p.m.
The Franciscan Journey, Chapter 8
St. Kevin's Hospitality room.

There are no Birthdays or Profession Anniversaries this month.

Pope Francis'

Prayer Intentions for September

Parishes

That our parishes, animated by a missionary spirit, may be places where faith is communicated and charity is seen.



Deacon Maurice Spiritual Assistant

I will sing of your salvation ... ¹⁵

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all day long... I will sing of your salvation

In today's Gospel, ^(Mark 6. 17-29) because John the Baptist had spoken the truth to King Herod and Herodias (Herod's brother's wife) - John the Baptist was brutally martyred ... That doesn't sound too inviting - yet one of the important teachings of this Gospel text is that each of us (prophets and ordinary disciples alike) is responsible for proclaiming the Good News: in truth - consistently, courageously and fully - regardless of the response we meet.

St. Paul re-iterates this teaching in his second letter to Timothy: "*I solemnly urge you: ²proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience ... endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.*" ⁽²

Tim. 4.1..5)



Blessing of Saint Clare

What you hold,
may you always hold.
What you do,
may you always do
and never abandon.
But with swift pace,
light step, unswerving feet,
so that even your steps
stir up no dust,
may you go forward securely,
joyfully and swiftly,
on the path of prudent
happiness,
not believing anything,
not agreeing with anything,
that would dissuade you
from this resolution
or that would place
a stumbling block for you
on the way,
so that you may offer your
vows to the Most High in the
pursuit of that perfection to
which the Spirit of God has
called you.

The Gospels are like symphonies... many parts blending together. When we look at today's text in its context we see a rich balance between joy and danger. Today's text is inserted into the middle of the account of Jesus' sending Apostles out (two by two) to preach.

Just before the account of the martyrdom of John, Jesus is sending them out to evangelize... *(no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹... sandals [but not] two tunics.)* (Mark 6.7-12)

And right after the account of the martyrdom of John, Jesus' Apostles return: tired, excited and triumphant: *"The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.'* (Mark 6.30-31)

So ... the Gospel has intentionally set the martyrdom of John the Baptist for preaching the truth as a counterbalance to the excitement and joy of preaching the Good News...

The message for us is to trust in Jesus - to proclaim the Gospel knowing that there will be both joy and hardship; knowing that there is always joy, even when there is danger and hardship... The Gospel acclamation is *Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice sake. The kingdom of heaven is theirs.* (Matthew 5.10) Even our suffering for the Gospel is a joy. Even if (like John the Baptist) we are to be

martyred for proclaiming the Good News this would be joy (in fact, St Francis of Assisi would call it 'Perfect Joy' to *"be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; ... [to] endure suffering... [to] carry out your ministry fully.*

The significant contrast between the Apostles' experience in Mark 6 and John the Baptists' is community. Jesus wants His disciples to be in community. He sends us out two by two; we come back together to share with each other and with Jesus; Jesus takes us away *'all together'* for rest, and prayer, and retreat - before we go on again together. But in today's Gospel, John the Baptist was isolated - by himself - in prison (not by his own choice, but by Herod's evil.) And yet, even there he was not alone, and he was not afraid

There is a sadly ironic line in the Gospel today about John's isolation, ⁹*When John's disciples heard about his death, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.* His disciples reconnected John with the community and kept his memory alive - together. We need to be in community.

We need each other for support and companionship in joyful times and in sad ...and we need to preach the Good News together - in favourable times and in unfavourable times **WE** will sing of your salvation ... ¹⁵ **OUR** mouthS will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all day long... **WE** will sing of your salvation.