



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

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

**VOLUME XXXIII NO. 12**

**Living Out the Incarnation**

The Incarnation of Jesus forms the basis of our Christian faith and the actions of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) form our decisive participation in this mystery. During this time of Advent, we reflect on how Secular Franciscans can use their active faith to make Christ present in the world.

From Article 15 of our Rule: *Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives.*



Since Vatican II, an important role of laity has been the task of ministry. No longer are the laity charged with just the threefold adage of “pray, pay, and obey”. The lay person has become the most effective evangelizer for the Church. This role of ministry for laity is not just about doing “churchy” things like proclaiming the Word as a lector, serving as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, or teaching catechetics, as important as these may be. It is a more dominant, out-front role of saturating the secular milieu with the message of the Lord. The laity’s pulpit becomes the platform of politics and business, family life and social issues. Almost 60 years later, the words of the Vatican II document on the Church in the modern world (# 43) still ring true: “One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of it in their daily lives.”

- What justice am I showing to those living around me?
- What am I doing to assist the settlement of refugees or minorities in my area?
- How am I involved in securing fair assistance for those in need in my community?
- Do I use my voting power and my correspondence with legislators to shape domestic and foreign policy with principles of Christian justice?

Let us use the season of Advent to think of ways in which we can activate our faith to fulfill the meaning of Christmas.

(Submitted by the JPIC team with excerpts from *Called to Proclaim Christ (Short Reflections on the SFO Rule)*, Benet A. Fonck OFM, Franciscan Press, 1998)

## **Elective Chapter 2021**

The St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity celebrated its elective chapter on November 14, 2021. Regional Vice Minister George Guimond presided over the election of a new council to serve the fraternity for the 3-year term of 2021-2024. The following were elected:

Minister:	Minerva McCourt
Vice-Minister:	Joan McDonald
Treasurer:	Ruth Cassidy
Secretary:	Michael Cassidy
Formation Director:	Mary Hagen



(Front: Ruth Cassidy, Joan McDonald, Minerva McCourt  
Back: Mary Hagen, Mike Cassidy)

## **Message from Fraternity Minister**



My first message as your Minister is one of humility, prayerfulness, and thankfulness for your confidence and support. As well, there is a sense of anticipation, joy and awe as I look forward to serving you on Council for the next term of office. One never knows where the Spirit may lead us.

The vision for our Franciscan journey has been shaped by the thoughts and wishes for the future that our Fraternity brothers and sisters have shared. Now, as we embark upon this journey, it is essential for all to know that, like any journey, every member plays a vital role to complete the journey. Let us think of a journey once taken - if one forgets to share the details with family members, everyone is confused and mixed up. So it is with our Franciscan journey - we value each and every member, your contribution, your ideas, and your suggestions; all are necessary to complete the journey. Together, we go to an exciting unknown world of how the Spirit will open hearts, ears and eyes to lead us into becoming who we are meant to be.

I wish each and everyone a Blessed Christmas and, as Francis did at Christmas, may we be filled with the love of the Babe and extend that love to our families, friends and all who we meet in our days.

May we bring the Christ child to the hearts of those who most need our love.

## **Message from your Council**

Your new council humbly thanks you for your support and we ask for your prayers and guidance as we work together to serve you.

### **December Fraternity Meeting**

We will celebrate the Incarnation of Christ, sing Christmas carols and share Christmas memories. We will also celebrate the Rite of Adhesion with our brother, Nasser Saad.

### **Fraternity Teams**

We ask that all fraternity teams continue until March 2022. During the January meeting, you will have an opportunity to select the team to which you feel that you are being called as a Franciscan. So, please take the month of December to discern which team needs your skills and talents.

As we walk towards the birth of Christ, let us ponder these words

*Someone to love. That was Greccio. That was Christmas.  
Francis prayed for all the lonely people in the world  
That they would understand what God's enfleshment meant to them personally.  
God was like us in everything but sin,  
And he left himself be touched and handled by everyone who came to him.  
Someone to care for. Someone to touch.  
That was Greccio. That was God become man.*

### **Adhesion of Nasser Saad to St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity**

Adhesion applies to individuals who, without becoming a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, wish to participate in its life and activities. Within St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, we have such an individual. We are speaking about Nasser Saad.

Nasser is a faith-filled, prayerful, gentle brother who has asked Council for the opportunity to enter into an ongoing relationship with our fraternity. Nasser is not able to make profession in the Secular Franciscan Order because he is not a Roman Catholic, which is one of the requirements for someone to become a professed member of the OFS. He is a member of the Coptic Orthodox Christian Church, a church that was founded by St. Mark the Evangelist in Alexandria, Egypt, in the year 42 AD. For the past three years, he has been coming to monthly fraternity meetings and has been very much engaged with our fraternity.



During the December fraternity meeting, Nasser will be welcomed as an adherent using a ritual specifically designed for this purpose.

(Excerpt of article submitted by Martha Gabriel on behalf of St. Francis of Assisi Council)

## Condolences



On the evening of November 9, 2021, Charlie MacDonald, member of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, was visited by Sister Death who gently accompanied him to meet our God and to rest with God for all eternity.

Sincere condolences are extended to Janet MacDonald, also a member of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, and to all of Charlie's family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

## Fraternal Visit 2021

The Fraternal Visit to St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity was conducted by Regional Vice Minister George Guimond, accompanied by his wife Sherrill Guimond (Regional Director of Formation and National Treasurer), on Sunday, November 14. The visit began at 10:30 a.m. at the home of Ruth and Michael Cassidy with members of the Council present. Fraternity documents were reviewed including the register, book of minutes (council and fraternity), treasury records, fraternity archives, record of attendance, and the minister's file box. All documents were found to be in good order and were signed off by the visitor. Brunch was served and the group departed for the 2 p.m. Fraternity meeting.



During the Fraternity meeting, George continued the Fraternal Visit and referenced the Triennial Report of the outgoing Council. He praised:

- the active participation of all members in leading ongoing formation sessions,
- the Fraternity newsletter,
- the generous leadership of our members at local, regional, national, and international levels,
- our JPIC commitment, particularly with the JPIC Moments and newsletter articles,
- the central role of our music at all Fraternity events,
- our use of technology and the leadership of the Technology Support team,
- our 3-year vision for 2021-2024,
- our support of Lucia Gray in NL and Kathleen May in Florida.

## 2022 Annual Fraternity Retreat

Next year's fraternity retreat will be held on **September 9-11, 2022 at Our Lady of Hope Retreat Centre**. The retreat leader will be Sr. Marianna Jung FMM (Franciscan Missionaries of Mary) and the theme will be "Clare". Mark your calendar!

## Br. Leo Fraternity – New Council



While on PEI, Regional Vice Minister George Guimond conducted the Fraternal Visit and Elective Chapter of the Brother Leo Fraternity (Montague, PE) on November 13, 2021. The newly elected Council for 2021-2024 consists of:

Minister	Claudia Batchilder
Vice Minister	Shirley Scully
Treasurer	Gary Scully
Secretary	Mike Mooney
Formation Director	Edwena Arbuckle

(Front: Marion Clorey (SA), Claudia Batchilder, Shirley Scully, Edwina Arbuckle  
Back: Gary Scully, Mike Mooney)

## Remembering Our Deceased Fraternity Members

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, Secular Franciscans gathered via Zoom to remember the deceased members of St. Francis of Assisi fraternity (Cornwall, PE) and Blessed Father Frederick fraternity (Moncton, NB). This service of remembrance, organized by Martha and Gerry Gabriel, was an opportunity to celebrate our Franciscan brothers and sisters who have been welcomed into eternal life by Sister Death.

May their souls rest in peace.



## Pope Francis Addresses OFS General Chapter



On November 15, 2021, during its General Chapter, Pope Francis held a private audience with the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order. He greeted those present with the words that St. Francis addressed to those he met along the way: "May the Lord give you peace!". He then recalled some elements proper to the vocation and mission of all Secular Franciscans. The full text of his address is attached to this newsletter as Attachment 1.

## December Birthdays

December 20                      Carol MacNeill-Longaphie  
December 27                      Martha Gabriel

Happy Birthday Carol and Martha. Blessings on you and your families!



## Newsletter

Newsletter items are always welcome. You may send them before the last Wednesday of the month to Doug Clorey at [jdclcorey@gmail.com](mailto:jdclcorey@gmail.com).

## Upcoming Events

Fraternity Meeting - **Sunday, December 12th at 2:00PM at St. Francis of Assisi Church hall (basement).**

**Please note that all members and guests to our meetings are now required to have had two vaccinations against COVID. We are also asked to wear masks at all times while on church premises. Thank you.**

Also note the dates of upcoming fraternity meetings and events for 2022 (below).

**St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity  
Fraternity Meeting Dates for 2022  
St. Francis of Assisi Church Hall**

Sunday, January 9	2-4 p.m.
Sunday, February 13	2-4 p.m.
Sunday, March 13	2-4 p.m.
Sunday, April 10 (Palm Sunday)	7-9 p.m.
Sunday, May 1	7-9 p.m. (Note: the <b>first</b> Sunday of the month)
Sunday, June 12	7-9 p.m.
Sunday, July 10	7-9 p.m.
August (Date TBD): Fraternity Picnic	
September 9-11: Fraternity Retreat (Our Lady of Hope Retreat Centre)	
Sunday, October 2	7-9 p.m. (Note: the <b>first</b> Sunday of the month)
Sunday, November 13	2-4 p.m.
Sunday, December 11	2-4 p.m.

**Mark Your Calendars !!**

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS  
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SECULAR  
FRANCISCAN ORDER**

*Sala Clementina  
Monday, November 15, 2021*

*Dear brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order, good morning!*

I greet you with the words that St. Francis addressed to those he met along the way: " *May the Lord give you peace!* ". I am happy to welcome you on the occasion of your General Chapter. In this context I would like to recall some elements proper to your vocation and mission.

Your vocation arises from the universal call to holiness. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that "the laity participate in the priesthood of Christ: ever more united with him, they unfold the grace of Baptism and Confirmation in all the dimensions of personal, family, social and ecclesial life, and thus fulfill the call to holiness addressed to all the baptized "( n. 941 ).

This holiness, to which you are called as Secular Franciscans, as the General Constitutions and the Rule approved by St. Paul VI ask of you, involves the conversion of the heart, attracted, conquered and transformed by the One who is the *only Saint* , who is "the good, all good, the highest good "(St. Francis, *Praise of God Most High* ). This is what makes you true "penitents". In his *Letter to all the faithful* , St. Francis presents "doing penance" as a path of conversion, a path of Christian life, a commitment to do the will and works of the heavenly Father. In the *Testament*, then, he describes his own conversion process with these words, which you know well: "The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance like this: when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter to see the lepers; and the Lord Himself brought me among them and I showed mercy with them. And as I moved away from them, what seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body. And then I stayed a little and left the world "(1-3).

The conversion process is like this: God takes the initiative: "The Lord gave me to begin to do penance". God leads the penitent to places where he would never have wanted to go: "God led me among them, the lepers". The penitent responds by accepting to place himself at the service of others and using mercy with them. And the result is happiness: "What seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of mind and body". Just the path of conversion of Francis.

This, dear brothers and sisters, is what I urge you to accomplish in your life and in your mission. And please don't confuse "doing penance" with "works of penance". These - fasting, almsgiving, mortification - are consequences of the decision to open your heart to God. Open your heart to God! Open your heart to Christ, living in the midst of ordinary people, in the style of St. Francis. As Francis was a "mirror of Christ", so may you too become "mirrors of Christ".



You are men and women committed to living in the world according to the Franciscan charism. A charism that essentially consists in *observing the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The vocation of the Secular Franciscan is to live the Gospel in the world in the style of the Poverello, *sine glossa*; to assume the Gospel as a "form and rule" of life. I urge you to embrace the Gospel as if by embracing Jesus. May it be the Gospel, that is, Jesus himself, that shapes your life. Thus you will assume poverty, minority, simplicity as your distinctive signs in front of everyone.

With this Franciscan and secular identity of yours, you are part of the outgoing Church. Your favorite place is to be among the people, and there, as lay people - celibate or married -, priests and bishops, each according to their specific vocation, give witness to Jesus with a simple life, without pretensions, always happy to follow Christ poor and crucified, as did St. Francis and so many men and women of your Order. I also encourage you to go out to the peripheries, the existential peripheries of today, and there to let the word of the Gospel resound. Do not forget the poor, who are the flesh of Christ: you are called to announce the Good News to them ( *cf. Lk4.18*), as did St. Elizabeth of Hungary, your patroness, among others. And as yesterday the "fraternities of penitents" were characterized by founding hospitals, dispensaries, soup kitchens and other works of concrete social charity, so today the Spirit sends you to exercise the same charity with the creativity required by the new forms of poverty.

May your secularity be full of closeness, compassion, tenderness. And may you be men and women of hope, committed to living it and also "organizing" it, translating it into concrete everyday situations, into human relationships, into social and political commitment; nurturing hope in tomorrow by alleviating today's pain.

And all this, dear brothers and sisters, you are called to live in fraternity, feeling part of the great Franciscan family. In this sense, I remind you of Francis' desire that the whole family remain united, certainly respecting the diversity and autonomy of the various components and also of each member. But always in a vital reciprocal communion, to dream together of a world in which all are and feel brothers, and struggling together to build it (*cf. Enc. *Brothers all*, 8*): men and women who fight for justice, and who work for an integral ecology, collaborating in missionary projects and making you peacemakers and witnesses of the Beatitudes.

So we began with the way of conversion, and then all these proposals of fruitfulness, which come from the heart united to the Lord and a lover of poverty. May St. Francis and all the saints of the Franciscan family accompany you on your journey. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady, "Virgin made Church", keep you. And please don't forget to pray for me. Thanks.