

FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 131

Post-Chapter 2019

My Assisi Pilgrimage – Praying With My Feet By Steve Bowman, n/OEF



I'm a simple guy, not much of a writer but I was asked for a report on my Assisi pilgrimage so here it goes! As a novice in the OEF and follower of Francis, I felt it important to visit Assisi before deciding on Profession. I also wanted my wife and kids to meet Francis and Clare in hopes they'd understand more about what I believe and seek and why. The trip was planned well before several personal financial challenges occurred, and I considered canceling the trip, but it was too late; thanks be to God!

I had done my reading on making the most of a pilgrimage. I'd been in contemplation about what I needed to leave at the Tomb of the Lover of Poverty. I pinned all the places to see on Google maps, and front ended the trip with a couple of days in Rome seeing the Coliseum and The Vatican. The week we were there was the 100-year heat wave record so suffering was achieved!



I come from Protestant roots and was awestruck by St. Peter's. (I'm ashamed to say that prior I had no idea the Apostle Peter was buried there!) The Sistine Chapel was also

awe inspiring. My daughter and I were able to see Pope Francis give a Saturday homily from his apartment window which was very special. My translator app was able to help me get most of it but the beauty of the square, the variety of people and the feeling of spiritual presence among the crowd was life changing.

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My Assisi Pilgrimage... continued



We took a train to Assisi and the pictures don't do justice to just how hilly the town is. We arrived in the evening and my daughter and I walked to the already closed Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi, then down to San Damiano, then back to our apartment.

Our apartment overlooked the fountain in the town square where Francis was greeted by a simple man, and where he renounced his father's wealth.



My most precious memory of the trip was journaling with a cup of coffee on a bench next to the fountain in the early morning before the temperatures skyrocketed. The bell tower and Temple of Minerva served as excellent sources of contemplation.

Over the next 2 days we toured:

- Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi – St. Francis' tomb
- Basilica d San Chiara – The original San Damiano cross and tomb of St. Clare
- Cathedral of San Rufino – Where Francis was baptized
- Chiesa Nuova – St. Francis' home where he was imprisoned by his father
- Eremo delle Carceri – St. Francis' Hermitage



Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli – The Porziuncola where Francis started the OFM, received Clare, and died.

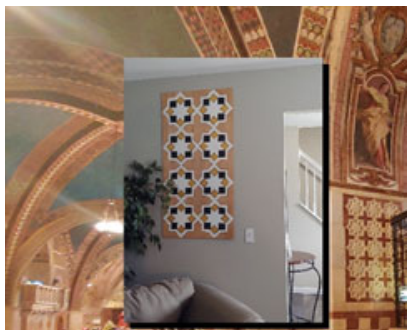
I was living in The Kingdom throughout. I was throwing out "Pace e Bene" to

everyone who would accept it and it felt great! Giotto's and other art works in the upper and lower chapels of the Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi are beyond words and too much to take in in a couple of days. I bought an art book on the collection and have been wallowing in it since.



My Assisi Pilgrimage... continued

The spiritual high was when I found out that the lower chapel opens at 6am for prayers. So, I ditched the family and went solo to spend some contemplative time at St. Francis' tomb. Then I did morning prayers and Mass with the Friars. I've never felt the presence of God more palpably.



It's a memory I will always cherish.

There was a marble geometric pattern next to where I sat for prayers and Mass that captivated me. Upon re-

turning home, I recreated it for my office, and it takes me back every time I see it.

This was, for me, a bucket list trip, but to hear my wife and kids all say they loved it, learned a lot and would return brought me pleasure. I think they now understand what draws me to St. Francis, and have a clearer understanding of what type of spiritual existence I'm seeking. They can relate to Francis as the role model for living like, and truly following Christ on earth.

The rest of my pictures can be viewed at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UbyZXsLSGOn-mHqSg_wm6nIps1IXCf8r?usp=sharing

Pace e Bene!



An OEF Online Bible Study

A group of six or seven have begun meeting Thursday evening in the US & Canada) for bible study using the communication software ZOOM. All OEFers are welcome to join.

We will be studying the Gospel lesson from the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel Reading for the Sunday that follows. We have now studied [Luke 10:1-11, 16-20](#), the sending out of the 72; Luke 10:25-37, The Good Samaritan; and Luke 10:38-42, The Martha and Mary story. The sessions have been fun, and have taken us all deeper into our faith and our exploration of living the Franciscan way. We use the "African Method" bible study: We first read the passage and everyone identifies a word or phrase that stands out for them. We then read the passage again (in a different translation), and everyone identifies how this passage impacts them individually. We read the passage a third time (in a third translation) and everyone identifies how the reading impacts us as a community. Then time for general sharing on the passage.

Everyone is welcome! Our meeting time is
8:00-19:30 PM EDT,
7:00-8:30 PM CDT,
6:00-7:30 PM MDT
5:00-6:30 PM PDT,
12:00 pm-1:30 pm Friday in New Zealand
12:00 pm-1:30 AM Friday Ireland
9:00-10:30 am Friday in Japan.



You will need a computer or a smart phone with a head set (and camera would be good) to participate. If you are interested in joining, send me an email at jgrbklyn@gmail.com and I will send you the Zoom link. We can also talk on the phone to get you started.

It will be great to have you with us!

Br. Juniper oef.



OEF History Project



For those who haven't heard, we (Sr. Dale, Br. Ron, Sr. Markie, and I) are working on a history of the Order. As we move forward, it would be helpful to me to receive copies of pictures, notes, meeting records, and the like to help fill out the content of the book, especially anything that reflects not only "business" decisions but personal takes on the Order at any given moment in time.



Thanks, Betty Lou



Words from The Council



Chapter 2019 began in a somber way, with unexpected grief at the death of Joseph Thomas (Keith) Downey, also known as Brother Baloo. Many of us learned of our sibling's sudden passing as we made our way to the Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond, Virginia. We were also gathering for our first Chapter since our sibling Brother Romero's death, and Thursday's time of worship together was both sorrowful and beautiful as we shared grief, love, and comfort, remembering all our siblings who have passed away. Sister Petra's words are helpful for us to remember as we continue to learn to give praise to our Creator "through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal can escape" -

"I receive this news with profound sadness for our loss. We commend his breath back to you, Divine One. Preserve his soul in peace and the embrace of your love. Bring our brother into a good and glorious resurrection. Keith, may you have peace and joy in your new found freedom. May you remember us in your prayers. May your sweetness accompany us. May your love imbue us. We will always miss you."

Our mutual grief and love opened our hearts to our celebrations and reflections of our 35th anniversary as an Order. Our theme, "Looking Back; Moving Forward," culminated in a special time of sharing, beginning with Charles Maxfield and Ron Nuss-Warren. As Dale Carmen wrote,

"At the birth of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans on November 22, 1983; Charles Maxfield became the first Postulant of OEF, Ron Nuss-Warren became the first Novice of OEF and Dale Trana Carmen became the first Professed member. All three had spent years exploring the possibility of an ecumenical religious order and months and days drafting, sentence by sentence and word by word, an Ecumenical Rule of Francis' revised version of the Third Order Rule. Then Charles, Ron and Dale signed, and had notarized The Incorporation Papers of An Ecumenical Franciscan Order; which, hours later, was blessed into birth at a Worship Service."

We then opened the reflections to all of us, each

sharing stories and gratitude as we passed through the years, to arrive at 2019. Of course, we also acknowledged the 30th anniversary of singing "Peach of a Savior" with a rousing rendition, to the joy of some and the annoyance of others!

Building on our theme of looking back and moving forward, our small group sessions gave us an opportunity both to get to know one another better and to reflect on how we can best go from gospel to life, and from life to gospel, as a community. We each had an opportunity to share how our journeys brought us to the OEF, as well as reflecting on what has shaped us, what our current needs are, and what we dream our community can be and do in the years ahead.

Our time together was very full, as we shared conversations over meals, laughter over witty jokes, silence and song at worship and prayer, and insight from the spoken word. We made tasty memories with homemade cookies, and we collected interesting travel stories when we finally left the gathering to face thunderstorms across the Midwest. We were also happy to welcome representatives from our sister orders: Masud Ibn Syedullah of TSSF, Ken Taylor of OLF, and Michael Heather of OFS. In addition to sharing life with us, they helped us with the serious work of discerning our Servant Council, as well as the seriously silly work of awarding the Juniper Cup. (By the way, congratulations to Helen (Kiwi), Fred, and James, and to everyone who participated and helped us learn about the forgotten saints of Franciscan history!)

And although we don't get the pleasure of Brother Rat's company (that honor went to Fred!), we look forward to working together as your Servant Council for the next three years. We welcome and appreciate your continued prayers as we all seek to ever more faithfully follow Jesus, in the little way of Francis and Clare.

Sincerely,

Betty Lou, Bruce James, Jacoba, Juniper, and Markie



Words from the Council... continued

We have great news to share with everyone about "The Tree". At Chapter I shared about an opportunity to work with the Pallottine Renewal Center in St. Louis (our most often home for Chapter gatherings). I began a conversation with them in Dec. 2018 about green projects. This past spring the conversation began to focus on planting trees at the center. I asked those who were at Chapter for their blessing in following through with purchase and planting of "The Tree" at Pallottine.

One thought was each year that we meet there we would sponsor a tree being planted. This idea has turned into a reality. In fact, the idea has grown into a fund raising project for Pallottine in their 50th anniversary campaign. This Oct., there will be a tree planting and ceremony at Pallottine. There will also be a marker for each tree with date planted and name of the sponsor.

Pallottine was going to have to replace the current trees that line their driveway in the near future and planting more. Now we and others are assisting with this green project. The desire is to continue working together to do more green projects and certainly planting more trees at the Center.

I will keep everyone informed about the tree planting in Oct. I hope many of us can be there for that day.

Peace and all good,
Markie



Sister Karen's Ordination!

Greetings, Sisters, Brothers, Siblings of the OEF! On Sat., June 8th, 11a.m, this year of 2019, at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Sacramento, the Episcopal Church ordained four of its own to the Sacred Order of Deacons; and Sister Karen Lawler/OEF was among those four. There to witness and participate in the Service was her spouse, Sister Kathy Lawler, Sister Betty Lou Leaver and her husband Carl, and me, Brother Michael V. New to me was The Hymn, "Veni Sancte Spiritus" (Come, Holy Spirit) sung as a chant at the beginning of the Consecration by laying on of hands to powerful effect. Our Sister Karen is now an Ordained Deacon of the Episcopal Church!
- michael v.



L-r: Karen Lawler, Michael Vosler, Betty Lou Leaver, Kathy Lawler

Sister Katie's Renewal of Vows!

Greetings, beloved siblings--

If my calculations are correct (I'm not so good at math), as I go to bed at almost midnight in the Republic of Georgia, some of you are practicing for the rites of passage tonight. I send you my love and a couple of photos* from my renewal ceremony on the 10th anniversary of my profession.

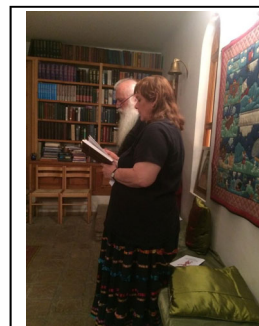
Malkhaz Songulashvili, a bishop in the Evangelical Baptist Church in Georgia, is the person who invited the Seeds team here to conduct our Creating Hope workshops. Malkhaz is also a lay Franciscan, and he agreed to witness my renewal of vows. In fact, he happened to have several copies of the SSF prayer book, which happened to have a renewal ritual. So, he invited me and my Seeds colleagues to his private chapel in his home to celebrate the liturgy and then the Eucharist. It was way beyond what I had in mind, and was very, very meaningful.

One of the photos is of Malkhaz and me reciting the ritual, and the other is of him, my Seeds colleagues, and myself. Some of you might recognize one of those colleagues from Chapter in Texas. His alter ego, Guinness (of Shirley, Guinness & Marcie), was at that Chapter meeting.

Peace and all good to you.

--Sister Katie Cook

*There is only room for one photo here





Another Fond Farewell



As most of you know, our Brother, Joseph Thomas (Keith) Downey, departed this life the day before he and Br. John Son of Syvert were to leave for Chapter. Needless to say, it was a shock to us all! We are grateful that John was there, and also grateful that he represented us at our Brother's funeral. Br. Keith was honored at Chapter, along with all of the other siblings in our Book of Life, and we learned that Keith had been contemplating changing his profession name to "Br. Baloo" Here is Br. John's report:

I wanted to share with everyone that I did attend Keith/Joseph Thomas/Baloo Downey's funeral.

I attended the visitation the night before the funeral and it was well attended. He was deeply loved by his home community. I met both of Keith's brothers. Kim, who I had met when I went to pick up Keith, is his younger brother. His older brother Kerry is nearly a foot TALLER than Keith was and that was no exaggeration. Both that evening and after the funeral I spent some quality time with Keith's husband, Victor; and we had a real heart to heart talk about Keith, their marriage and OEF. I have been asked by Victor to thank each and every one of the siblings in OEF for the care and compassion shown towards our Brother Keith.

By the way, I met with the Pastor the night before the funeral and I shared that Keith was thinking about changing his name to Brother Baloo. The topic of the sermon was love and compassion towards our loved ones here and beyond, including Saint Baloo.

Peace and all good,

Brother John soS,



A few words from Br. Lilith Bear:

Thank you, John, for your love of Br. Baloo. Not a day has passed since you told us of his passing that I have not missed his presence.

It was during Chapter two years ago in Chicago where Keith and I became close friends. It was there where we began our deep, heartfelt conversations, often filled with concern and laughter. In the last year we talked several times a week through the video chat option through Facebook messenger.

The name Baloo was his idea, because Brs. John Michael, Baloo, and I had many conversations about how to live our authentic selves. It was in the loving incubator of our conversations that Keith embraced the full nature of his being Baloo.

I miss his laugh and his care. I will try to carry it forward in my heart and life.

Regards, Br. Lilith Bear



**Above reading submitted by Br. Baloo, OEF (We will always love your weirdness, dear Brother!)*



This year's Juniper Cup!



Once again, a good time was had by all at our Annual Juniper Cup competition. As mentioned earlier in this issue, our winners were Sister Kiwi (first place, winning the coveted habit of St. James-the-least), Fred Jaxheimer (second place, with the dubious honor of hosting Br. Rat for the year), and Br. James Schwarzlose (bringing up the rear with the privilege of hosting Little Sister Kiwi).

Sr. Helen (Kiwi's) First Place Entry: Saint Hugo the Hugger

Feast Day - October 2nd

Relic - St Hugo's teddy bear



St Hugo the Hugger is one of the least well-known saints in Christian Hagiography. This is his story: As a child, St Hugo lived in a country where everyone was very serious. Life was all work and no play. Everyone always wore a sombre expression. There were no toys. And the language had no words for joy, laughter, smile, play, hug etc.

One day, Hugo was sitting under a tree when a big brown bear wandered towards him. "What's up?" he asked Hugo as he sat down beside him. "I don't know," replied Hugo. "There is no work to do so I don't know what to do." "Well ... I could give you a hug," said the Bear. "What is a hug?" asked Hugo.

"Come on, stand up," said the Bear and proceeded to give Hugo a rib-cracking bear hug. "I like that," said Hugo. "Is that what a hug is?" "Yes," said the Bear, and gave Hugo a teddy bear. "Now you can practice hugging by hugging the teddy bear."

So, Hugo took the teddy bear and practiced hugging it in secret, smiling to himself. One day he wondered if other children would like teddy bears to hug so he took some mock fur cloth from his mother's sewing cupboard, painstakingly learnt to sew and made some teddy bears. He gave them to the other children, taught them how to hug and swore them to secrecy. The more children that received bears the more difficult it was to keep them a secret.

Eventually, the adults found out about the bears and wanted some for themselves. Hugo was kept busy helping people make bears and teaching them how to hug.



Then Hugo had another idea. What if people started hugging each other? So, at the next town meeting he tentatively suggested that people could hug each other. Many of the adults shouted him down and said that hugging bears was revolutionary enough, and that hugging people would be going much too far. But a small group crept off to a convenient cellar and experimented with hugging. They found it quite liberating, and slowly the practice of people hugging each other spread throughout the town and into the country side.

The more and more people hugged, the more they gradually learned to smile, then laugh and play until everyone was doing it. The townsfolk were so happy that they proposed to the Pope that Hugo be made a saint.



Br. Fred's Second Place Entry:

What is imaginary can seem real if we all play along. What is real can sometimes be taught by sharing with others our love of the imaginary.

My presentation has three parts. 1st part will be a short biography (which is real). Then a reading (which is somewhat real and somewhat imaginary.)

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Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Submissions for the Advent 2019 issue of "Fiddlesticks" will be accepted immediately.

Deadline for submissions is October 15, 2019.

Send submissions to Sister Chris at
capoef@solarus.biz

or snail-mail to:

Christine Petersen, OEF
934 Round Oak Ct.*
Nekoosa, WI 54457

Thank you!

***Note the new address!**



Juniper Cup...continued

And lastly, a presentation of Relics, (completely imaginary.)

Part 1. Can you guess who I am recommending as a Saint?

My beloved Saint Applicant, hereafter at times called the Virtuous One, was born on October 4th, 1950, which is of course the Feast day of our beloved St. Francis.

Our Virtuous One had a very public life, and yet, there are many things that the average person does not know or remember about him. For example, from late 1969 through 1972, he had an important role in NASA and remains highly regarded among all those who worked in Aerospace safety. NASA personnel can be nominated for a quality award which is known affectionately by the name of our beloved saint to be....

Our Virtuous One did other things of significance and I'm surprised that he didn't have a troubled life after his unsurpassed fame in the 1970's & 1980's. By the time I was attending the Pennsylvania State University, he was extremely well known and popular - you found his likeness, and his name or nickname all over campus, and not just there, but all over the college towns everywhere in the country and the globe. Which is amazing to me because, as far as I can tell, he never completed a University degree.

Our Virtuous One is remembered by most people for his time in media, mostly the entertainment industry. He played more musical instruments than I could name but seemed to play the guitar the most. He was pictured on a US postage stamp released in May of 2001 and He received his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in late 2015.

All through life, he dabbled in writing but his novels, to my knowledge, were never published. He put some effort into the title of his book on Theology. And personally, I believe it was his best work. Oh, I

almost forgot his frequent appearance in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parades. But lastly, going back to aeronautics and flight, he had at least



1 spacecraft, 1 military plane, and 3 commercial aircraft named after him. That would be One Lunar Module, one B-58 Air Force Bomber, and 3 Airships (Blimps) owned and operated by the American insurance company (Met Life). Does anyone know who I'm talking about? It's Snoopy!

Part 2: "If Snoopy was a Saint." By Brother Fred

If Snoopy was a Saint, he would be the luckiest dog in good ole' Ireland.

And if he was a Saint, he would surely be a Franciscan Saint. For he was very Charismatic and his home was rather humble. His home was decorated brightly for Christmas and he frequently had a beggar's bowl in his hand... uh, no paws... uh, I will get it right, in his mouth.

We know like Fr. Francis, he talked to the birds.... And one was his best friend. Snoopy liked to tell Woodstock his jokes and then they would laugh so hard they would fall off the dog-house.



If our beloved Beagle was a Saint, he could be a Patron Saint of Unpublished Writers. For no writer has ever started so many great epic stories... "It was a dark and stormy night," or "It was the greatest love story ever told" But his theology book was his best, titled: "**Did you ever consider that you might be wrong!**"

Snoopy, if Sainted, could also become the Patron Saint of Aviation; move over St. Joseph of Cupertino (The Flying Friar,) we have a flying beagle!

Music was an important part of Snoopy's life. He played many musical instruments, from bugle, to guitar, and a mouth harp... oh many instruments, but when he played guitar or heard piano he seemed to always dance - his happy dance.

If Snoopy was a Saint, it would hardly be a stretch for most to agree; for we know of his imagination and loyalty. He was a fairly good-natured beagle, prone to express love and joy... he had wide circles of influence as "Joe Cool." And like Francis, who dreamed of being a knight, Snoopy had aspirations of war valor as a flying ace in the Royal Air Corps. I'm grateful to God that neither of

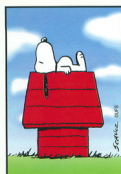


Juniper Cup...continued

them were any good at their dream of being a war hero.

Sure, it can be said that Snoopy was always a bit obsessed with cookies, especially chocolate chip, and pizza as well; and also in trying to steal Linus' blanket, but we know lack of sinfulness is not among the criteria for Sainthood. Like many Franciscans and saints of all times, Snoopy spread the Good news and peace through his actions, not needing words. (Although, he did moan and yelp and do some sniveling and crying from time to time!)

If Snoopy was a Saint, his normal rest position on top of his doghouse would become an icon in stained glass to symbolize the Sabbath, and how naps are scriptural and holy, and best done looking up at the stars. His laughter and dancing would be sacred tradition required on his feast day, and prayers would be offered up to plead for Celebration of God's Grace and presence in everything. Let's face it, he is a Saint by all measure - **Oh, Saint Snoopy, we ask your blessing upon us. Amen.**



Part 3: Presentation of three relics.

Now I have three relics of Saint Snoopy here to present, they are all Class 2 Relics. And if you don't know what a class 2 relic is... then, "Why are you in this competition?"

1st: We have his original Flying Ace cap. Sadly, the aviator goggles have been lost, but we hope they turn up, and that we have the resources to reunite them with our collection.

2nd We have His Joe Cool Sunglasses. The miracles attributed to these is that they can make anyone look exceptionally cool.

3rd, We have the most important relic of all: part of the Blue Blanket of Linus VanPelt, badly bitten into and slobbered on by our beloved Snoopy during an attempt to take it away from Linus on the Ice Pond in 1997. The slobber on the blanket mysteriously reappears from time to time, and although that is kind of icky, the blanket has been credited with four healing miracles: One person was healed from their fear of dogs; and one was cured of their fear of flying; and lastly, two children were completely cured of their need of having a security blanket!

Brother James' Third Place Entry:

Some of you know of the North German town of Buxtehude and the 17th century composer Dietrich von Buxtehude. But few know of a medieval character some would call a saint -- Otto von Buxtehudewoderhundmitderschwanzbelt.

Buxtehudewoderhundmitderschwanzbelt was a very small settlement outside the then small town of Buxtehude. Otto von Buxtehudewoderhundmitderschwanzbelt was such a long name, even for Germans, that they simply called him Otto B.

Otto was a simple, bumbling man who seemed to do everything wrong, and yet somehow make things right--like the day he took his old donkey to the market, which was set up right outside the gates of the castle of the feared Graf, Count Buxtehude. This Market Day was usually a vigorous time. But this day, just a few merchants came out because the Count had guests. All of the militant knights of the region had gathered for a war council. People would not come to market; they were afraid, and they hated the Count and his friends.

While few came, Otto was oblivious to the tensions and did go. He loaded his old donkey, over which he attached the many bells he had collected, and went to town. Poor Br. Donkey was so old and so laden that he could not walk straight. So, he scuffled along from side to side, stirring up dust, and off to market they went.



As Otto and Br. Donkey approached the town with noise and dust, the despair of the merchants began to lift; customers were coming! But when they saw it was Otto and his donkey, they panicked. They knew the bumbling beast could knock down their booths (as before.) So, they began to shout at each other to stop them. They couldn't, and they didn't.

Suddenly, donkey and rider were sauntering this way and that, knocking over pots, trampling cloth, and eating a few fruits. The merchants were furious, mostly at each other; each blaming the other for failing to prevent the disaster. They yelled, even cursed, until slowly, Otto got down on his knees, asking for pardon. And at the same time, he gave each merchant one of his precious bells to ring, which they did.

(Continued on page 10)

Juniper Cup...continued

And soon, the injured began to pardon each other for their failures. Then, another amazing thing happened! Br. Donkey, seeing Otto on his knees, also tried to kneel. But the poor beast was so old and overburdened that he simple fell over and rolled down the hill away from the market.

Suddenly, the merchants and their aides began to laugh; they could not stop. Indeed, since they had made so much noise, the Count and his men came out to see. Soon, they too joined the joy--and more! They saw the goods and began to buy, offering less for the damaged goods, yet enriching the merchants with great deals of silver. The mood totally changed; the merchants no longer hated the knights; in fact, they almost loved them!

This incident was just one of the times bumbling Otto B. managed, by his bumbling, to turn despair to hope, injury to pardon, sadness to joy and even sow some love where hate had been.

So it was, that when Otto B. died a few years later, the Franciscan priest declared that Otto B. ought to be a Saint: Saint Ought-to-be!

And some also-rans:

From Sister Chris:

St. Clawdio was a large brown tomcat that followed Br. Juniper home one day. He wasn't much brighter than Juniper. On the same day Juniper cut off the pig's foot to make soup for an ailing Francis, Clawdio decided it would help Francis to see one of the birds he had preached to in the field. So, Clawdio went out and caught one of the birds. However, being a cat, Clawdio couldn't help playing with the bird before he brought it to Francis. Of course the little creature was terrified. By the time Clawdio dropped the bird at Francis' feet, it was dead. Francis was just as upset about this as he was about the pig, so neither Juniper nor Clawdio succeeded in cheering Francis.

St. Clawdio's miracle: St. Clawdio once brought a possum back to life! Like the bird, he caught it and played with it. Eventually, it stopped moving and appeared to have died. While Juniper was scolding Clawdio, the possum got up and ran away!

A miracle!



St. Clawdio's reliquary: Lace from Br. Juniper's Sandal; Toy Mouse; Br. Juniper's Clown Nose; and a Tin Foil Ball stolen from the Brothers' kitchen.



From Br. Stephan, Sr. Deb and Br. Mark:

A Brief History of St. Sharkus the Capsizer: St. Sharkus was born in 7JW; that is, the seventh year following the passing of Jonah the Whale. St. Sharkus' initial gift to the world came through his ability to compose water music. In fact, it was his Water Spout for Whales Suite that inspired Handel's "Water Music," and ultimately, the

"Messiah." But that was only the beginning! Sharkus' greatest contribution to the world was his ability to bring order out of chaos, even if it was his initial appearance that caused the chaos in the first place!



Unlike most sharks, St. Sharkus was not known for the size of his appetite, or some wild desire to chomp on things indiscriminately. Instead, he was known as the shark with a big heart. A shark whose only desire was to enable all creatures great and small to swim, no matter how stormy the seas might become; that their lives might be transformed from the chaos of a capsized boat to the serene calm of an island cove.

St. Sharkus' first call to compassionate action came when he befriended a pod of plankton eaters. With the help of his new found spiritual companions, St. Sharkus took a vow to be a vegetarian, and remained so until God called him to the great ocean in the sky.

If you would like more information on the history of St. Sharkus, might I suggest a beach or a boat; someplace where you can see the clouds clearly, since that's where most of these facts came from.

And now I will conclude with the prayer of

St. Sharkus: *Lord, let me swim peacefully in Your ocean, ever careful to ensure that my neighbor does not suffer in my wake. Let me rejoice in the abundance of vegetation that You have provided for me, that I might not eat my little friends and neighbors. And last, but not least, Lord, make me mindful of the posted speed limit when swimming in harbors and marine sanctuaries, so that I don't destroy or displace the animals and plants You have placed there.*



Fellowship News



FELLOWSHIPS REPORT POST CHAPTER 2019

THE FELLOWSHIPS TEAM for 2019-20 is now comprised of....

- Brother Neal Dunnigan working out of his new residence in Cork, Ireland; coordination of On-line Fellowships; linkage to Communications Team; Visual Mapping of our geographical presence; and geographically defined Fellowship's care,
- Brother Fred Jaxheimer - geographically defined Fellowship's care.
- Brother Jacoba Ketchum tracking the who/what/& where of our ministries and engagements as the OEF,
- Sister Faith Klein - monitoring and encouraging inter-Franciscan contacts and Fellowship opportunities with TSSF, OFS, FOR, and OLF,
- Brother Sam Loudenslager - geographically defined Fellowship's care,
- Sister Markie Oliver keeping The Council informed, and strategy options,
- Brother Michael Vosler - linkage to Formation Team and coordination of geographically defined Fellowship's care,

Post-Chapter, we are revising geographical care assignments for 2019-2020. Each Fellowship needs its local "Spark," or leader, who is supported by a Fellowship's Team Partner.

NEW GEOGRAPHIES:

- Neal Dunnigan's move to Cork, Ireland breaks the isolation Scott Peddie has endured! Where 2 or 3 are gathered.....the Irish Fellowship? the Saint Patrick's Fellowship?
- We now have a Postulant in Boise, Idaho, Judith Evans, who for this year will be included among the Northwest Fellowship.

- Nancy Menning's move to Missoula, constitutes our 1st presence in Montana! We wait to see how she'll link to current Fellowships and watch as our presence in those Northern Mountain States evolves.

- John Gist is a new Postulant in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico allowing us to think of linkage to our Arizona colleagues (or Bluebonnets, or Colorado.)

TRANS-GEOGRAPHICAL:

We had our pilot Online Fellowship this past year and we can expect 2 or 3 more in the coming year with Neal coordinating the "when's and how's." Brother Juniper has coordinated and convened the first Online Bible Study, which provides its own Trans-Geographical Fellowship opportunity. What else will emerge in this year to come? Stay tuned!

NAME CHANGE:

The northwest corner of the US, once called the Juniper Fellowship, is now **The Northwest Fellowship**, and includes Washington, Oregon, & Idaho It has all the elements of being among our stronger Fellowships with watchful hearts on the northern tip of California and the southern part of British Columbia, Canada).

brother michael v. for The Fellowships Team

* * * * *

Greetings from the Northwest Region!

Two OEF Franciscans (Jul and Br. Stephan), coupled with one Brother from the Franciscans of Reconciliation and a Sister from the Order of Claire's, made for a nice retreat at the Peace and Spirituality Center in Bellevue, Washington.

We gathered for a one day contemplative prayer retreat with Fr. Carl Arico, which included Mass,

(Continued on page 12)

Fellowship News... continued

a few words about his book: A Taste of Silence, and plenty of opportunities to reflect and commune with nature by way of a Lake, a labyrinth and several nice garden spaces; some with flowers, others with water features.

Following the retreat, our little band of Brothers and Sisters spent the evening telling stories over pizza and wine at Muriel and Br. Stephan's place.

A big thank you to Jul Baker for getting us all together.

Hugs and Happy Thoughts, Br. Stephan



* * * * *

YES! THE GOLDEN GATE FELLOWSHIP did gather in the City of the Saint! Saturday the 25th of Memorial Day Weekend 2019, eight of us convened at St. John's United Church of Christ, across the street from Laguna Honda Hospital, historically known as San Francisco's Laguna Honda Alms House Hospital. Brother Lilith Bear is a member of St. John's and kind of on the staff at "herchurch" (ELCA) — the Purple Church you can't miss it —up the hill from St. John's.

We were six Professed OEFers —Sibling Lilith Bear Longino, Sr. Betty Lou Leaver, Srs. Karen & Kathy Lawler, Sr. Anne Nancy & Br. Michael Vosler; and two Franciscan spirits: OEF/OFS Inquirer Yvonne Butler living in Richmond (East Bay) and John Surinchek, a lone presence in association with the Universal Anglican Interspiritual Church (UAIC), living in Novato and working among the poor in San Rafael as a Chaplain and willingly "doing whatever needs doing". (San Rafael is in the North Bay).

Because we had a lot to share, we gave the entire morning to worship & reflection, check-ins and story telling, so rich with God-presence, life's challenges and wonders, and making connections.

Over lunch we shared our anticipations of Chapter 2019 in Richmond, VA, including our responsibility for worship on Saturday morning with three of us able to be present. The afternoon focused on reflections as we anticipate OEF Chapter/Convocation 2019 in Richmond, VA. The structure for that was 3 sets of questions, phrased differently, but each with the dual focus the Order's journey & well-being and our own journey as Members of the Order. A 3rd element was the role and work of The Council. We closed with our own prayers of gratitude keyed by Walter Rauschenbusch's dual-focus of gratitude for earth and for our own senses to take it all in, and hearts & souls of being open to the beauty that surrounds and gifts us. We highly recommend our final destination, "Crepes On Cole", when YOU are next in San Francisco! We will attest: GATHERING IS GOOD! Then our collective Confession: We took no photos!
- brother michael vosler

Memo to all OEF Fellowships: PUT THE PHOTO OF THE GATHERED ON THE AGENDA!

* * * * *

OEF people from the New York City/Northern New Jersey area gathered on June 2 for a delicious supper and engaging conversation at the Brooklyn home of John Robertson, Brother Juniper. In attendance were superb hosts and cooks Br. Juniper with spouse Mark; Professed Member Owusu Slater; Professed Member Petra Aleah Strand with spouse Karen, and Sara Holliday (soon to be a Novice, God willing) with spouse Gayden. We caught up on end-of-semester happenings and summer plans; chatted about the power of music and the arts; tossed around some creative perspectives on items in the news; and those who've recently traveled, described their adventures.



Fellowship News... continued

We look forward to meeting again at Chapter at the end of the month - with perhaps a cameo from Sister Kiwi anticipated before we all head down to Richmond.

Affectionately - blessings -
Sara Holliday, n/OEF

* * * * *

From June 11: Hi all! I am traveling in Ireland at the moment on my way to Convocation. I had the pleasure of spending the weekend in Cork with our very own Neal Dunnigan and his lovely wife Virginia. Alas, they cannot make Convocation this year, but Neal is planning a gathering in Cork to coincide with it which will hopefully include Brother Scott Peddie. In between time of sightseeing and some great meals, Neal and I had times to talk things Franciscan and OEF, and pray evening prayer together each evening.



Kiwi

* * * * *

From June 17: Siblings and friends,

Shoshanah Kay, Bruce James Kay, and I attended Brother Romero's memorial service in the Boston area yesterday. I'll let the two of them say something artful with words about our experience there. For my part, I have shared on the OEF list an image of Romero from an art project that was displayed at the memorial service reception. In that project, Romero was recognized as one of several "ordinary people" who have done "extraordinary things" in the work for racial justice. If there was one clear take-home message from the memorial service it was this: Don't let the work for racial justice die with Romero.

Peace and All Good,
Nancy Menning, OEF



I was delighted to get together with Br. Juniper and Sr. Linda Rose on Saturday, July 20 for a very informal meet-up - we dropped in to the 11:00 AM Mass at St. Francis' Church on 31st Street in Manhattan, then grabbed a light brunch at a sandwich shop around the corner. Conversation included the weekend's heat wave (of course), delights and discoveries in the formation process, and some perspectives about cutting down on single-use plastic.

One of several takeaways: We all have more of an environmental footprint than we'd like; it's easy to beat up on ourselves as sinners, but helpful both to recognize the universality of sin and the possibility of making one little improvement even if we can't make every improvement.



Excluding August, we hope to schedule roughly one drop-in meet-up per month in varying NY/NJ locations for anyone in this chunk of the world who's available. Regardless, our date for October is Transitus, evening of Thursday 10/3 at St. Francis' Church on 31st Street, details TBD.



Peace & love from the Big Apple
- Sara Holliday, n/OEF

An Important Reminder

Reminder! Nancy Menning is the OEF Treasurer. Contributions can be made by sending a check (made out to "Order of Ecumenical Franciscans") to Nancy at:

**Order of Ecumenical Franciscans
c/o Nancy Menning, Treasurer
908 Elm St *
Missoula, MT 59802**



****Please note the new address!***





Fiddlesticks
c/o Christine Petersen, OEF
934 Round Oak Ct.
Nekoosa, WI 54457
U.S.A.



PRAYER OF BELIEF –John Shea



We believe that where people are gathered together in love

God is present and good things happen and life is full.

We believe that we are immersed in mystery, that our lives are more than they seem that we belong to each other

and to a universe of great creative energies whose source and destiny is God...

We believe that God is after us, that God is calling to us from the depth of human life.

We believe that God has risked Self and became man in Jesus...

In and with Jesus we believe that each of us is situated in the love of God and the patterns

of our life will be the pattern of Jesus - through death to Resurrection.

We believe that the Spirit of Peace is present with us, the Church, as we gather to celebrate our common existence the resurrection of Jesus, and the fidelity of God.

And most deeply we believe that in our struggle to love, we incarnate God in the world.

And so aware of mystery and wonder, caught in friendship and laughter, we become speechless before the joy in our hearts and celebrate the sacredness of life in the Eucharist.

Amen.

**Submitted by Jul Baker n/OEF*

