



# Secular Franciscan

National Bulletin March 2025 of the Secular Franciscan Order in Canada

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800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the composition  
of St. Francis'  
*The Canticle  
of All  
Creatures*

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## JOURNEY TO THE

**Minister and International Councillor, Jewel Jasmins, ofs**



Dear Brothers and Sisters- Pax et bonum!

In this Jubilee year, Pope Francis invites us to celebrate and proclaim hope to the world. “Christian hope gives us the courage to build a fraternal and peaceful world when it seems barely worth the effort,” Pope Francis said as he encouraged the faithful to rejoice in the gift of the resurrection and “see the promise of good at times when evil seems to prevail.”  
- *Vatican News, May 9, 2024.*

Our journey through Lent in self-emptying and self-sacrifice for the benefit of others, draws us into a deeper appreciation of our Lord’s journey in the wilderness, to guide us in the way of spiritual progress in our earthly pilgrimage. The image of Christ crucified, continually inspired Francis to recognize Jesus in others, leading him to serve not only the lepers, but others as well. *Let us look for Jesus in those we encounter.*

Our National Elective Chapter and National Spiritual Conference will be held June 26-29, 2025, at the Ursuline Spirituality Centre in Québec. Our theme for the Conference is *Pilgrims and Strangers* in the context of the Jubilee Year, with keynote speaker Fr. Louis Cinq-Mars, OFM, Cap., former Provincial. Fr. Alix Poulin, OFM Cap., National Spiritual Assistant will also offer a presentation.



Our Minister General, Tibor Kausser, OFS, will join us to preside over the Elective Chapter, and Fr. Tomàs Gíngua Panzo Suva, OFM Cap., Spiritual Assistant General, will be accompanying him. Putting on this venue has been made possible through your generous financial support to the National Fraternity, for which we are very grateful. Thank you. As we prepare for this special ingathering of Secular Franciscans from across Canada, let us pray together for the Holy Spirit to inspire brothers and sisters to be open to the call of serving on the National Fraternity Council, for a new season of building a more fraternal and peaceful world.

## **National Formation Director, Catherine Payne, ofs**



May the Lord give you peace....

We did it! On February 15, our hearts and lives were united at our National Retreat, "You Are Love." Over 180 of us gathered—from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island—in a true celebration of our shared Franciscan spirit. This remarkable assembly not only reaffirmed our commitment to living out the Gospel but also deepened our bonds as a nationwide family.

### **A Journey Rooted in Love and Service**

Our retreat invited us to explore what it truly means to be embodiments of Christ's love. Drawing inspiration from the life of St. Francis and the Gospel, we were reminded that each of us is called to serve, to love, and to be transformed by God's grace. The inspiring talks by Father Benjamin Ripley, Sister Mary Kathleen, and our very own Françoise Malboeuf ofs illuminated the themes of love and service with personal stories and deep spiritual insights. Their reflections resonated with many of us, sparking thoughtful discussions and personal moments of grace.

### **Overcoming Challenges Together**

Coordinating a gathering of such scale presented its challenges—especially on the technical front—but our dedicated team, led by Colleen Finlon ofs from the OLOTA Region, met each challenge with perseverance and expertise. Their hard work ensured that every detail was managed seamlessly, allowing us to focus on the true essence of our retreat: forming a closer, supportive community of faith.

### **The Power of Community and Shared Testimony**

What struck me most was the genuine sharing among participants. Each testimony, each reflective moment, wove together a vibrant tapestry of our collective spiritual journey. In those exchanges, we saw the Holy Spirit at work, guiding us toward a deeper understanding of ourselves and our calling as Secular Franciscans. Your prayers, your openness, and your willingness to share created a sacred space where love and hope flourished.

### **Looking Ahead: A Workshop on the Beatitudes**

Our journey of formation does not end with one retreat. I am excited to invite you to mark your calendars for May 31, 2025. On that day, we will gather once more for a workshop on the Beatitudes and the Franciscan way of life, led by Martha Gabriel ofs from the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada. This upcoming workshop promises to be a time of rich reflection and practical insights on living out the Gospel values in our daily lives. More details will be shared as the date approaches.

### **In Gratitude and Hope**

I am profoundly grateful for each one of you—the participants, facilitators, and volunteers—whose prayers, enthusiasm, and commitment made the retreat a true testament to our Franciscan spirit. As we move forward, let us continue to draw strength and inspiration from this beautiful gathering, allowing the love of Christ to shine through our lives and communities across Canada.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. May our shared love and commitment continue to illuminate our paths as we strive to live as true reflections of God's love.

[Formation - Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis \(OFS\) Canada](#)

Next Formation  
Workshop

Saturday, May 31,  
2025

The Beatitudes and  
the Franciscan Way  
of Life

# Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

## National JPIC Team

[Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation - Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis \(OFS\) Canada](#)

### Mission: In the Spirit of Peace

Everything that the Canadian ofs National JPIC Team has been fostering, is in the direction of creating Peace with the Indigenous Peoples. The Indigenous Peoples endured severe suffering that has created Intergenerational trauma, for approximately 600 years in the Americas.

Just as Jesus suffered a loss of love while on the Cross, the Indigenous Peoples have suffered a loss of love from the communities of the world. This loss of love has meant murder, rape, dishonouring, total disrespect for the dignity of the human person who are the Indigenous Peoples. This disrespect is pathetic, deplorable, disgusting, Horrifying, terrible.

As St Francis experienced with the those persons who have leprosy, we are called to follow the Commandment of Jesus, “to love our neighbour” (Mark 12:31).

In establishing contacts and making friendships with the Indigenous Peoples, we are treating the person with integrity, dignity and respect. The first and foremost value of the Catholic Social Teaching.

Over the years, the Franciscan growth has moved from being a contact to a friend. This Mission of caring, compassion and being lovable people to the person has deepen relationships ... to create Forever Friends, and Spiritual Sisters and Brothers in the Fraternity of the world. The Fraternity of brotherhood and sisterhood is what the Indigenous Peoples have lived from all time.

St Francis, while following in the footsteps of Jesus, emphasized the Ministry of Peace. Each person is given a sense of belonging in the one Fraternity of the world. Therefore, the Mission Statement to be realized is ... we are “Never Alone.”

As taught at St Peter’s Seminary in London, ON ... God created human beings as sacred ... who are made “in the image and likeness of God” (Gen 1:27), and social ... to be in communion with God. By following the example of St Francis, we are formed ... to place God first, to follow Jesus, to love deeply and ... to live in Peace.

....to create  
Forever  
Friends, and  
Spiritual Sisters  
and Brothers in  
the Fraternity of  
the world.

*Every person has a core of sacredness. \**

*\* (cf. God and the Human Experience,*

*Dr Norman King, U of Windsor, 1998)*

*By the grace of God, we are Spiritually bonded  
together.*



The Logo shows four stylized figures to indicate all of humanity from the four corners of the earth. They are each embracing another, indicating the solidarity and brotherhood that must unite peoples. It should be noted that the first figure is clinging to the cross.

The underlying waves are choppy to indicate that the pilgrimage of life is not always on calm waters. Oftentimes personal circumstances and world events call for a greater sense of hope. This is why the lower part of the Cross is elongated turning into an anchor, which dominates the movement of the waves. As is well known, the anchor has often been used as a metaphor for hope. In fact, in maritime jargon, the hope anchor is the name given to the spare anchor, used by vessels for emergency manoeuvres to stabilize the ship during storms.

It should be noted **that the image shows how the pilgrim's journey is not individual, but rather communal, with the signs of a growing dynamism that moves more and more toward the Cross.** The Cross is by no means static, but it, too, is dynamic, bending toward and meeting humanity as if not to leave it alone, but rather offering the certainty of its presence and the reassurance of hope.

Finally, the Jubilee 2025 Motto, *Peregrinantes in Spem* is clearly visible in the colour green." official caption of the logo

*"the pilgrim's journey is not individual, but rather communal,*

*... more and more toward the Cross*

*By Deacon Maurice Prindiville, ofs*

The logo of the Pilgrimage of Hope expresses the aim of strengthening and rebuilding individuals, certainly... but also of strengthening and rebuilding the Church. The four figures - representing "all of humanity from the four corners of the earth" are together - united together - not separate. They make up a ship - a familiar metaphor for the Church. The ship is amid waves - which are described as "choppy to indicate that the pilgrimage of life is not always on calm waters."

The Roman Catholic Church and its renewal, and growth are vitally important in Franciscan spirituality and in the rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Our Secular Franciscan Pilgrimage of Hope is towards rebuilding the Church.

St. Francis of Assisi is romanticized as the little poor man, the patron of peace, or the lover of creation. And those are good things, but they are not at the center of understanding Francis. The true Francis of Assisi was and is rooted in two core characteristics. He is unshakably **Catholic** and He is a preacher of **repentance...** that is, of rebuilding.

In Francis' lifetime, other popular spiritualities embraced poverty and the Gospel way of life - just as he did (for example, the Waldensians.) But all of those other movements broke away from the Church and were, in time, declared heretical. Francis remained radically faithful to the Church. He saw its weaknesses and abuses, but rather than breaking, (and rather than doing nothing,) he worked to rebuild the Church.



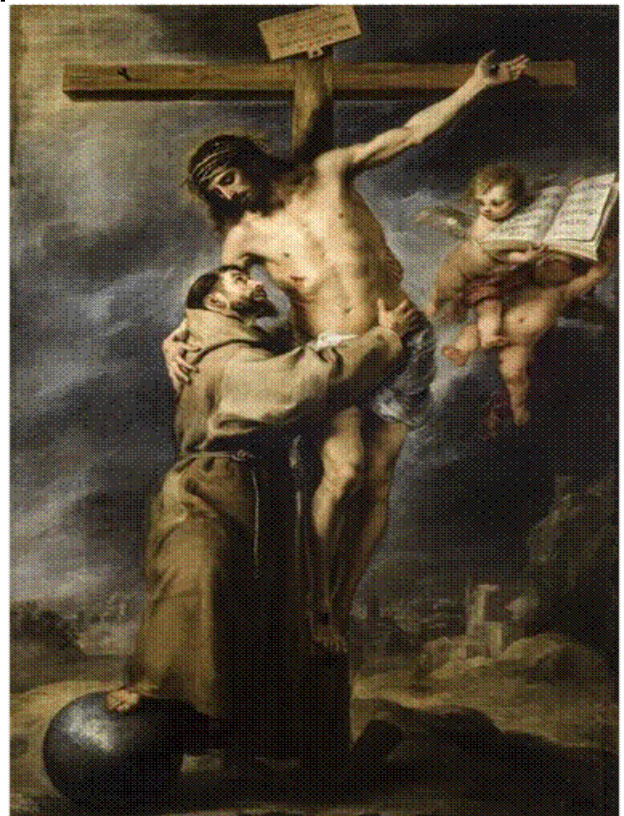
He began by physically rebuilding county churches. During his conversion he was praying in the broken down chapel of San Damiano. He heard, a voice from the Cross, repeating three times, *“Francis, go and repair My House, which, as you see, is falling utterly into ruin.”* St. Bonaventure wrote - that Francis *“heard this Voice in his bodily ear ... and immediately prepared to obey, and devoted himself wholly to the request to repair the material church.”* Major Life 2.1 Over a few years he and companions repaired three chapels: San Damiano, the Porziuncola, and St. Peter the Apostle. St. Bonaventure concluded, *“However, the principal intent of the message was to rebuild the whole Church which Christ had purchased with His own blood, even as the Holy Spirit taught him, and as Christ Himself afterward revealed to Francis and to his companions.”* Major Life 2.1

In confirmation of this, Pope Innocent III had a dream that the cathedral church of the diocese of Rome was falling over, collapsing on itself, but a small man in plain peasant's clothing came up and took the weight of the church and held it up with his shoulder. The church would be straightened and set solidly on the ground by St. Francis. Major Life 3.10

For Francis, and for us, the pilgrimage to rebuild the Church **begins with the Cross** - the San Damiano Cross... and is a pilgrimage **towards the Cross**. The pilgrimage logo *“shows how the pilgrim's journey ... moves more and more toward the Cross.”* The official description of the logo continues, *“The Cross is by no means static, but it, too, is dynamic, bending toward and meeting humanity as if not to leave it alone, but rather offering the certainty of its presence and the reassurance of hope...”* to inspire us (together- not individually) to dynamically bend up towards the cross as Francis did on Mount La Verna.

OFS Rule #6. *They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.*

**Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example,** let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the Pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.



# Perspectives from the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada (RFEC)

By Gerald Gabriel, ofs, Eastern Fraternity Regional Minister

## [FRANCISCAN FOCUS – Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada – SFO – Franciscan Focus](#)

As we are soon entering into the season of Lent, I thought I would share a few words from our Region presently. It seems that this is a busy time of the year. We have had several recent Elective Chapters for our local fraternities; however there are four or five more on the horizon. Although preparing for these Elective Chapters is always a bit of a challenge, they are for the most part a blessing...a time of renewal of leadership and a time of personal growth for our OFS members.

It is our tradition to distribute our Regional newsletter (called the "Update") at three times of the year. Lent is one of those times. Our focus for this Lenten issue is the opening statement of Article 8 of the OFS Rule that asserts: may "prayer and contemplation be all that they are and do...". Several members have contributed articles about their own approach to prayer or that of their fraternity. There is also a reflection concerning "contemplation" and what that might call us to.. This issue of the Update will be distributed to all OFS members in our Region just prior to the commencement of Lent, which is next Wednesday (March 5, 2025). The hope is that these various reflections will help foster greater attention to prayer for all of us during this season of Lent.

It is hard to believe but the current Regional Council is in its final months of fulfilling its three year term. Accordingly, we are scheduled to have a Regional Elective Chapter in the third week of July, 2025. On the one hand, we can all muse "where did the past few years go...they seemed to pass so quickly". Yet, upon reflection, we can look back with satisfaction on many fraternal encounters, worthwhile collective endeavours, and frequent local initiatives undertaken, all evidencing the faithful commitment and joyful support of our OFS brothers and sisters. We pray that with help of the Holy Spirit the upcoming Regional Elective Chapter will be a time of prayerful reflection about the past and a hopeful turning of our hearts and minds to the future!

To all of our fellow OFS brothers and sisters across Canada, we wish you a holy Lent and a joyful Easter celebration!

### **National Communications Team**

*Jewel Jasmins, Richard Chamberland, Debbie Tessier  
Sherrill Guimond, Lanny Hui*





# REGIONAL FRATERNITIES PAGE

## Eastern Regional Fraternity News



*Secular Franciscans from the Quebec Area gathered in Montreal for their annual Variety Show in January 2025. A very good time was had by all!*

*Members of Brother Leo Fraternity had their Elective Chapter recently. Members of the Council (2024-2027) from left to right are: Marion Clorey – Spiritual Assistant, Edwena Arbuckle- Minister, Mike Mooney- Vice-Minister, Gary Scully- Treasurer, Shirley Scully- Secretary, and Claudia Batchilder- Formation Director.*



*St. Patrick's Fraternity will be celebrating its 120<sup>th</sup> of canonical establishment in 2025! The fraternity banner has two sides; one side is the image of St. Francis and the other side highlights St. Patrick. Thanks to brother Gerry who was instrumental in sprucing up the fraternity banner!*

*The recently-elected Council (2024-2027) of Saint Francis of Assisi Fraternity with Les MacFarlane (RFEC Vice-Minister Eastern Ontario) standing at the podium. From left to right, Council members are: Mary Hagen- Formation Director, Doug Clorey- Vice-Minister, Joan McDonald- Minister, and Marion Marshall, Treasurer. Kathleen Swift- Secretary is pictured on the Zoom screen. Claudia Batchilder, Spiritual Assistant for the Fraternity, is not present in this picture.*



# Regional Fraternity of St. François de Laval



*Tau Fraternity, Québec*  
*Here is a photo of our fraternity that received two persons into formation.*  
*For this occasion members of the Ottawa fraternity visited us.*

**Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity**

*Submitted by Maritza Chouza, ofs  
OLOTA Youth Director*



*Winter Young Adult Retreat 2025  
“Journey with the Magi”*  
*We were blessed having 45 young adults joining the retreat at Mount St. Francis, in Cochrane AB. We journey together during the weekend of January 3th to January 5th along with the Friars Fr. Dan Gurnick, Fr. Joachim Yeo Won Yoon, Br Aldin, Br Brandon and Br Vincent. The retreat featured Lectio Divina for Saturday and Sunday mass readings, small groups reflection, journey with the magi walk, adoration, opportunity for reconciliation, mass, prayer time, quiet time, meals together and fellowship. Young adults from the provinces of BC, AB and Sk were bonded as they were meeting and journeying together during the weekend.*

*Students in K to G12 from the provinces of BC, AB, SK and MN participated in the 8th Annual Franciscan Art Contest. Students from Holy Cross Elementary in Burnaby BC received their prizes. They won 1st place, Honour Award and Artistic Merit Award in kindergarten; and 1st place, Honour Award and Artistic Merit Award in Elementary. Lanny and my self had the beautiful opportunity to give the prizes to the kids in person during the mass at Holy Cross Parish on February 20th. They were so happy receiving their gift cards and diplomas!*





“Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.”



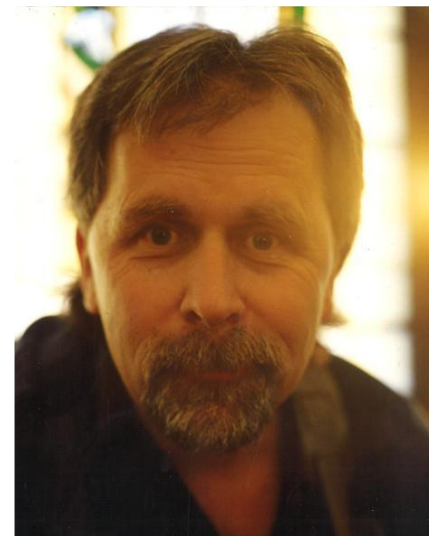
We wish to inform you of the death of

**Sister Louise Caouette, fmic** on January 3. Often involved with young people, Sister Louise was head cook for several years of the Fête des Tentes, and many members of the Franciscan family may remember her. Her funeral was held Friday, January 17 at 10:30 a.m. at the Résidence Les Pionnières, 850 Côte Vertu Blvd., Montréal.

The obituary notice is available here:

<https://www.magnuspoirier.com/fr/avis-de-deces/132225/louise-caouette>

**Denis Grady** entered into eternal rest with the Lord Jesus Christ on Friday January 24, 2025 at the age of 72 years. His heart beat for the homeless, the handicapped, the addicted, the broken hearted, and the lost. He used his creative passion for music, faith and community, to build bridges and create belonging for all to feel part of God's compassion and love. Later in life, he would open his home and his heart to others, creating a sanctuary for those in need, offering comfort, guidance, and love to those who needed it most. He founded the *Franciscan and Friends Mission* in 2002 with the vision to bring hope to vulnerable and isolated people through a variety of creative programs. For the next 22 years, he would organize many trips to Haiti, Mexico, Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Grenada, Guatemala, Belize and the Dominican Republic. Beginning in 2017, in an effort to further the Truth and Reconciliation Act, Denis reached out to many First Nations in southern Alberta to serve the communities through organizing art and music events. A Funeral Mass was celebrated at Holy Spirit Catholic Church on Saturday, February 1, 2025 at 11:00 am.



## **Sister Anna Chan, SC**

Anna Chan, daughter of Rudy and Esther Chan, ofs, founded the Servants of the Cross in 2003. The Servants of the Cross is a community of religious women associated with the Companions of the Cross. Anna Chan founded the Servants of the Cross with permission from Roger Vandenakker, the moderator of the Companions of the Cross. The Servants of the Cross is a community of women who are dedicated to evangelization and openness to the Holy Spirit. The Companions of the Cross is a community of priests and seminarians founded by Fr. Bob Bedard. The funeral Mass was celebrated on February 19, 2025 at Notre Dame Cathedral, Ottawa.