



*St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity
Cornwall, P.E.I.*

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER
March 2021**

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COVID-19 Can Lead Us to a Better World

If there's one lesson we have learned from the current pandemic, it is that we are all connected to each other. What happens to one of us affects all of us. I believe this is the message that Jesus is teaching us in Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."



In his (2020) Easter message, Pope Francis said, "I hope that this time of danger will free us from operating on automatic pilot, shake our sleepy consciences, and allow a humanist and ecological conversion that puts an end to the idolatry of money and places human life and dignity at the center." COVID-19 has demonstrated the power of our collective will when we agree on what is important.

Pope Francis also encouraged political leaders to "work actively for the common good." St. Francis viewed the earth and all nature as God's creation, a place of continual incarnation. St. Bonaventure tells us that how we choose and what we choose make a difference—first in what we become by our choices and second in what the world becomes by those same choices.

At some point, this crisis will end and then we will have a choice: Do we want to go back to the same "normal" of inequality, discrimination, and separation? Or, do we follow Pope Francis and work to do better?

We can come through this with a better appreciation of all of God's creation. We can choose to live simply and full of gratitude as St. Francis taught us. Knowing how fragile life is, we can live more intentionally. We have the opportunity to come together with God to create a new normal, one based on the interconnectedness of all creation. But first we must rethink who we are. We need to change our paradigm; as Mark says simply, "No one pours new wine into old wineskins" (2:22).

(Excerpt from an article by Patrick Carolan, former Executive Director of FAN - Franciscan Action Network, *St. Anthony Messenger*, September 2020)

Ongoing Formation - March, 2021

Patris Corde – With a Father’s Heart

During the pandemic, we have experience, amid the crisis, how “our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history.

Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone.

*(Meditation in the Time of Pandemic,
L’Osservatore Romano, 27 March 2020)*



Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that the ones who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

(Submitted by Doug Clorey)

Lenten Reflections



During this Season of Lent, and during this special Year of St. Joseph, the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada invites all to take some time to pause and join our brothers and sisters from the Quebec/Ontario and Atlantic areas for the 2nd Zoom Regional Lenten Reflection on:

Saturday morning, March 20, 2021, from 11:00 am to 12 noon AST, local time on PEI.

This Lenten program is being organized by Fr. Benny Vincent, OFM Cap, Minister Provincial and Regional Spiritual Assistant for Eastern Canada, and Aurora Osdon, OFS. Again, there will be three presenters giving Lenten meditations to consider in our observance of the Lenten Season.

Thank you to all who joined the Regional Lenten Reflection on February 20th and a special thank you to Marion Clorey, a member of our fraternity, who was one of the presenters.

Everyone who participated in the February 20th Lenten Reflection will be provided with the link to the Zoom call. Anyone who was unable to participate on February 20th but wishes to join the March 20th ZOOM call, please advise Tom Wilkinson who will ensure that you receive the link.

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

Alleviating Poverty

Please refer to Attachment 1 at the end of this newsletter for the JPIC article which describes current and proposed programs for alleviating poverty in our society, with specific references to Prince Edward Island.



(Submitted by Michael Cassidy)

News from Brother Leo Fraternity



In recognition of Pope Francis' proclamation of 2021 as the year of St. Joseph, Brother Leo Fraternity is excited to have its spring retreat based on his Apostolic Letter on St. Joseph - "Patris Corde" (With a Father's Heart). With St. Francis being all about humility and littleness, St. Joseph must have been a favorite model for him as he can be for us. As plans progress, we will let you know.

We are very appreciative to Mother Fraternity (Formation Director Martha) for inviting our formation director and our lone candidate to participate in formation sessions. The sense of community for her is much appreciated. We hope your meeting in June will be face-to-face for it is our annual visit to "Mother".

Have a happy and peace-filled Lent!

Your Brothers and Sisters of Brother Leo Fraternity

(Submitted by Claudia Batchilder)

Farewell to Bishop Richard Grecco

Thanks to Gerry Gabriel, Tom Wilkinson had the opportunity to speak with Bishop Richard Grecco on Thursday, March 4th, the last day of his term as Bishop of Charlottetown. Tom presented him with one of Ruth's beautiful cards, and in it, thanked him for his eleven years of ministry in the diocese and especially for his support and kindness of our Secular Franciscan vocation and action. He was assured of the daily prayers of our members.

Please remember Bishop Grecco as he begins several months of chemotherapy treatment. He said, "I had made some plans for my retirement but it is now evident that the Lord has another plan for me. I will just allow His plan to unfold and follow and see where it takes us". A true statement of faith and commitment to God's Holy Will!



Bishop Richard addressing St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Cornwall, PE (April, 2019)

Let us all keep the Bishop in our prayers each day as he embarks on this difficult journey. Thank You!

(Submitted by Tom Wilkinson)

February Birthday

March 24	Marion Marshall
March 31	Maureen Goodick

Happy Birthday, Marion and Maureen. Blessings on you and your family!



Newsletter

Newsletter items are always welcome. You may send them before the last Wednesday of the month to Doug Clorey at jdclorey@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Fraternity Meeting - **Sunday, March 14th at 2:00PM.**

Fraternity members will be informed by email or telephone on Wednesday evening, March 10th, if the meeting will be held face-to-face or via Zoom.

2021 Fraternity Meetings

Sunday, March 14	2-4 p.m.
Sunday, April 11	7-9 p.m.
Sunday, May 2	7-9 p.m. (Note: the first Sunday of the month)
Sunday, June 13	7-9 p.m.
Sunday, July 11	7-9 p.m.

August (Date TBD): Fraternity Picnic

September 10-12: Fraternity Retreat (Our Lady of Hope Retreat Centre)

Sunday, October 3	7-9 p.m. (Note: the first Sunday of the month)
Sunday, November 14	2-4 p.m.
Sunday, December 12	2-4 p.m.

Mark your calendars!!

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
From the St. Francis of Assisi JPIC Team,
March, 2021
Alleviating Poverty

Defining Poverty

The **poverty line** in 2017 for a lone parent with one child was \$30,029. On **PEI**, this family received \$21,290 from social assistance for a gap of \$8,739. The **poverty line** for a **PEI** couple with one child was \$36,778. Families of four in most urban centres in Canada would have to have total incomes in excess of **\$60,000** to escape poverty. On PEI, 1 child in 5 lives below the poverty line.

Social Assistance/Welfare

Social assistance refers to the current set of programs that federal and provincial governments have developed to financially help low-income individuals and families. Social Assistance will assist in paying for:

- food
- shelter
- medications
- basic dental
- glasses
- funeral costs

Total annual welfare incomes in 2019 ranged from \$11,245 for the single person considered employable to \$34,938 for the couple with two children.

Alternatives to the current level of Social Assistance

1. **Basic Income Guarantee (BIG):** BIG refers to a program whereby the government guarantees that everyone is provided with an income sufficient enough to meet basic needs. On PEI, the guarantee for a single adult is set at \$18,260. The guarantee for a two-person family is \$25,747.
 - In November, 2020, an all-party committee of MLAs recommended that the PEI government work with the federal government to provide a **full BIG program** for 50,000 eligible recipients (39% of the population) at an estimated net cost of \$260 million. This program would eliminate social assistance.
 - If the federal government is unwilling to support a full BIG program, then the all-party committee recommended that PEI initiate a **pilot BIG program** involving approximately 3500 randomly selected eligible participants at a cost of \$23 million. Social assistance programs would remain in place for the duration of the pilot.
 - When the PEI legislature resumed sitting on February 25, 2021, no mention was made of these two BIG recommendations.
 - A pilot BIG programs took place with 30% of the population of Dauphin, MB from 1974-1978 with positive results. Ontario launched a BIG pilot project in Hamilton, Lindsay and Thunder Bay in 2018. This 3-year pilot cost \$50M a year and reached 4,000 households, but it was eliminated after one year when a new party was elected.
 - Critics of a BIG program argue that the cost is prohibitive, that it threatens the network of social assistance and that the governing party could reduce or eliminate the program to meet its budgetary goals.

- 2. Increase Social Assistance:** Most current measures of poverty levels tend to underestimate the actual number of people experiencing poverty. A more accurate determination of poverty levels and a corresponding increase in allotments for food, housing, etc. would lift more people above the poverty line. The Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce suggests that an analysis be done to demonstrate how a costly program like BIG would achieve successes that existing programs could not if they were more adequately funded or adjusted.
- 3. Comprehensive Income Security:** The British Columbia government appointed an independent panel of economic and public policy experts to explore the idea of a Basic Income Guarantee for that province. In its report of Dec. 28, 2020, the panel recommended against adopting a BIG program. It noted that “the needs of people in our society are too diverse to be reflectively answered simply with a cheque from the government.” The panel argues that BIG is too costly and very individualistic. It advocates for approaches that emphasize social interactions and cooperation.
- 4. Job Guarantee Initiative (JGI):** JGI is a proposal to guarantee a job with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations, and retirement security to all people. JGI is a major component of the Green New Deal (GND), a major international endeavour for action on climate change. JGI offers decent jobs at a decent pay to the most disadvantaged of our society and to all who wish to work. This is proving to be an effective and popular program in parts of Europe, Asia, South Africa and South America. In 2020, the USA House of Representatives (Democratic majority) approved the GND program but the proposal was not approved by the Senate (Republican majority).