



# Good News Report

Secular Franciscan Order  
Trillium Regional Fraternity



Number 91

June 2020



June 1, 2020

Dear Regional Minister,

I am writing as a follow-up to my letter, dated March 14, 2020, regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. At that time, the OFS National Council highly recommended "*that all face-to-face local and regional chapters or meetings be cancelled for the time being*". However, the situation now seems to be evolving, as restrictions around gathering are easing, and access to church facilities are being contemplated. That said, be aware that the easing of restrictions varies greatly from one location to another across the country. As always, it is critical that we follow all guidelines established by national and provincial governments in this regard, as well as those established by your local diocesan church. As churches begin to open, prudence will be key.

When the proper protocols are in place, fraternities will begin to gather again. However, no one should feel obliged to enter into any situation in which they do not feel safe. As always, please move cautiously so as to avoid any further spread of the virus, especially to the elderly and vulnerable.

I also wish to take advantage of this opportunity to thank local and regional fraternities for the innovation and creativity that they have demonstrated in remaining connected during this crisis. All of your efforts have been most appreciated.

Please distribute this message to all of your local fraternities. Thank you.

Wishing you peace and all that is good.



## A MOMENT WITH THE MINISTER

### St. Clare as a Servant Leader

St. Clare, the cornerstone and foundation of her Order, from the very beginning sought to place the building of all virtues on the foundation of holy humility. For she promised holy obedience to blessed Francis and never deviated from her promise.

Three years after her conversion, she declined the name and office of Abbess. She wished, in her humility, to be placed under others rather than above them, and to be among the servants of Christ: to serve more willingly than to be served. Compelled by blessed Francis, however, she accepted the government of the Ladies. With apprehension not arrogance in her heart, she brought about an increase in their freedom and culture of service in herself and in them.

Moreover, the higher she was perceived in this type of prelacy, the more worthless she became in her own judgment, the more ready to serve; and she always considered herself unworthy of veneration by others. She never shirked any familial chores - to such an extent, that she very often washed the hands of the Sisters, assisted those who were seated at table, and



waited on those who were eating. Rarely would she give an order, instead she would do things spontaneously - preferring rather to do things herself than to order her Sisters. She herself washed the commodes of the sick; she herself, with that noble spirit of hers,

cleansed them. She frequently and reverently washed the feet of the serving Sisters who returned from outside and, after washing them, kissed them. Once when she was washing the feet of one of those servants, while bending to kiss them, that Sister, not tolerating such humility, withdrew her foot and, with it, struck Clare on her mouth. Clare calmly took the foot of the Sister again and, on its sole, placed a firm kiss.

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## SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

Lately I have been thinking what will the church look like after the Covid 19 pandemic has ended. Will it be the same as before, or will people who have grown accustomed to not going to Mass just continue to stay at home praying on their own?

Certainly, parishes have changed these last three months. We are a people praying for each other at home. We, like the “shut-ins” and frail people, can only participate in the mass virtual through TV, YouTube, or live stream.

Parish priests communicate to their parishioners by mail, emails, social media, websites, phone calls and internet video meetings. Certainly, there is a fear that more and more people will stop coming to Mass and being involved in organizations and services. Yet there is much hope for a renewal and growth.

Throughout the centuries God brings good out of evil. Constantly, God is recreating; bringing order out of chaos. I was reading an article in the *Tablet: The Meaning of Love*. It was about how the church grew during terrible outbreaks of the plague in the second and third centuries. What was the reason for so many converts to the faith? It was their compassion to the sick and dying. The article states that many in plague-ravaged cities observed and remarked how, “heedless of the danger, (Christians) took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ. Obedient to the commands of their Saviour, who had told them that to care for the least of their brothers and sisters was to care for him, and confident in the promise of eternal life, large numbers of them were able to stand firm against dread of the plague, and tend to those afflicted by it.”

Isn't this exactly what Pope Francis has called us to be, a church like a field hospital caring for souls. Of course, our Pope just doesn't talk about this, he leads by example. I believe we, as a church, must be people of compassion showing love to the most vulnerable. Our example will draw people to our way of life.

St. Francis' whole life changed in his encounter with the leper. Jesus lead Francis to recognize Him in the person of the leper. Francis insisted that the early friars and poor Ladies lived with and cared for the lepers in their midst. People

(Continued on page 3)

## VICE MINISTER



Dear Franciscans  
and friends of St. Anthony

The Novena to St. Anthony started May 31. For 13 days Fr. Mario will give short video talks on St. Anthony. On June 13 they will live stream the Holy Mass from St. Anthony's Basilica in Padua. I am attaching the link below. You can view all the previous days talks also.

We are celebrating also 800 years that St. Anthony became a Franciscan Friar this year.

<https://www.santantonio.org/en/content/13-days-novena-2020>

*Pax et Bonum!*  
John Francis of St. Anthony

## TREASURER'S TWO CENTS



*"In my deepest wound  
I saw Your glory  
and it dazzled me."*

— St. Augustine.

Mark Rozario of St. Anthony

(SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT Continued from page 2)

witnessing this compassion in action wanted to be like them. Might it not be the same today?

If people see our compassion to the most vulnerable: the elderly in LTC facilities, seniors in their homes, the sick and dying in hospitals - will they not only be impressed with the love we show, but might they not also want to join us in living love and compassion?

So, as we wait in for a vaccine for the virus and an end to this pandemic, let us pray to God for God's intervention in the chaos we are suffering.

*"Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.*

*And You shall renew the face of the earth".*

Fr. Peter Knaapen O.F.M. Conv

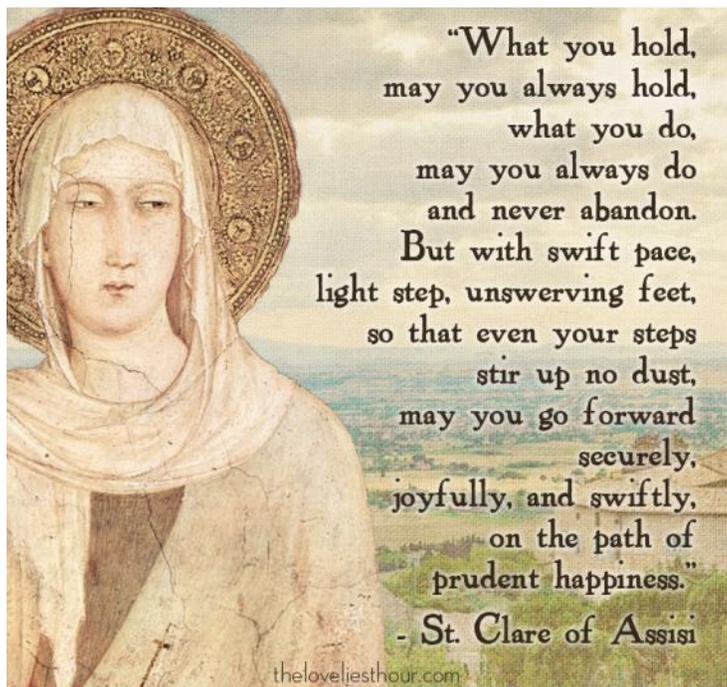
(REGIONAL MINISTER Continued from page 2)

Foot-washing leaders must pay attention to the development of the gifts they are working with. A fraternity will only prosper if the individual gifts are developed for the common good and put at the service of the mission of each fraternity. A foot-washing leader will always be concerned about the individual members of the fraternity. There is no substitute for ongoing attention to the needs of others.

What can we learn from Clare: this humble servant of the Lord? Accepting who we are, with our gifts and limitations, signals to others our willingness to accept them. Such an approach enables people to work together to enrich their whole family and fraternity...and enables us to see Christ present in all situations. The servant-leaders who give of themselves out of love, as St. Clare did, will find that self-giving is a replenishment for the heart.

Saint Clare created a humble lifestyle of "structural humility", where she and the Sisters had to live and love their own ordinariness day by day – living in a closed community with few distractions. There was no place to hide from themselves or from God. There was no one to impress or no one who needed to be impressed by their cloistered life... except God alone.

Catherine Payne of St. Clare,  
*Deus meus et omnia*





## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL FORMATION COMMISSION

May 29, 2020

Dear Regional Ministers and Regional Formation Directors:

Greetings! It seems a lifetime ago since my last communication to you. So much has changed in our world that has affected so many lives, our families and communities. Still, we are mindful that God is unchanging and ever present in our midst.

I would like to keep you updated of the ongoing work our National Formation Commission has been involved in. We now have a Canadian version of *Caring and Feeding of Fraternity Councils*, a document that originally came out of the U.S. and has been modified and updated for a Canadian audience. This resource for developing and strengthening Fraternity Councils is now available on the OFS National Website under the 'Formation' section. There is now an English, French and Korean translation, thanks to the kind assistance of members who volunteered to assist with translation.

[http://www.ofsnational.ca/NationalDocuments/April\\_2020-Care\\_and\\_Feeding\\_of\\_Fraternity\\_Councils.pdf](http://www.ofsnational.ca/NationalDocuments/April_2020-Care_and_Feeding_of_Fraternity_Councils.pdf)

The previous work done in revising the *Role of the Spiritual Assistant in Formation*, last year, hopefully has been circulated to all your local fraternities and fraternity Spiritual Assistants. Any feedback you have to offer on the application of this document from local fraternities would be very helpful.

[http://www.ofsnational.ca/NationalDocuments/Role\\_of\\_the\\_Spiritual\\_Assistant\\_in\\_formation.pdf](http://www.ofsnational.ca/NationalDocuments/Role_of_the_Spiritual_Assistant_in_formation.pdf)

The *Formators Course* will come to completion next month, and there has been expressed interest by some members to take this course if offered again. I would like to find out from you, whether there might be interest from members within your Region to take this course. We have 20 members who participate in this Course (12 online / 8 correspondence version). Should there be enough interest, we would run another Formators Course in September – March (with a break in December). Unfortunately we have not been able to find anyone to help translate the course into French, so for now, it is being offered in English only, unless there are volunteers who could assist with the translation of the Course files. One component of the course that had a great deal of positive feedback and which, I think, might be good resource for local fraternities is the Youtube video on the 'Significance and Power of Profession,' by Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZgowg5egpU>

Currently, there is work being done on developing a toolkit for working with youth and young adults outreach - to assist local fraternities interested in sharing their Franciscan way of life with youths and young adults. Other initiatives we would like to launch will deal with 'leadership development.' There have been suggestions to create some leadership resources, and also to have a leadership course like the Formation Course, etc. We would appreciate your input, **by the end of June**, on some of the needs in this area that would be most useful to fraternities. Thank you for your ongoing support in engaging and utilizing the resources that have been prepared for you and your fraternities. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Peace and all Good, Fraternally yours,*

*Jewel Jasmins, ofs Chair of the National Formation Commission*

NEW WINE? - Essay by Lisa Theriault, ofS

Roman Catholics are spoiled. There I said it. Yep. Spoiled.

How you may ask? The Sacraments. If COVID-19 has taught me anything, it is this; I am a spoiled daughter of our Father Almighty. Every Sunday, and weekday for some, we have the opportunity to receive His Body and Blood (depending on your Diocese). We can call our priests and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation any time, day or night. Every moment we spend in the Sacraments is a moment of Heaven here on Earth. Every moment we spend in the Sacraments is a moment in which we are held by our Father, caressed in His loving embrace. We are spoiled.

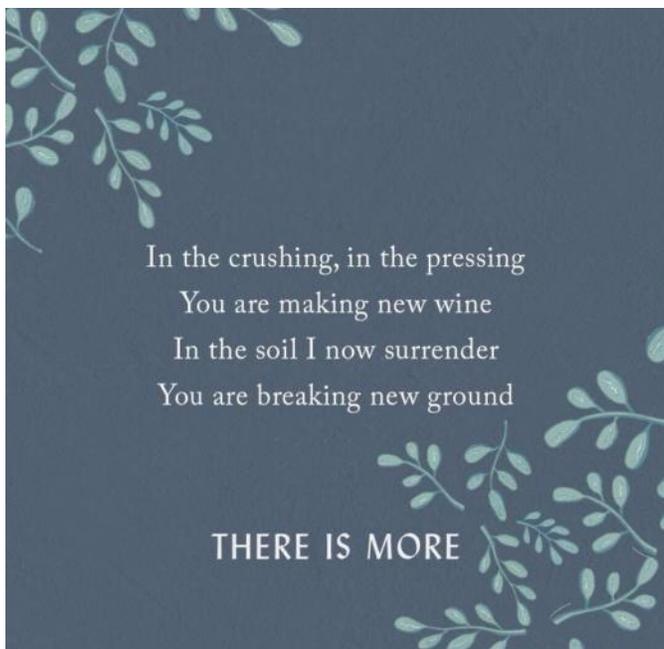
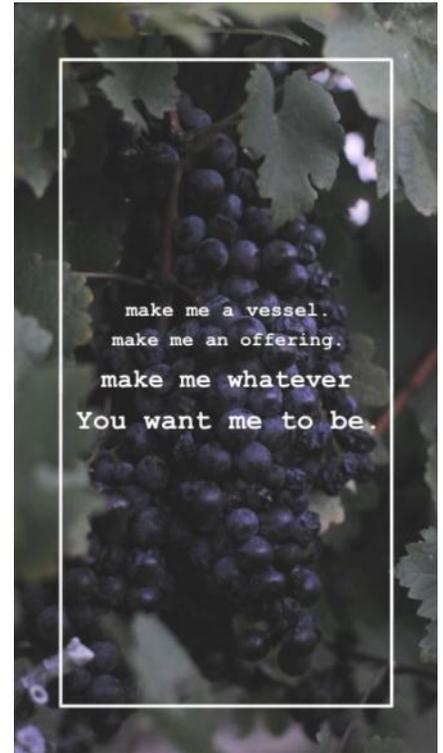
I have the amazing calling to teach the faith to high schoolers. Throughout these 22 years as a teacher, I have spoken of the Kingdom of Heaven among us. I have taught that at Mass, Heaven and Earth collide: that we become so close to Heaven that it permeates us, fill us and gives us the strength to go out and face another week. I have realized, through this pandemic, that I have taken this miraculous movement of God for granted.

My words to my students fell short on me. Prior to the pandemic, I was finding Mass boring at times. I would force myself to go to Mass or Reconciliation (the Solemn Promise of Obedience is a powerful thing). Now, I would do anything to be able to receive my Lord in the Sacrament of the Eucharist and kneel at His feet to *'clean the cobwebs of my soul'* as St. Padre Pio would say. I have realized (perhaps you have as well,) that I, although going through the motions, have been dry. Brittle. I have taken for granted the time my Father has wanted to hold me, to speak to me, to direct my path.

Lent was hard. VERY HARD. As someone said on Facebook, it was the *'Lentiest Lent I have ever Lented.'* I felt lost and tired. I kept looking for guidance... and then realized my numbness was because the Sacraments were removed from my life. Ripped from my life. My weekly 'visits' to Heaven were cancelled. Had I known that March 7th would be my last time to receive His Body, I would have arrived at Mass earlier and left later. I would have breathed in more of Him in the tabernacle. I would have been less consumed with what was waiting for me after Mass. I would have rested in Him. I took it all for granted. We are spoiled.

But what a blessing this awakening has been, my brothers and sisters. How blessed it is to realize as Catholics how spoiled we are. I have been forced to find Him in all places and in everything I am doing. This doesn't make up for the lack of the Sacraments, but it has allowed me to learn this and by the Grace of God, I pray I never take for granted again my heavenly 'visits.' I am being renewed. God is making new wine out of me (check out the song *'New Wine'* from Hillsong, you won't be disappointed). I feel that God is reawakening me. Dusting me off for what is to come: *"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."* Isaiah 43:19

My brothers and my sisters, we will get through this. We may be scarred, but so was Christ for us. To carry His cross means to experience life; all of it: the joys and the sorrows. May we take this time to allow Him to reawaken us and, when the time is right, to propel us out again to proclaim His message to the world.





This flower is indigenous to New Zealand and only flourishes during Holy Week. It is called the *Blood of Christ*. The cross in the center is called the *Light of Christ*.

When you look softly at the Light of Christ, pray, "*Lord Jesus, enlighten my family by Your most precious Blood.*"

## The Good News Report

This Good News Report is the newsletter of the Secular Franciscan Order, Trillium Region, Ontario, Canada. We aim to publish it quarterly: between the middle and end of: March, June, September, and December.

Opinions expressed by individual contributors do not necessarily reflect positions of the Trillium Regional Fraternity.

Any items you wish to include are warmly welcomed and will be considered, space permitting. Articles may be sent by the 8th of the month of publishing, to Debbie Tessier, ofs, at [debtess@xplornet.ca](mailto:debtess@xplornet.ca)

Note: If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please let us know as above.

**DO FEW THINGS  
BUT DO THEM  
WELL, SIMPLE  
JOYS ARE HOLY**

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI  
PICTUREQUOTES.COM



**Remembering the fun and joy shared among the Regional fraternities  
in June of 2012  
at the "Franciscan Fest" held at Mount Alverno.**

# Local Fraternity Bulletin Board

ST. FELIX OF CANTALICE *Secular Franciscan FRATERNITY*  
60th Anniversary May 1960 – 2020

St. Felix of Cantalice Fraternity started on May 1960, and is canonically established.

The Fraternity meets at St. Philip Neri Parish, 2100 Jane Street, Toronto every 4th Sunday of the month at the 12:00 noon Mass followed by a meeting until 3:30pm.

The Trillium Region would like to acknowledge the 60th anniversary of the Fraternity of St. Felix of Cantalice. To all members from the past and present we send you our prayers and best wishes that you continue to flourish in the Region.

## May 18: Feast of St. Felix of Cantalice



On May 18, the Capuchins celebrate the Feast of St. Felix of Cantalice, Capuchin. Felix was born at Cantalice, on the north-western border of the Abruzzi, and died at Rome, 18 May, 1587. He is usually represented in art as holding in his arms the Infant Jesus, because of a vision he once had, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and placed the Divine Child in his arms.

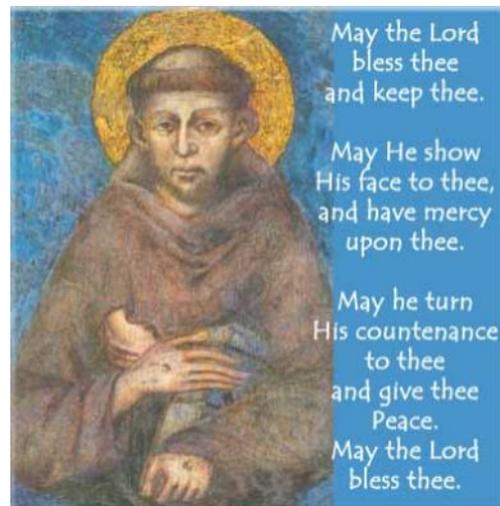
His parents were peasant folk, and very early he was set to tend sheep. At nine years of age, he was hired out to a farmer at Cotta Ducale - with whom he remained for over twenty years: first as a shepherd-boy and afterwards as a farm labourer.

But from his earliest years, Felix showed signs of great holiness - spending his leisure time in prayer - often in wild or solitary places. When a friend read to him a book about the lives of the 'Desert Fathers,' Felix conceived a great desire for the eremitical life. But, he also felt called to live under obedience to a superior. After seeking light in prayer, he determined to ask admittance amongst the Capuchins.

At first, the friars hesitated to accept him, but he eventually received the habit, in 1543, at Anticoli in the Roman Province. After persevering through severe temptations, he made his profession. By this time, these severe temptations had greatly injure his bodily health. In 1547, he was sent to Rome and appointed '*questor*' for the community. Here he remained for the rest of his life, and in fulfilling his lowly office became a veritable apostle of Rome.

St. Philip Neri had a deep affection for the Capuchin lay brother, whom he once proclaimed 'the greatest saint then living in the Church.' When St. Charles Borromeo sought St. Philip's aid in drawing up the constitutions of his Oblates, St. Philip took him to St. Felix as the most competent adviser in such matters.

But through all, Felix kept his wonderful humility and simplicity. He was accustomed to style himself "*Ass of the Capuchins.*" Acclaimed a saint by the people of Rome, immediately after his death, he was beatified by Urban VIII in 1625, and canonized by Clement XI in 1712. His body rests under an altar dedicated to him in the church of the Immaculate Conception to Rome.



## OBITUARIES

Our former Minister of St. Anne's Fraternity in Tecumseh, **Bert Van Berlo** ofs, entered eternal life on April 4, 2020.

Bert had held many council positions within the St. Anne's fraternity, and was very devoted to the Secular Franciscan Order as well as the St. Vincent De Paul Society. Bert had suffered a stroke a while back, and had many other health issues over the past several years. May St. Francis, St. Claire and all the Franciscan Saints intercede for Bert as he joins his wife Lillian who was also an OFS member. Bert made his profession March 20, 1999 along with his wife Lillian.

**Jean De Angelis** ofs, a former member of St. Peter's Fraternity, London passed away on June 3, 2020 at Strathmere Lodge, Strathroy. Jean was a parishioner at Our Lady of Sorrows, Aylmer and a Secular Franciscan who made her profession on Nov 9, 1999 and was a member of Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity, Aylmer until it ceased operating and its members welcomed into St. Peter's Fraternity, London later that year.

Please keep in your prayers the repose of the soul of: **Father Jonathon Robinson** of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Toronto. Father Robinson was 91 years of age and the founder of the Oratory.



Do you need a certificate for a newly professed member or for a special anniversary for a fraternity member?

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