



Secular Franciscan

National Bulletin for the Secular Franciscan Order in Canada
October 2014

From the Minister Debbie Tessier ofs

Spiritual Reflection

As Summer gives way to fall and the trees drop their leaves, we are reminded of the need to shed appearances of glory and stand naked before God and the world, vulnerable and humble yet strong enough to face the elements sure to come. Slowing down, watching, waiting, living internally on the harvest of summer that will take us to the next Spring. Thank you Lord, for the rich harvests of summer, both of food and of spirit!

National Meeting in June

The National Meeting took place in PEI in June of this year. It was a very good meeting, hospitality was wonderful! Some of us who had never been to PEI were able to see some of the sights after the meetings. A report was sent to Regional Ministers at the end of June.

The next National Meeting will take place via SKYPE on November 21st, 2014. This is our first try! Hoping it works almost as well as being there in person!

National Conference of Spiritual Assistants
Brother Gerry Clyne, OFM, who had resigned as National Spiritual Assistant last year, is now free to once again take up the yoke, forming a Conference of National Spiritual Assistants with Fr. André Chicoine, OFM Cap. The National Fraternity is permitted to have a Spiritual Assistant from each branch of the First Order Franciscan family to represent the fraternities that were founded by that particular branch of the First Order in Canada. Welcome back Br. Gerry!

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From the National Spiritual Assistant to the SFO

"You Are Our Faith"

You may remember, on the occasion of the National Spiritual Conference of the OFS in 2013, Deacon Maurice Prindiville, ofs, focused particular attention to the OFS theme "Faith in Christ following in the footsteps of Francis in our world", which was proposed by the National Council. He emphasized the reality of our God that Francis loved to contemplate and to speak of as: "Triune God" or "God the Trinity." A rewarding reflection to help to integrate the spiritual journey of St. Francis that he incorporated into his own life.

I recall that Benedict XVI, just before his resignation as Pope, mentioned that he must stay the course. He wrote: "I felt like St. Peter with the apostles in the boat on the Sea of Galilee ... There were times when the water was choppy and the headwind strong, as throughout the history of the church, and the Lord seemed to be sleeping. But I always knew that the Lord is in this boat, and I always knew that the boat of the Church is not mine or ours, but his. The Lord will not let it sink ... "(Quoted by Andrea Torielli in his book *Francis, the Pope of the poor*, Novalis)

Following this discussion, we of the Franciscan family can think of St. Francis who was also struggling with depression ... however, it was said by the voice within "to whom does the Order belong?" "We too are invited to face the difficulties that can crush us, to turn to Him and say, **You are our faith.**"

Cardinal Bergoglio spoke of faith as a treasure that we keep and are afraid to lose. He continued his thought by insisting: "Faith is not a possession, but a mission." We feel that our Pope Francis invites us to enter into "the dance of small steps" to deepen our Christian journey in the Word of God.

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NATIONAL OFS CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS

May 14-17, 2015

Rediscovering the Simplicity of St. Francis

Ursuline Centre of Spirituality
20 rue des Ursulines, Loretteville, QC G2B 3W7

(FROM THE MINISTER Continued from page 1)

Trillium Regional Fraternity Chapter:

A beautiful setting for a Franciscan gathering at Mount St. Mary’s in Ancaster! It is also always a pleasure to provide musically support to the liturgies!

NEW COUNCIL FOR THE TRILLIUM REGION

- MINISTER - Catherine Payne, ofs
- VICE MINISTER - Marzio Apolloni, ofs
- VICE MINISTER- Louise Arruda, ofs
- SSECRETARY- Debbie Tessier, ofs
- TREASURER- Danuta Juchniewicz, ofs
- SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT - Fr. Peter Knaapen, OFM Conv.
- FORMATION DIRECTOR - Donna Dooling, ofs
- YOUTH ANIMATOR- Lisa Theriault, ofs

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Eastern Regional Fraternity Chapter:

It was my pleasure to preside the Chapter of Elections of the Eastern Regional Fraternity with Br. Gerry Clyne, OFM on the weekend of August 1st to 3rd, 2014. The gathering of the delegates and observers was well organized. There is a wonderful tradition for the assembly to gather every year at Le Cenacle in Cacouna for their Spiritual Conferences and Chapters, and to meet at the convent of the Poor Clares in Rivière-du-Loup for Mass and greeting of the Sisters.

To enhance Eastern Regional Communication capabilities, a new web-site was created by Michel David, ofs. You can view it at: www.rfec@webs.com

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE NEW COUNCIL

- MINISTER- Michel David, ofs
- VICE MINISTER, ATLANTIC - George Guimond, ofs
- VICE MINSTER, QUEBEC AND ONTARIO - Carol David, ofs
- SECRETARY - Martina McLean, ofs
- TREASURER - Sherrill Guimond, ofs
- DIRECTOR OF FORMATION - Debbie Richard, ofs
- DELEGATE #1 TO THE NATIONAL CHAPTER - Claudia Batchilder, ofs
- DELEGATE #2 TO THE NATIONAL CHAPTER - Eric Lasota, ofs
- ASSISTANT SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT - Doug Hagen, ofs

There is one issue that came up that Regional Fraternities will want to bring their attention to, and that is that Secular Spiritual Assistants do not have active voice at the elections of officers and in financial decisions of the Regional or Local Fraternity. This ruling comes from the Statutes for Spiritual Assistants to the OFS, article 12.3:

The Spiritual Assistant is by right a voting member of the council and of the chapter of the fraternity to which he or she gives assistance and collaborates with it in all activities. Only in economic matters and in elections at any level does he or she not enjoy the right to vote.

This is why it is so important that Secular Spiritual Assistants do not serve their own fraternities, as they will lose their active voice within the fraternity. If they are serving other fraternities, they cannot vote in the elections of the fraternity that they serve, but they can still vote in the elections of their own fraternity. At the Regional (or National) level however, a local (or regional) fraternity Secular Spiritual Assistant’s role overrides any other position, and if they attend the Chapter of a higher level of fraternity, representing the fraternity that they serve, they again will not vote in the election and on economic matters.

The wisdom of this complex matter may not be immediately obvious to us. The right to vote is a precious one and not easily relinquished. It may help to remember that this is no ordinary organizational

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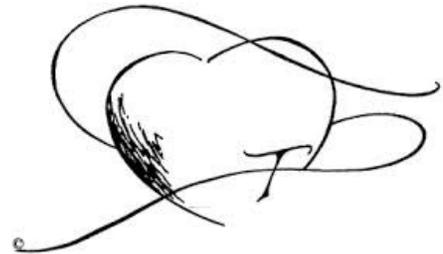
(FROM THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT Continued from page 1)

Whenever we participate in the liturgy of the Eucharist as in the sharing of the Word, there is always the rite of "Ite missa est" or the "conclusion" ... On the contrary, it's not over, it all begins ... we are invited into the "evangelical dance of small steps" that will fuel our life in fraternity because we were fed the Eucharistic Bread and the Word of God.

As we prepare to celebrate St. Francis in October, enter this contemplation-action of God who offers himself in the manger in Bethlehem as well as on the cross at Golgotha. May the Poverello of Assisi guide our daily actions!

Pax et Bonum!

Fr. André Chicoine, OFM Cap.



From Marion Clorey, ofs, International Councillor

A frequent comment in response to our recent request for input on the upcoming General Elective Chapter theme "How to manage an International Order like the ofs" was that members do not have a clear understanding of the structure of the Order.

As members of the Secular Franciscan Order, we are members of the International fraternity. I think of it as one giant circle with approximately 115 smaller circles inside of it representing nations or in some cases, clusters of nations. Each National Fraternity circle has smaller circles inside it representing local fraternities.(GC 65.1). In some countries like Canada, these local fraternities are clustered into regions. (GC 65.1) Many countries are too small in number and/or geography to have regions.

Each National Fraternity elects an International Councillor. All of these councillors are members of local fraternities, like me, elected by their respective National Chapters and are members of their respective National Councils. When there is a General Chapter, this individual speaks "in the name of the National Fraternity that they represent," and presents what has been entrusted to them by the decision of their respective National Council."(Int'l Statutes. Art. 7b). At the General Elective chapter, a Presidency is elected - this group is made up of seven Presidency Councillors and a Vice Minister General and Minister General. All of these people are local fraternity members like us. Anyone who is a permanently professed member of the Order can be elected to any of these positions. It is not a hierarchy. There is also a Franciscan Youth International Councillor elected. The four General Spiritual Assistants also form part of the Presidency, as do the General Treasurer and General Secretary which are appointed positions.

Over the past year, I have been focussing on preparations for our General Chapter to be held in Assisi, November, 2014. Thank you to our National Vice Ministers who worked hard at getting responses to questions on the theme. And thank you to all of you who responded! These responses collated by the regions will help inform and articulate my participation when speaking in the name of the National Fraternity of Canada at the General Chapter (paraphrase of Int'l Statutes Art 7b).

Here are some of the highlights of the responses. More interconnectedness between the various levels of fraternity was recommended which would lead to a better understanding of financial and other needs. More use of electronic communication and a greater number of people involved in leadership might lighten the load in terms of human and financial resources. Some felt a more simplified structure which would respond to the needs of members was required instead of members being forced to comply to the needs of a structure. Leadership training and delegation of responsibilities was a recurring theme. The use of technology (facetime, skype, webinars, etc.) could allow more people to work on projects whether it be educating others in formation programs or collaborating to create effective JPIC initiatives. Through the intercession of St. Louis, our patron, and St Francis and St. Clare, please continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten and guide the deliberations of the Chapter.

From Tom Wilkinson, National Vice Minister: Anglophone

Both the Trillium and Eastern Canada Regions have held Elective Chapters within the past three months and we wish to welcome all those who have accepted the call to leadership in their respective regions. We particularly welcome Cathy Payne as the new Regional Minister of the Trillium Regional Fraternity as well as Michel David who was recently elected Regional Minister of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada.

In welcoming Cathy and Michel, we want to also sincerely thank Les Alberti for his devoted leadership as Minister of the Trillium Region over the past 3 years and his previous years of service on the Trillium Regional Council. Likewise, we express our sincere appreciation for the dedication and leadership given by Leonarda MacNeil, who served as Minister of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada from August 2011 until Dec. 31st, 2013 when she was forced to resign due to health issues. Fortunately, Leonarda is making a slow but good recovery. (Thanks be to God!) Our thanks, also, to George Guimond who completed Leonarda's term as Regional Minister, organized and chaired the recent Elective Chapter and remains on the new Council as Vice-Minister.

In Pope Francis' exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel", (Evangelii Gaudium), we read much about the need to build community and how each of us "*in every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the*

poor, and for enabling them (the poor) to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid".

As Secular Franciscans, we are called to carry out the mission of evangelization as described in our holy Rule. We are called to live the gospel of Jesus Christ, going from "gospel to life and life to gospel". In so doing, we have a special responsibility as Christ and St. Francis showed us, to recognize, identify with and live that spirit of poverty as we serve the poor on a daily basis.

Having attended both the Trillium and Eastern Canada regional fraternity elective chapters as well as the Elective Chapter of Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity Elective Chapter last year in Delta, British Columbia, I have had the opportunity to read and listen as local fraternity ministers reported on a variety of ministries, described their initial and on-going formation programs as well as their fraternity liturgies and prayer support life. All of which speaks to the building of community/fraternity as Pope Francis outlines in "The Joy of the Gospel".

Pope Francis is calling us, individually and as community/fraternity to reflect carefully as to whether or not we are living our lives in harmony with the poor to whom we are called to serve. I encourage all of us to spend time in this coming year to read the Holy Father's exhortation carefully. Then, let us examine our fraternal life to ensure that we are growing together in our study and understanding of the scriptures. Finally let us not fear welcoming the poor into our community of love (fraternal life) and design our actions (ministries) to reflect our embrace and support of these, our sisters and brothers, in both our own community here at home and in the troubled areas around the world.

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rule, that we belong to an Order of the Church, and all that we do has an effect in ours and others' spiritual lives. The more difficult road is the one that promises the most spiritual fruit.

National Chapter 2015 The National Council is looking forward to preparing the next **National Chapter**, at the Ursuline Spiritual Centre in Lorretteville, **May 14-17, 2015**. Leadership in the Secular Franciscan Order is a fulfilling and formative experience! I encourage anyone considering serving on the National Council to pray over it and to talk to one of the members of the current Council about the role that they are considering!

May God bless all that you do in his service!