

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

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

July 2020

VOLUME XXXII NO. 7

A Few Words from the Minister

After months of lockdown, we now see the Confederation Bridge open to our Atlantic Canadian family members and friends, while Islanders venture off the Island to visit family and friends in other parts of our region. The first weekend of July sees churches across PEI opening their doors to worshippers, although to a maximum of only 50 persons. Slowly our communities are experiencing a cautious re-awakening.



Since the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, we Secular Franciscans have been unable to meet together other than through Zoom. Catholics have been unable to gather for Mass and worship and have been limited to “watching” Mass on television or live-streaming, and praying in the quiet of their homes. Families and communities have been restricted in gathering together for socializing, for play or for reaching out to each other in many ways.

As our families, communities, churches and businesses are allowed to gradually re-awaken to our new reality, will we be able to allow ourselves to re-awaken spiritually to the challenges and limitations that await us? Will our new reality continue to encourage within each of us that deep desire to come together and experience the true presence of the Lord in the Word, Eucharist and in each other gathered around the table of the Lord?

As we plan to gather together as fraternity on Sunday, July 12th at 7 PM, I encourage each of us to pray that Catholics everywhere will experience the call to return to the Sacraments in a spirit of joy and renewal. May we all return with as much enthusiasm as those coming to visit us and those of us rushing to see loved ones off-Island.

“Come to me.....and I will give you rest.” (Mt. 11:18)

Tom Wilkinson, OFS

July Fraternity Meeting - IMPORTANT

The July fraternity meeting will be held on **Sunday, July 12th at 7:00PM at St. Francis of Assisi Church hall (basement)**. The meeting will include Evening Prayer, on-going formation with Marion C, a JPIC Moment and one or two short items of business. The meeting place will be arranged in such a way that respects safe distancing. There will be no singing nor partaking in food. However, it will be wonderful to see everyone and to enjoy a very special time of fraternal joy.

Formation

Jesus our Centre

When Francis became aware that he was made in God's image and that God loved him to the core, his life was transformed. God's love changed everything. This love included embracing the darker parts of himself - the belief that God loved him even with his flaws was empowering for Francis.

While he felt the presence of the "living and active person of Christ" (ofs rule, art. 5) in his very self, he was moved to encounter the presence of Christ in others. He could embrace the leper because he had first embraced the leper within himself. This does not mean he no longer felt repulsion, but that sense of the love of God overwhelmed his heart and usurped the repulsion.



Jesus is the first of many brothers and sisters. (ofs rule art.13 based on Romans 8:29) If Jesus is our brother, then everyone we meet is a brother or sister and deserves to be treated as such. The joy of this indescribable love of Jesus is not the whole story. There is also the pain and sorrow in this unconditional love of Jesus when he gives his life for us.

Invitation to Reflect:

1. Read chapter 32, *The Way of St. Francis* (Bodo)
2. Reflect on Phillipians 2:5-8
3. Reflect on ofs Rule: Articles 5&13
4. Consider the following questions:
 - a) Reflecting on current events in the world focussing on racism, what should our response be as Secular Franciscans?
 - b) How do you react when you hear "you are made in God's image"?
 - c) Who are the lepers in your life? Are you able to embrace them despite your sense of repulsion?

(Submitted by Marion Clorey)

Ongoing Formation

Following the June fraternity meeting, small groups met, via Zoom, to further reflect on the topic of spiritual intimacy. The underlying message from the groups' meditation and discussions seems to be that "God is Love" and also that "God is incomprehensible". God is beyond anything that we can describe. Is it possible that the only language appropriate to address God is Silence? One mystic says: ... "if you wish to communicate with God, don't say anything at all. God will listen."



Group Sharing:

- We all carried our prayer into our daily activity, although our inspiration was not entirely on the phrase: "My God and My All". One person chose a mantra (Maranatha, Come, Lord Jesus); another person was called to use the prayer provided; another two found that they were reminded constantly of Garry Doiron (he spoke these words aloud at Mass.) Everyone found the exercise expanded their sense of presence.
- Expanding the normal definition of the word "poverty" to radical trust in God."
- Seeing God in our neighbor- modern day lepers
- Francis so loved God that he was able to love ALL that came from God.
- All groups discussed the concept that the God whom Francis discovered is a God who shows himself in poor, humble, fragile human flesh
- Reminded of Mother Teresa - always giving-seeing Christ in the people she cared for – individuals panhandling on the street; those struggling with active addictions.
- Lady Poverty is being able to empty ourselves of everything and letting God into our lives. It is getting rid of things, changing our attitude towards others, sharing with others, listening, asking God for help, etc.
- Constant challenge to continue to look for the goodness in people
- In poverty, and especially in the aloneness that accompanied COVID-19 lockdown, everyone sensed a closer intimacy with God, and a state of freedom.
- God is not "out there" but within... intimacy with God wears a human face.
- When I speak out loud, my thoughts, it makes them more real.
- It is more difficult to detach when we are healthy and feeling in control.

Profession of Nancy Murphy

Nancy Murphy will make her temporary profession to the Secular Franciscan Order during the fraternity's Annual Picnic at Joan McDonald's cottage. However, please note that the date for the fraternity's annual picnic has been changed to **August 16, 2020, the third Sunday in August, beginning at 3:00PM.**



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

KINDNESS

(Adapted by Sherrill Guimond from the *12 Weeks of Franciscan Peace* by Carolyn D. Townes)



Being kind is a choice we must make each and every day.

Kindness is a quality of being friendly, generous and considerate. We often think it is easy to be kind. Since the COVID 19 pandemic started, we see many acts of kindness and people helping others in need. It could be a simple smile at the grocery store, a phone call to a friend or family member, or to someone who is living alone or someone who is sick.

It can be quite difficult to be kind to others when they are unkind to us. We do not know why people show unkindness but it is up to us to show kindness to them. We must choose to behave as Jesus in the manner of Saint Francis.

Mother Theresa said, "I would rather make mistakes in kindness and compassion than work miracles in unkindness and hardness."

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer. "

Reflection: What is one small act of kindness you can do?

Departure of Kathleen May

Kathleen May, a formation candidate with St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, has made the difficult decision to give up her employment on PEI and relocate to Florida in order to be with her father who now requires considerable home care. Happily, Kathleen will continue participating in the fraternity's initial formation program, joining in the team meetings through the means of modern technology.

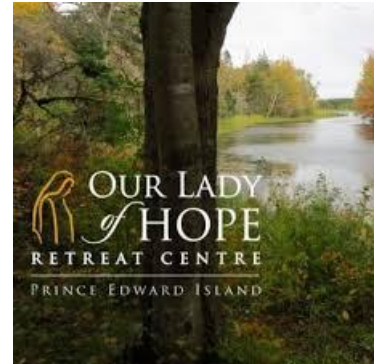
There are a number of Secular Franciscan fraternities in the area of Florida in which she will be located; however, until a transfer takes place, we will continue to joyfully claim her as our own. In the meantime, please keep Kathleen and her family in your thoughts and prayers. We will miss you, Kathleen.

Annual Fraternity Retreat 2020

The St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity annual retreat is scheduled for

**September 25-27, 2020
at Our Lady of Hope Retreat Centre
in Bayview, PEI.**

The retreat will begin at 6 pm on Friday evening and conclude at 1 pm on Sunday (after lunch). Our retreat leader is **Sr. Marianna Jung, FMM** who works in St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Park Extension (Montreal). The theme of the retreat is **The Life and Spirituality of St. Clare.**



Note: We are still hopeful that we will be able to gather for our annual retreat on September 25-27, 2020. Please pray that we will be able to come together for this important time of prayer and reflection.

July Birthday

July 16 Mary Hagen

Happy Birthday, Mary. 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 jdclcorey@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Fraternity Meeting - **Sunday, July 12th at 7:00PM at St. Francis of Assisi Church hall (basement).**