



Secular Franciscan

National Bulletin for the Secular Franciscan Order in Canada
October 2012

The Mission of the OFS

At the conclusion of the XIII General Chapter held in Brazil in 2011, Our Minister-General Encarnacion del Pozo reminded us that our mission as Secular Franciscans is that of the Church which has evangelization "at the core of her identity" (Evangelii Nuntiandi 14) She stated "We can no longer sit on the fence. The Church and the world is waiting for a courageous and effective response from us. The Church and the world has a need for Francis ...". The full text as well as the conclusions of the chapter is available at ciofs.org - click on *General Chapter 2011*.

The ongoing formation project team have worked hard to enable all OFS members to access the presentations from this General Chapter. During the first six months of 2012, the monthly dossiers have focused on the main address "Evangelized to evangelize", presented by Fr. Fernando Ventura, OFM Cap. From July to December, the focus is on the sub-theme, "A specific vocation for a particular mission", presented by Benedetto Lino, OFS. These too are available on the CIOFS website under *ONGOING FORMATION PROJECT*.

Marion Clory, ofs, International Councillor of Canada

Jesus' Teaching on Simplicity

Jesus both lived a simple life-style and taught simplicity. Here I will out-line only the - five spiritual principles in his teachings which are the grounds for the Secular Franciscan's simple life-style.

The first principle is: The Primacy of the Spiritual Life. Although all His teachings imply it, in Mathew 6:33 Jesus explicitly says: "*Seek first the Kingdom of God...*" Also, referring to Mary's intense listening to Jesus, he said to Martha who was preoccupied with many unnecessary things "*...there is need of only one thing*". In other words, ultimately, only one thing matters - the spiritual life. These teachings clearly give greater primacy to the spiritual life. This is because we are always inclined to give primacy to transitory physical life to the extent of detriment of our spiritual life.

This leads to the second principle: The Temporality of the Material World. We find this teaching, for instance, in Mt. 6:19-21 (Lk. 12:32-34) where Jesus says: "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be*

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Lord of the Dance

Dear brothers and sisters of the OFS

We can see that life takes us on unforeseeable roads in our human experience. Who could have predicted that the son of Peter Bernardone, a rich merchant of Assisi, would one day be a « pilgrim and stranger on this earth »? Who would have thought that a girl of noble class would become a disciple of Francis on her way to San Damiano? Who knew that the Franciscan Family would spread and become what we know of it today in the world?

In that thrust, who would have thought that one day we would close churches because of the absence of the faithful? Also, we would never have imagined that our evangelical fraternities are living in an « historic » moment of purification and detachment....

Yes, since our national chapter last May, many events have taken place...at a breathless pace. As we live under the gaze of the Lord, we can ask ourselves this question : do we not have the Lord of the Dance? Where there is life, there is movement! There is hope!

On reading the Bible, we find Abraham, who in his old age, was caught up in the « dance of the Lord »...the people of Yahweh had this rhythm of itinerance in the desert...did Jesus not travel exten-

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Year of Faith's Kick-Off! – October 11, 2012

Today we begin, in communion with the universal Church, the year of the faith, convened by Pope Benedict XVI. The liturgy of the word proclaimed in the Eucharist on this day (Thursday of the 27th Week in Ordinary Time) presents us at least two fundamental aspects of our faith that can be very helpful in strengthening in us an ever deeper sense of this faith and that we, therefore, may share with other members of the People of God in order to grow together in this experience.

First, the five verses from the Letter to the Galatians remind us that the Christian community of Galatia was tempted to give the primacy to the law of Moses over faith in the gospel which they had heard. The apostle's rebuke to those believers was as strong as his desire to help them rectify their grave mistake.

Today the Church also faces challenges regarding our faith. There are some whose faith is based on mere external practices and do not arise from a sincere conversion, nor lead to a genuine commitment for the extension of the kingdom of God. Some people also hold on to some outdated rules, even when there are other norms that are necessary and faithful expressions of our Christian values, and they forget that it is faith in the Gospel, as Paul tells us, that opens our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit, the life of God, the flame that sets us on fire from within and transforms us into Christ's disciples and faithful witnesses. It is often easier to cling to certain practices, human norms and obsolete structures rather than letting the Spirit guide us on the path of the Gospel. Not that all rules and structures are invalid, but there may still be many that are so; however primacy is not theirs but it belongs to the faith-filled listening of the Word which leads us to a way of life.

The Lineamenta of the Synod on the New Evangelization in the section on "Word of God and transmission of faith" caution us about the need for a better awareness of the role of the Word of God and his power, a better proclamation of it in the liturgical celebrations and a more careful preparation of preaching. It is also necessary to understand better the importance of the Word for the mission of the Church, particularly in listening and in dialogue with the culture (n. 13). It may be convenient to ask ourselves, how do we proclaim the Word of God? How carefully do we prepare our preaching?

The second element clearly stated by today's Word of God is prayer. The Gospel of Luke shows basically three aspects of this fundamental experience of the Christian life. First, the parable of the person who bothers his friend at midnight asking for something to eat for an unexpected visitor invites us to pray with insistence even to the point of 'bothering' God, who actually listens to us always. This invitation of Jesus is very convenient for us, who many times neglect our dialogue with God, and prefer to use our time and energy in other realities, much less necessary. In addition, we often tend to separate the contempla-

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tive dimension from our concrete and daily commitment, forgetting that we are called to be contemplative in action, both vital dimensions should nurture each other if they are to be truly evangelical. We can say that one cannot pray without faith but it is also true that without prayer there cannot be an enduring and mature faith. The evangelist then tells us that God hears our prayers mainly because God is more than a friend; God is our Father who loves us so much more than a earthly caring friend or father, always imperfect, can do. This is the reason why our prayers are not lost in the air, but reach the heart of God. That is why Jesus dares to promise: "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you." May our prayer arise from a believing heart which desires to be true to what it believes and asks...

In this second element there is yet another important aspect, which is emphasized by Lucas: in our prayer we should pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which the Lord gives to those who ask for it.

We now return to the topic of the primacy of faith, of being led by the Spirit, which brings the words of life alive, and impels us to love God with all our being and our neighbor as Jesus did... How far are many of us from this goal! May this year of faith be a new beginning in this journey,

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enlightened by the word that we are to listen to with such faith, strengthened by a prayer which is generous and insistent, a prayer that is both trusting and thirsting for the Spirit of Life! In every Eucharist, this becomes a reality and compels us to live with these attitudes every minute of our existence.

Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR.

TOR International Spiritual Assistant to the OFS

The National Archives

The archives of the National Fraternity of the OFS includes meeting minutes, correspondence from the International, regional fraternities and correspondence sent to diverse groups and individuals. The reports of the members of the National council are also archived. The most recent archives are currently being kept by the National Secretary. Archives no longer current are sent to Françoise Malboeuf who files them at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Ottawa. Many francophone regional fraternities send their archives for safe keeping at the hermitage of St-François-du-Lac.

Michèle Turgeon, ofs, National Secretary

Regrouping of Fraternities, Local as Well as Regional

Brothers and sisters of St. Francis, I would like to share with you the idea of regrouping local and regional fraternities in a greater context.

For six years, I have occupied a role on the National Fraternity Council et these years have permitted me to see a significant decrease in active members in the OFS in all regions, and by this fact, the closure of many local fraternities. Also, I see more and more, the difficulty of renewing leadership in local and regional fraternity councils. It is often a game of musical chairs between certain members, who, without hesitation, take up roles, but with the risk of burning out and with no renewal at the heart of these councils. Certain fraternities « local or regional » have few active members, those having an average age of 75 years and this leaves the newly professed to take on council roles very early. How do we make room for younger members, who have little time to simply live the Franciscan experience at the heart of the group?

Therefore, how can we regroup our living forces of members that still have enough energy to take on roles on an elected council? How to maintain the life of the Franciscan charism that is so dear to us, and still pursue the animation of our fraternities? What and who will animate the OFS in 10 to 15 years? What will remain of this heritage and what are we willing to do to invest in the future?



What are the positive elements or conditions, for all, that would, in re-evaluating or revisiting our local and regional structures, help to find the means so that our Franciscan spirituality would regain the life necessary to pass on to a younger people. These structures were adequate for a generation of 30 years, but are they still adequate today? Let us not be duped, there are young people all around us, and there are some that dare to approach. But the 'House' that we present to them is too heavy and complex for them, and that may scare them, or is too complicated to integrate into their own lives. In the past, not so long ago, we had dozens of fraternities per region and now we are lucky to have a few fraternities with a few active members and they are decreasing rapidly.

Let us take the time to reflect on what we are leaving as heritage. Let us open up the discussion to identify the advantages and disadvantages of our ways of doing things, while keeping in mind that the structures should make things easier. Live in Fraternity like we are fraternities in a movement, and not spending all of our time managing structures.

On April 12, 2013, the Francophone Committee of Consultation (CFC) will open this topic for discussion. This will permit the regional representatives to share on what the future holds.

Finally, be assured, these discussions are not to obtain short term goals for me, but a desire to look ahead...for future generations, as did those who came before us. Peace and joy!

*Gilles Métivier ofs,
Francophone Vice minister secteur
National OFS Fraternity of Canada*

How to implement the National Chapter's JPIC resolutions

At the last National Chapter of Elections we passed two important resolutions affecting Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC). One was the adoption of a National JPIC Action Plan and the other was about Fair Trade. Passing the resolutions was the easy part. Now we have to consider and decide how to implement them.

Actually the JPIC Action Plan includes the steps to implement the plan and adopt some issues for continuing formation and action. The key parts of the plan are in articles 5, 6, 7 and 8. Please read the Plan and take the necessary action in your local fraternity.

The resolution on Fair Trade asked that "(1) fraternities become aware of the Holy See's and Canadian Bishops' concern for Fair Trade and learn what Fair Trade is, and (2) commit, where and when possible, to purchase Fair Trade and organic coffee, tea, chocolate and sugar for all meetings; and (3) positively encourage the fraternities' brothers and sisters to make the same commitment for their own individual use, ..."

This is a continuing formation project coupled with action. Many people in Canada already know about Fair Trade and how it is supported by Catholic Social Doctrine. Others do not and so it up to us to help them become aware. Fair Trade products are widely available in Canada. Please have your fraternity only buy and serve certified organic Fair Trade coffee, tea, sugar and chocolate.

In line with the National JPIC Action Plan's focus (in 6.2.8) "Solidarity with, and support for, Christians in countries threatened by hostile cultures" the National Fraternity has sent letters to the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia about religious freedom and to the High Commissioner of Pakistan about a Christian 14 year old girl, Rimsha Masih, who was in danger because of the oppressive blasphemy laws. In future these letters can be circulated to all local fraternities who can print their own copy and have it signed by members of the fraternity. Our Franciscan Voice will then be heard.

Andrew Conradi, ofs, National JPIC Animator

Youth Animator

May the peace and the joy of the Lord be with us! I have accepted the appointment from the newly elected National Council, to continue the role of Youth Animator for the OFS of Canada.

It is with great joy that I write today to encourage all of you to continue to share the Charism of our Founder St. Francis of Assisi with Youth! The National Council has written a mandate for this role and over the next three years it is my heart's desire to follow this mandate and to support and encourage Regional Fraternities and local Fraternities in their efforts to reach out to Youth.

The young people, today need more than ever, to hear words of hope and faith! And to experience the perfect joy that comes when one's heart is at "peace" in Jesus. St. Francis found this perfect "joy". Jesus promised to give us a peace that would surpass our understanding and He does. Walking in the way of St. Francis, leads us into this peace.

The Holy Spirit is the instigator of our actions in Christ. Led by and animated by the Holy Spirit, we will be certain to be vessels of grace! It is

not our work that we do when we share our charism- it is the Lord's work and we are channels of HIS Peace! Therefore we must be vessels of grace! WE are not "full" of grace as Mary is but with her intercession and the Holy Spirit, we can be vessels of "grace". In this grace we can truly live our Franciscan Rule. As we do this Youth are attracted!!

Over the next three years, I am hoping that we will see some regional events that will involve old and young together. Seculars and Religious brothers and sisters! As Vice Minister of the Trilium Regional Council, I was very involved with our 1st Franciscan Family Fest this past June 24th! The Feast of John the Baptist and it was a great success!! Together our Region and almost every Fraternity in it, participated! Some bringing their children and grand children! Over 200 attended and there was an article in the National Catholic Register <http://www.catholicregister.org/news/toronto-gta/item/14776-new-wing-of-the-secular-franciscans-encourages-youth-to-rebuild-the-church>. Thanks to Silvana for the great You Fra

display table! Thanks to our “Franciscan youth” Kendal Freeman and Keegan Fraser for their generous participation!! (Youth from our 1st Pilgrimage) Nikola Mery and the other Young People that attended and made our event more exciting! During this event we had several activities for all ages, Adoration, crafts, dance, music and a procession! Everyone renewed their OFS promises. The Holy Spirit was at work and young and old had fun!

Another necessary goal would be to establish a communication network across Canada, with all those that feel called to reach out to our youth. In order to follow the mandate defined by our National Council, inspired by the International OFS Presidency, *we need to build a team that spans our Nation! French and English together!* Including our young YouFra/Jefra contacts, our Regional OFS Youth Coordinators and any other Secular Franciscan or Friar or Sister drawn to Youth! Young or old! We will then share ideas and develop our means of delivering them to our Fraternities. SKYPE- and Facebook are two great means of connecting!

And thirdly, if at all possible, sometime in this next 3 years, to have another National You-Fra Pilgrimage Franciscan Youth- those drawn to the spirit of Francis and Clare! Our 1st Pilgrimage is still bearing fruit!! God is good! I have been maintaining contact with the Pilgrims and just this month, Aaron Arbuckle came to visit! I met Aaron at the Pilgrimage and he is from PEI. He attended the YouFra gathering in Spain at the WYD’s last year (his story will be in the next YouFra Bulletin) Youth are interested in action and making a difference. Aaron fasted and prayed when a certain bill went before our Nation, deciding whether or not to change the definition of what a human being is. While working at the Foundations Youth Centre in Madoc Ontario, we ran into Kendal who just happened to be visiting her parents! It was a joyous reunion! (see picture) These two young people that have made a commitment to support-



ing YouFra and Jefra in Canada! Youth bring us life and we give them life, by sharing the gifts of the charism of St. Francis! Let us all work closely together over the next three years!

It is not by chance that we are living in these times. As Secular Franciscans, God has called us and commissioned us. May we humble ourselves as our Lady did and be open to His will. May we be vessels of grace and channels of peace, allowing the Holy Spirit to animate us and fill us with God’s great love that we may share our charism, without fear, with everyone and in particular Youth!

I would like to thank and encourage the Regional Youth Coordinators and all of you that are reaching out to the Youth. (In particular I would like to thank Martine Gingras for sharing YouFra Jefra information with the at the Fetes des Tentés!)

If you have any questions or I could be of any assistance to your fraternity or Youth that you may have interested please contact me! 613-

242-1125 or email colleenmacalister@yahoo.ca

Peace and all Good, Love and Prayers

Colleen MacAlister ofs

Youth Animator OFS National Council Canada

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sively throughout his native land?...Francis of Assisi made of himself a pilgrim....these are only some figures....

Having lived in a Church that was well anchored in structure, the Vatican II Council appeared to shake this “immobility” and rediscovered the “Lord of the Dance”, that is to say, the “God of Life !”... the “God of the Word”.... the “Lord of Sacramental Life”...the “Living One in the midst of the living stones that we are.”

We have pruned the rootlets to discover the principal root of this church : Christ! He who makes us dance despite ourselves in our Christian communities and in our evangelical fraternities.

May Saint Francis of Assisi give us the grace he received upon meeting the Lord who initiated him on the pilgrim road before the Triune God who does not stay still. May Francis transmit to us the hope that filled him!

Frère André Chicoine, ofm cap.

National OFS Spiritual Assistant

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also." What we "treasure" most is what set our hearts on. Our heart is the essence of who we are - the centre or core of our beings. The material world, though good, is temporal and therefore cannot be made the center of our beings. If we do, it will lead to destruction because it is transitory. Storing up treasure in heaven is an analogy for saying that the spiritual life must be given the priority. It must be at the center of our beings because it is eternal. God is the source of our being and is therefore the proper object on which to set our hearts.



This echoes what Jesus said to Peter after he rebuked him: *"Get behind me, Satan, you are setting your mind on human things and not on divine things."* To "set the mind" on something is to make it the focus of your life. These cannot be "human things"; they must be "divine". Also, it echoes what Jesus said about making God the "focus" of your life, "heart" or "mind": *"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"* (Mt. 6:22-23) Focus on that which gives light - on God and not materialism. We become like what we focus on. Focusing your life and ambition on materialism only leads to darkness.

Once again, to the crowd that followed him just for the "free lunch", Jesus said: *"Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life."* (Jn. 6:24-35) Though important, "spiritual food" is more important than "physical food". Also, in the Parable of the rich farmer (Lk. 12:13-21) Jesus warned against covetousness. A person's life, he says, does not *"consist of his possessions"*. Be *"rich toward God"*.

A life focused on material gain is completely incompatible with the spiritual life. It is like trying to serve two masters: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."* (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13) Serving wealth leads to despising God.

The third spiritual principle is: The Distraction of Material Wealth From God. Two parables illustrate this principle: The Sower, and The Great Feast. In the parable of the sower, the seed that falls in the weeds represents those who hear the word of God but *"the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word"* (Mk.4:18. Mt.13:22; Lk. 8:14) In the parable of the Great Feast the wealthy ones invited to the wedding banquet were too preoccupied with their possessions to come. Only the poor who were not distracted by wealth came and feasted. The wedding banquet represents the Kingdom of God. Material wealth can distract us from the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 22:1-4; Lk. 14:16-24).

Two more examples of this principle can be given; not parables but actual encounters. A rich young man inquired of Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus quoted the Commandments, the man said that he had done all this but still felt he lacked something. To this Jesus said *'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.'* (Lk. 18:18-27) When the man heard this, *"he went away grieving, for he had many possessions."* (Mt. 19:16-26; Mk. 10:17-27) Wealth can be a bondage, a serious block to our spiritual life. It can become a higher priority than God. After this encounter, Jesus tells his Disciple that it is very difficult for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God. The other encounter is with Martha already mentioned. Jesus said to her: *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things..."*

The fourth principle is: The Proper Detachment From Material Things. Jesus teaches us not to be too attached to material things but to keep a "loose grip" on them. In Mt. 5:40,42; Lk. 6:29b-30, Jesus instructs us: to give to those who beg, give extra to those who sue us, and to, lend without expecting return. This implies a spirit of detachment from possessions.

Lastly, the fifth principle behind Jesus' teaching on simplicity is: Trust in God's loving Providence. Mt. 6:25-34 (Lk. 12:22-34) is Jesus' great passage about not being anxious about material necessities. Our loving God knows what we need. If we "Seek first" His reign (Mt. 6:33) we may trust Him to give us what we need to live. (Also see: Mt. 10:5-15; Mk.6:7-13; Lk. 9:1-6; 10:1-12 – Apostolic life style. Trust in God's loving providence.)

There are several other teachings concerning simplicity: 1. The Parable of Lazarus and rich man (Lk. 16:19-31). We are to show mercy to the poor. Both mercy and unkindness have ramifications in the

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afterlife. Mercy is rewarded and unkindness is punished. Wealth shared with the less fortunate implies a loose hand on possessions. The Beatitudes - "*Blessed are the poor, the Kingdom is theirs.*" (Lk. 6:20-21, 24-25) By way of judgment, in the afterlife, there is a reversal of fortune. Finally, in Mt. 19:27-30 (Mk. 10:28-31; Lk. 28-30) Jesus speaks of the rewards for those who have "*left everything*" to follow him above material wealth. They shall "*receive many times as much and shall inherit eternal life.*"

I realize this was a "crash course". You have, however, the bases on which is build your Franciscan call to Simplicity. You may want to read the references more thoroughly later. Francis lived and taught simplicity because Jesus lived and taught simplicity. As Secular Franciscans, we follow suit in accordance to our vocation.

Br. Gerry Clyne, OFM, National Spiritual Assistant to the OFS

Use of Contributions

The National Council would like to thank the regional fraternities for remitting their annual contributions. There are four major categories of expenditures for the National Council :

Primarily, the funds permit the National Council to meet twice a year, defraying travel costs for members of the council and for accommodations and meals for the meetings.

Secondly, the funds defray the cost of translations and part of the costs of the national conference and elective chapter, including travel costs for the International Visitors to the chapter.

Thirdly, travel costs for National Council members conducting Fraternal Visitations and presiding over elective chapters in the various regional fraternities.

Fourthly, the contribution of the National Fraternity to the International Fraternity and the cost of registration and travel of the International Councillor to the International Chapters.

The National Council must also cover office expenses and occasionally travel costs other than those mentioned above, as well as formation projects. The National Council supports Franciscan International and activities of the Franciscan Family such as the Fête des Tentés and Youfra when funds are available.

Outside of Regional Fraternity contributions, the National Fraternity will sometimes receive gifts from individuals and corporations.

Harvey Levesque, ofs., National Treasurer

National OFS Fraternity of Canada - Orientations of Formation, 2012 to 2015

Brothers and sisters of the OFS in Canada, I am addressing you for the first time since my election as Formation Director at the National Chapter in May 2012 at Chateauguay. It took me four months of reflection, prayer and attention to the signs that the Holy Spirit has placed on my path, to be able to share with you the orientations that I hope to follow for this mandate of National Formation Director.

It is an intimidating challenge to succeed Micheline Larocque who had accomplished with a competent and devoted team, a colossal work of adapting the Initial formation program transmitted in 2008 by CIOFS to National Councils. The Initial OFS Formation Manual for Canada has then been assembled and distributed since 2010 for *ad experimentum* use.

First, I would like to confirm that this Manual remains the privileged and recommended tool for forming new inquirers to profession as members of the OFS. Several regional fraternities have decided to use all or parts of it for professed members to update or to gain a basic understanding of the major changes that came following Vatican II. These changes are characterized by the new Pauline Rule, the new General Constitutions, the new Ritual, the new Statutes and by an Ecclesial Statute clearly redefined.

The orientations that I would like to propose for the period of 2012-2015 relate more to ongoing formation. In 2010, CIOFS Formation Director, Benedetto Lino, wrote a letter bringing important clarification to the profound meaning of formation. Having emphasized that formation is not instruction, that it consists not only in receiving and giving documents and that it has no bearing on meetings where devotions are practiced, he defined **Franciscan formation** as a journey that shapes and takes on a new

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form, the form of Christ. To attain, our Formation Manual is Christ himself, present amongst us through his Word, the sacraments and his Spirit. In that sense, to form oneself consists more in conforming to Christ (as illustrated by the pin of the Franciscan conformity), to resemble Him, to allow Him to realize the plan that He has conceived for us. Our part consists in simplifying, shedding, becoming minors, in the way of Francis so that we too become living manuals for our brothers and sisters. The essential of a living manual is to teach without words, still communicating the interior flame that frees the warmth of love. Benedetto Lino concluded in saying that only when we are consumed by the flame of love will the manuals become useful.

Do we have this flame that the apostles and our father Francis had and that permitted them to enflame the world of their time? And if we do not have it yet, how to increase in us the thirst and hunger to conform ourselves to Christ? The Church today gives us eloquent answers to the questions that are asked by Christians and all men and women of good will. The new evangelization that was spoken of by blessed John Paul II is more than ever on the agenda. Therefore, the XIIIth General Assembly Ordinary Synod of bishops is taking place in Rome from October 7 to 28 with the theme: The new evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith. Also, on October 11, 2012, three significant events were celebrated at the Vatican : the 50th anniversary of the Opening of the Vatican II Council, the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the inauguration of the Year of Faith by Pope Benedict XVI.

Would it not be time to respond to the call of holiness given to all Christians following the last Council and to ask again in Whom we believe in this year of Faith that begins? Would not the image of God the Father that we are familiar with benefit from being conformed to that of the Father of Mercies revealed by Jesus? And where our values and our beliefs stand in regard with the Catholic faith exposed in the new Catechism? As an example, are we convinced of the free gift of salvation as clearly proclaimed by St. Paul or do we still think that we have to merit it by our own efforts, our good works... Where are we on our journey to follow Jesus in the way of Francis who said : « Let us begin, my brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up to now we have done nothing » (*1 Cel 103*)? Seen in this way, ongoing formation is nothing else than a daily conversion as requested by article 7 of our Rule.

Does the orientation to grow in hunger and thirst for holiness constitute a goal of formation? I invite you to revisit this question in your fraternity meetings and to make it yours. To mutually support each other on this road to sanctity, I ask you to share your reactions, undertakings and discoveries on the page of the National web-site dedicated to formation. Other means can be discovered and used in time.

The difficulty of such a goal is to establish measurable criteria. Can we measure the growth of our collective holiness by an increase in membership in the OFS from now until three years? Not certain! However, other criteria exist. The pagans who observed the first Christians said SEE HOW THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER. If the flame grows, the glow of Love will not fail to warm, to light and even to enflame the whole world and we will be worthy sons and daughters of Francis and Clare of Assisi.

Pierre Fortin, ofs, Formation Director

Secular Franciscan

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New Franciscan Saints

Pope Benedict XVI canonized seven saints on October 21, 2012. Doug Clorey, International Vice Minister, attended and sends these words: *I was pleased to have been able to attend the canonization ceremony. As a Canadian Secular Franciscan, three of the 7 individuals being canonized were particularly relevant. Anna Schaeffer, from Germany, was a Secular Franciscan, Marianne Cope was a Franciscan sister from Syracuse, NY who followed the Third Order Regular and, of course, Kateri Tekakwitha was the first Native American saint, linked to both the US and Canada.*