

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

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER
November 2020

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Franciscan Values

Franciscan charisms are meant to translate into a Franciscan's way of life. The following are examples of core values that flow from living the Franciscan charisms.

We value relationships. We are called to live out our lives in relationship because God is relational.

We value diversity and inclusivity. Simply put, we welcome all.

We trust in the providence of God. We recognize that every individual is specifically gifted and that God is working all things for good.

We strive to provide joyful service to others. When we present a face of joy and hope to the hurting or lonely, we share the same energy that God wants for all of us.

We strive to hear and respond to the voice of the under-heard. We use our privilege and the strength of community to support others whose voices are under-heard, unheard or muted.

We value proactive collaboration and cooperation in bringing about better results. Greater impact can occur when we bring all our wisdom, knowledge, and skills together, yet retaining our own individual responsibility.

We strive to practice prayerful discernment. Prayerful discernment makes use of our logic, intuition, imagination and emotions. It helps us to listen and to be in harmony with God's desires.

We strive to cooperate with the Spirit. We work together cooperatively with the Holy Spirit so people can hear the Gospel and lives can be transformed.

We recognize that the results of our efforts are always a gift from God. We don't own the results; God does.

(Adapted from "Franciscan Order and Values", Franciscan Renewal Centre operated by the OFM Frairs of the USA Province of Santa Barbara)

Franciscan Charisms



The following are selected thoughts that have surfaced from discussion within the small sharing groups regarding our Franciscan charisms, those most valued and those found challenging.

One group suggested that our Franciscan Charisms are interconnected, and provide inspiration and direction to us. Ultimately, the personal challenge is in living these charisms out in our daily lives.

Another group found being Christocentric in the way that Francis emulated Christ very challenging, and that living in community (i.e. fraternity) is central to our Franciscan charism.

A third group offered that the Franciscan Charisms are both valuable and valued, but it is a tremendous challenge to live them, and it is only going through the Cross (one of our charisms), that we can experience the joy of the Resurrection.

A fourth group indicated that our Christocentric charism, seeing the world through Christ's eyes, and loving the world through His heart, was the most valued. This group also commented that all our other charisms are connected through the charism of creation. Members also identified charisms that were particularly challenging, such as the Cross, and being a peace-maker.

Finally, a fifth group saw Humility, Poverty and Peace-making as most valued. This group suggested that being Joyful when there is so much suffering in those around us can indeed be a challenge.

It is obvious from the feedback that people really enjoyed their small group discussions about the Franciscan charisms.

A Prayer About Franciscan Charisms by Janet McDonald

Francis, keep us centred on Christ through the Cross. May we live in his image as you did. God took on human form and taught us love, and gave us the Eucharist to give us strength and hope. Thank you, Francis, for giving us community and showing us a love of all creation. Amen

Ongoing Formation – November 2020

The theme of ongoing formation at the November meeting is "Obedience." In preparation, please:

- Read chapter 12, Obedience, in *The Way of St. Francis* by Murray Bodo;
- Read article 10 of the OFS Rule;
- Reflect on John 13:34 (the what) and John 14:1-30 (the how); and
- Bring a pen or pencil to the fraternity meeting.



Understanding the Gap

Over the past year, the Atlantic Area of the OFS Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, and our fraternity, have been engaged in the examination and consideration of matters regarding young adults as we have explored the theme “Bridging The Gap”. Thanks to you, our members, and especially the leadership and writing skills of Martha Gabriel, our fraternity has prepared the final report for submission to the Regional Fraternity, including

suggestions and recommendations on options we might consider as we move forward and seek opportunities to engage and journey with young adults in our community of PEI.

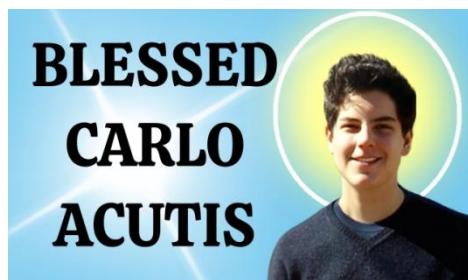
This report shares the process that our fraternity went through as we explored this theme and is included in this newsletter as Attachment 1. It includes the actions that the council is adopting as the fraternity's next steps.



In the midst of our fraternity's discussions, Pope Francis announced that a 15 year old Italian youth, Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006, has been beatified and is now Blessed Carlo Acutis. This occurred at a special Mass held at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi on October 10th 2020.

As we move forward with our quest to explore opportunities and journey with young people, and others, let us place these discussions and actions under the guidance of Blessed Carlo Acutis. Meanwhile, we might also take time to examine his life and example and how these might bear directly on our mission. All are encouraged to reach out in prayer to Blessed Carlo for his intercession and guidance in these matters.

Blessed Carlo Acutis



Born and baptized in London, England in 1991, his mother was Italian and his father was of Irish/Polish roots. The family moved to Milan, Italy when Carlo was only four months old. Although his parents were not very fervent, from a very early age, Carlo had a great interest and insistence in visiting churches. Since receiving his First Communion at age 7, he never missed daily Mass or receiving Holy Communion. Before and after Mass, he

always tried to pray in front of the tabernacle to worship our Lord, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lady was his great confidant and he never failed to honour her by reciting the Rosary daily.

As a youngster and teenager, Carlo was very involved in school activities and in athletics. He was especially gifted at anything related to computers and his friends and many adults in the computer engineering field considered him a genius in these areas. Carlo would often say, *“Our aim has to be the infinite and not the finite. The infinite is our homeland. We have always been expected in Heaven”*.

Carlo put the sacrament of the Eucharist at the centre of his life and called it “*my highway to heaven*”. His love of Jesus truly present in the Blessed Sacrament led him to research the many examples of miracles when people actually witnessed this presence physically in the Eucharist. He put together a collection of virtual panels with texts and photographs recounting the events documented in 20 countries. Carlo was convinced that this on-line museum of miracles, now translated into 12 languages, would attract young people back to the church. These panels have travelled to parishes and universities campuses around the world.



In 2006, Carlo’s life took a tragic turn when he was diagnosed with an acute and aggressive form of leukaemia. Within a week, his immune system collapsed and on October 12th he suffered a brain haemorrhage, which took his life. As he was dying, he confided to his doctors, “*I’m happy to die because I’ve lived my life without wasting even a minute of it doing things that wouldn’t have pleased God.*” Would that we could say the same!

Carlo is buried in the parish church of Sancta Maria Maggiore, Assisi, where he spent many summers as a youth and grew to love and admire St. Francis of Assisi.

Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us and for the young adults of our diocese!

Well4Africa Project

The Well4Africa project, sponsored by the National Fraternity of Canada, has now exceeded its fund raising goal, thanks to the generous contributions of Secular Franciscans from across Canada, including our own fraternity who contributed \$1000 towards this project.



A water well will be built at the Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre in Zimbabwe, Africa. Mutemwa is a very special place situated in Mashonaland, in the Eastern Province of Zimbabwe where John Bradburne, a Secular Franciscan from United Kingdom, lived for the last 10 years of his life, caring for the community there who were living with the devastating effects of leprosy. John was killed during the Zimbabwe independence war in 1979 and was immediately considered a saint by the local community. His beatification cause is in the process and his spiritual journey is described in the book “Strange Vagabond of God”.

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Myths and Facts about Refugees in Canada (Part 2)

5. **Myth:** Refugee health care costs are a burden to Canadians.

Fact: The cost of health care for refugees and refugee claimants is only a fraction of that of other Canadians. Health care costs are disproportionately higher for the elderly: the average age of refugees is much lower than that of Canadians.



6. **Myth:** Canada does not need more immigrants

Fact: Canada depends on immigrants – unlike many other countries, it actively seeks out and recruits economic immigrants. Business groups estimate that, if Canada were to close its doors to immigrants, our economy would shrink significantly.

7. **Myth:** Refugees receive more financial support than pensioners.

Fact: Refugees do not get more financial assistance from the federal government than Canadian pensioners. Refugees come to Canada in a variety of different ways. Privately sponsored refugees are financially supported by the sponsoring citizens and are not eligible for any provincial social assistance for the first 12 months. Government sponsored refugees will receive only minimal financial support from the federal government for up to one year to meet basic food and shelter costs.

8. **Myth:** Refugee claimants are abusing Canada's generosity.

Fact: Refugee claimants are not abusing Canada's generosity. Canada has a legal obligation to provide protection to refugees and to respect their rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is not a matter of generosity. Canada has a history and a strong tradition of social justice and human rights..

Remembering Our Deceased Fraternity Members

November 29th is a special feast day for all Franciscans. On this day in 1223, the definitive Rule of Life of St. Francis of Assisi was approved by Pope Honorius III. To commemorate the November 29, 1223 approval of the Rule of Life, each year on that date, all deceased Franciscans are remembered around the world, as we celebrate the Feast of All of the Saints of the Order. Although St. Francis died in 1226, he left the Franciscan Order, with over 800 years of saints, as his legacy.

Planning is currently underway to have an event with our fraternity on November 29th that will celebrate our Franciscan brothers and sisters who have been welcomed into eternal life by Sister Death. Details to follow.



2021 Fraternity Retreat

The St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity annual retreat will be held on

September 10-12, 2021 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). This retreat date is earlier than those of past years and hopefully will provide us with warmer weather and the opportunity for other fraternities to join us.

Our **retreat leader is Sr. Marianna Jung, FMM** who works in St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Park Extension (Montreal). Sister Marianna is a member of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), an international congregation in the church that is active in Quebec as well as other parts of Canada.

The **theme** of the retreat is **The Life and Spirituality of St. Clare**. This theme was recommended by many of the participants of our 2019 retreat. When Sr. Marianna gives retreats and workshops, she always tries to examine and emphasize practical applications to our individual lives. As the Blessed Sacrament is a pillar of the spirituality of St. Clare, Sr. Marianna is preparing a liturgy for one hour of **Adoration**, which we will share together during our retreat weekend.

Registration forms for the retreat will be available in June, 2021.

November Birthdays

November 1	Charlie McDonald
November 3	Nasser Saad
November 18	Doug Clorey
November 21	Lucia Gray

Happy Birthday everyone. 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 NOTE CHANGE IN TIME OF MONTHLY MEETING

Fraternity Meeting - **Sunday, November 8th at 2:00PM at St. Francis of Assisi Church hall (basement).** Meeting setup will respect social distancing. **Everyone is expected to wear a mask.** There will be no food at this meeting.

St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Cornwall PEI
Response to *Bridging the Gap*
Submitted to The Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, Atlantic Area

The original discussion about *Bridging the Gap* was held at an Atlantic Area meeting of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada in Amherst, Nova Scotia in September 2019.

Representatives from a number of Atlantic fraternities were present for this panel presentation and discussion. Subsequent to that meeting, the Vice Minister, Atlantic called upon those who had attended the Area meeting to return to their fraternities, and discuss the ideas and challenges that were presented on this topic in Amherst.

To address this request, the Council of St. Francis of Assisi fraternity invited the Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator/ Assistant UPEI Campus Minister to a Council meeting to discuss initiatives that were currently being offered for young adults in our Diocese. Subsequent to that discussion, Council made a presentation about *Bridging the Gap* at a fraternity meeting; the Coordinator was also invited to that meeting to share the information about young people in the Diocese with all of our members. After that fraternity meeting, five small discussion groups were held from September 21, 2020 to September 30, 2020 to discuss the issues. During the course of these discussions, fraternity members shared their answers to the questions:

- Who are our young adults?
- For what are they searching?
- What insights did you come away with from conversations you have had with young adults?
- What have they revealed to you about the world in which they live, their needs, their fears, and their hopes?
- How is the Spirit calling us to respond?

20 Secular Franciscans were involved in these discussions: 18 members from St. Francis of Assisi fraternity, and 2 members from Brother Leo fraternity. The raw data has been synthesized, and this synthesis was presented to the St. Francis of Assisi Council for their consideration. Council used this information to develop an answer to the challenge of *Bridging the Gap*. As requested, this information will be shared with the Vice Minister, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada.

Who are our young adults?

It is important to note that most young adults with whom we have contacts are members of our own families – sons, daughters, nieces and nephews. Younger relatives who were engaged with all of the challenges of being in relationships, taking on new responsibilities like families, and trying to find a place of stability as they find their place in the world formed the group under consideration here. This is our field of influence.

A caveat: While people between the ages of 18-35 are usually considered to be young adults, some felt that this categorization is not always useful as older adults may have a very youthful

view of life while some younger adults may be quite staid in this respect. Spiritual maturity varies by person.

Members of one group discussed a diversity of experiences with young adults: from the Catholic Christian Outlook (CCO) and the Catholic Young Adult Network (CYAN) to discussions with many nieces and nephews, to listening to participants at two Young Adult Summits, to meeting young people “travelling the world” in search of meaning and purpose in their lives.

For what are young adults searching?

When young adults go to university or college, or go out into the world of work or go traveling, part of their task is to determine who they are, and what they want. In the end, we believe that young adults are searching for happiness, although they do not want to achieve it at the cost of causing pain or damage to others or to nature.

Young people are earnest, and are striving to achieve a wide variety of life goals. They are often searchers, looking for how they can move forward in their lives, searching for employment or a career, for security, health care, and connection to others and the planet. They may be searching for a partner, they may want to settle down and start a family—to move forward from being in a preparation period for their lives, to actually living their lives. They also remain concerned about the bigger issues that face the world: ecology, justice, love, beauty and joy.

Young adults are trying to find balance in a world with more complex choices than ever. They may be searching for things of value; many young people look at different world traditions to help them get in touch with themselves. They want to love and be loved. This leads them to explore their values. Young adults frequently show their concern for others, and they often see things in a different light from the way older adults see them. They want to be environmentally responsible, and to be kind to others (“pay it forward”). Many of them are prepared to make hard choices in order to be true to themselves.

A number of older adults felt it would be good to directly ask young adults what they want *in a group setting*. For instance, would it be possible to attend a Catholic Studies class to ask young adults for their ideas? We cannot define what they are searching for without directly asking them. We often act as if we know what they need. For example, we may believe they need to go to church and receive the sacraments. But if we adhere to principles of adult education, we should ask: *who needs what as defined by whom?*

How do young people see the Church?

It was clear from the discussion that some young adults are very much involved in their faith:

- Actively participating at Mass as lectors or offering the Prayers of the Faithful
- Engaging in Eucharistic Adoration celebrations
- Seeking to live their faith more deeply through spiritual direction
- Organizing the Alpha Program for others

However not all young adults are engaged with their faith:

- Some young adults are searching for meaning in non-Church activities/interests

- Some young adults even though raised in strong Catholic families have drifted away from the Church, and do not participate in Church celebrations at all. Some find Church activities boring.
- It may be said that some young adults have a depth of spirituality but are not religious, that is, they are not engaged with Church activities. Many young people simply do not see that the Church, as organized religion, has a place or impact in their lives.
- Young people have faith and morals; however, they do not see church as the way to express their faith. Young adults may be searching for justice and social justice, but not necessarily in the context of Church.
- However, some of these young adults who were once disassociated from Church are coming back when they have young families

What insights did you come away with from conversations you have had with young adults?

Young adults are interested in making the world a more peaceful place, caring for the disenfranchised and those in need, and safe guarding our planet. Although they are probably unaware of this close connection, many may actually hold a Franciscan perspective about the world around them.

Many share a fear of the future and what it holds for them, including major concerns with the current pandemic, the political environment and the sense of not having a voice to effect change. Many young adults are re-assessing what life is all about and wanting to blend ambition with existence, that is, that ambition can flourish without exploiting people and the planet.

We are not inclusive as a Church—so many people are denied sacraments. When Jesus passed the bread at the Last Supper, He said, “All of you take and eat”. He didn’t say “all of you, except you because you are in a relationship with your same sex partner, or you, because you divorced your wife!” The Church needs to rebuild because the exclusion is so profound – this does not sit well with young people.

It is important for people to establish personal connections with each other, and to learn the name of the other. Members of the group mused about what it means when people **cannot** remember your name. One person recounted a story told at the fraternity meeting, where one person began to attend a new parish, but did not feel rooted in that parish at all —until someone in the parish noticed her, and called her by name. Being recognized and named is very important to all of us.

There are often vast differences in the ways and language that young people use to discover and explore their spiritual life. We agreed that no young person we know would be prepared to sit through one of our Secular Franciscan meetings, nor would they find our format meaningful. There is another time, and meaning is found through different ways.

Young adults appreciate being listened to, and sharing ideas when we are in authentic conversation with them. They respect where we are, and know that we are trying hard to be non-judgmental, loving, environmentally active, and happy. They also can sense our humility, as we share genuine dialogue. Our Franciscan charism has given us great training to accompany young adults on their journey.

What have they revealed to you about the world in which they live, their needs, their fears, and their hopes?

Love is key – God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (John 4:16)

Young adults want to be accompanied on their journey. They don't need to be told what to do—just to be accompanied. They need us to be true to ourselves, and to walk beside them as Jesus did—to talk with them and to be the hands and feet of Jesus for them. Jean Vanier was a good example of someone who was able to do this.

Young adults have suggested they are looking to raise families well and wanting to live in a world that is cared for and provides equal opportunity to all. Catholic Social teaching is underutilized. Do our young people know that the core teachings of the Church in these documents are all about inclusion?

How is the Spirit calling us to respond?

Members of small sharing groups had a number of ideas that were considered:

- As Secular Franciscans, we could invite young adults to our retreat. (The retreat theme would have to be appropriate, and of interest to young adults).
- We could consider supporting the National Evangelization Team (NET).
- We can pray in a special way for young adults, that they may be empowered as younger faith seekers, and that we may learn how to accompany them on their journeys.

We also ask: Is there a way that we can give young people a sense of belonging though a shared activity that promotes justice? In many cases, we share a common belief that all are equal, deserving of care and respect, including the earth. Picking up on the *belong, believe, behave model* shared by the Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, we could start by participating in a shared event that creates a sense of **belonging** in both young adults and Secular Franciscans. The event could focus around something both groups **believe** is important, and the resulting **behavior** is that both groups might want to repeat this process.

A potential process for engagement with young adults:

- First, the consensus was that **our fraternity was being called to respond**.
- The focus of our deliberations was on action and not further discussion, specifically on a local interactive event/activity.
- However participants cautioned that this should not be a “one of” event/activity but the outreach should have a longer-term perspective.
- As well, young adults should be engaged at the outset with the planning and implementation of this event/activity. In this way young adults would be empowered to afford the activity leadership and fraternity members would provide support.
- The hope would be that the young adults would ultimately sustain the activity over a number of years.

- It was the collective view that among the members of the fraternity there were sufficient “gifts and talents” that an outreach activity to young adults could be undertaken successfully.
- Focus was given to a number of possible approaches/processes that could be utilized: for example, World Café, Open Space, and Appreciative Inquiry.
- In essence the outreach activity would be to provide “an opportunity for young adults to explore/dialogue about certain issues/interests that are important/meaningful to them.”
- There was a view that given the challenges that young adults are facing (for example, pursuing an education, looking for meaningful employment, getting married and starting Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator a family) all in the midst of a global pandemic that **it is timely to reach out.**
- A general theme of this proposed outreach activity could be “Helping Young People Find Meaning in the World Today”.
- In terms of how this outreach activity might be launched it was noted that the assistance and support of others would be valuable: the Youth Ministry Coordinator, the UPEI Campus Minister, the Assistant UPEI Campus Minister, a Diocesan priest who has been very involved with bringing young adults together, and young adults themselves. As a starting point, it would be constructive to reach out to these people initially and seek their input and guidance.
- Effective use of social media and the engagement of young adults at UPEI and Holland College and various parishes would be essential.
- The collective view was that it would be best to start small, build slowly and for the fraternity to sustain its commitment and not “drop the ball”.

Moving Forward

The St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity Council met and reviewed the thoughts/recommendations of the various small groups. The consensus of Council was that the Fraternity needed to put these thoughts/recommendations into action. As was outlined above, an identified first step was to meet with the UPEI Campus Minister, the Assistant UPEI Campus Minister, and young adults (both those on campus, and also young adults in the work world) to explore the possibility of initiating a process of dialogue. Council endorsed this first step. Several members of the fraternity were identified as potential participants in facilitating this dialogue with young adults. The intention is for the first step to be undertaken within the next few weeks (October 22-November 9, 2020).

Respectfully Submitted
to the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, Atlantic Area Vice Minister

from the Council of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Cornwall, Prince Edward Island
October 22, 2020