

# FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 132

Advent 2019



P Elie korkomaz

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## Border Wall Construction: Imperiling Sacred Sites, Churches and Religious Freedom by Br. Coyote Nabhan, OEF

Most of us have heard the devastating reports of how the new construction of a thirty-foot wall and flood-lights along our southern border has begun to impact water flows, wildlife and archaeological resources long-protected by federal laws. The federal protection of endangered species, critical habitat and cultural antiquities has been waived along a three-hundred foot swath along the U.S./Mexico border. Eminent domain under the auspices of homeland security has allowed U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and Army Corps of Engineers to condemn lands and sidestep long-standing laws that former presidents from both political parties signed without much debate or rancor.

Most of the legal efforts to gain injunctions to stop wall construction undertaken by the ACLU, tribes and environmental groups have been vacated or kicked up to higher courts. But what has not been challenged to date is Homeland Security's right to impair or ignore religious freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

As documented in a 220-page National Park Service report covered by the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, archaeological sites—including Native American sacred sites, burial and ceremonial grounds have already been impacted by wall construction in national parks and wildlife refuges along the border.

And yet, some of these same sites have been, and still continue to be visited, used and stewarded by



## Border Wall Construction... continued

(Continued on page 2)

Native American communities who live within 50 miles of these parks and refuges along the border. They are part of living, continuing spiritual traditions—not by-gone remnants—that have been practiced in the desert borderlands for upwards of 4000 years.

What has also escaped the notice of most journalists is that several sites imperiled by wall construction and well-drilling along the border have also been utilized by Christian communities of Native, Hispanic- and Anglo-American



practitioners for centuries.

Perhaps the first Palm Sunday mass recorded in present-day Arizona took place at Quitobaquito Springs—then known as A'al Wappia in the O'odham or Piman language—in 1698 or 1699. It was presided over by the Jesuit priest and explorer Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino. Now part of Organpipe Cactus National Monument, this ancient springs and agricultural settlement was frequented by Roman Catholic practitioners for rituals related to the Day of the Dead and the Holy Sacrament of Baptism at least through the 1980's.

Some of the long-standing participants of these rituals remain alive

and well in communities on both sides of the border, but fear retribution from CBP if they visit the site while construction is in process. Individuals from their communities who were simply taking photographs of the destruction of sacred plants and cultural resources at this site have already been threatened by construction workers and on social media.

Elsewhere along the U.S./Mexico border, the white adobe chapel of La Lomita built in Mission Texas in 1899 is now threatened by wall construction, as are several cemeteries in San Juan and Pharr, Texas. These cemeteries have served Mexican- and African-American families for decades. However, the families and their lawyers have been told by Homeland Security department officials that all 52 laws which protected sacred sites along the border have been waived because of a “national security emergency.”

Similarly, since 2008, bi-national gatherings of La Iglesia Fronteriza or Border Church have been organized by Methodist Pastor John Fanestil along the border wall in Friendship State Park, south of San Diego. But recently, gatherings involving deportees and refugees in attendance have been heavily monitored and at times disrupted by Customs and Border Protection Officials.

While no one can pass from one side of the border to the other at Friendship Park, parishioners are allowed to touch their

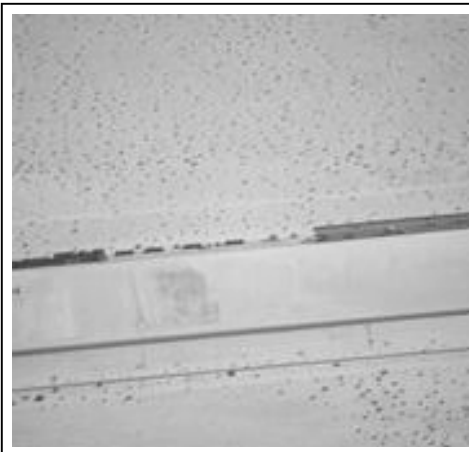


## Border Wall Construction... continued

“pinkies” through the wall to have contact with relatives on the other side—those who have been deported or denied access to visiting their families on U.S. soil.

These disruptions of religious traditions and harassment of spiritual practitioners appear to be in violation of Constitutional mandates intended to assure that citizens and refugees can practice their faith with a full guarantee of religious freedom.

We urge Native American, Christian and other faith communities to unite in solidarity in response to this crisis, and to meet with Homeland Security and other federal officials to find alternative solutions to further violations of the religious freedoms of the peoples of many faiths, creeds, cultures and races who live upon the border.



We urge you to write the Environmental Branch Chief, Border Patrol Facilities and Tactical Infrastructure Program Management Office, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20229, and the Commissioners of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the same address. May your prayers be with them to do the right thing, as well as with the refugees, deportees, and faith practitioners who wish to worship along the border.



## An OEF Online Bible Study

A group of six or seven have begun meeting for Bible study using the communication software ZOOM. All OEFers are welcome to join.

We are 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. The November dates will be: Tuesday 11/5, Wednesday 11/13, Tuesday 11/19, Wednesday 11/27. The December dates will be: Tuesday 12/3, Wednesday 12/11, Tuesday 12/17, Wednesday 12/27. Not sure what we want to do about Christmas and Holy Name/New Years?

**Everyone is welcome! Our meeting time is:**

**8:00-9:30 PM EDT,**

**7:00-8:30 PM CDT,**

**6:00-7:30 PM MDT**

**5:00-6:30 PM PDT,**

**12:00 am-1:30 am Wednesdays & Thursdays in New Zealand**

**12:00 am-1:30 AM Wednesdays & Thursdays in Ireland**

**9:00-10:30 am Wednesdays & Thursdays 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 [igrbklyn@gmail.com](mailto:igrbklyn@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 Servant Council



Your Servant Council continues to meet on a weekly basis, discussing issues of both business and pastoral care. We are open to any concerns, suggestions, and requests being raised to our attention.

Most recently, during Francistide, members of the council called each of the professed members of our order to make contact, learn of concerns, provide support, and share some love. We plan to repeat these kinds of phone calls periodically as part of our pastoral care function—and also because we, too, enjoy these conversations as much as it seems that professed members have.

Items we have discussed have included our relationship with other Franciscan Orders and participation in their meetings (and they in ours), reports from regional fellowship meetings (Please, keep those coming!), and a swath of business topics (no concerns—we are in good shape, but we are looking for ways to make Chapter costs bearable for all).

Items pending are issues related to developing a refund policy, enrollment management software (to keep track of our membership—we have a system but it is costly), Chapter (theme and organization, including how to handle reports the most efficiently, perhaps inviting locals from St. Louis with social justice interests, and how to make Clare a more significant part of Chapter—suggestions welcomed), archiving of our records and documents (they now go back many years),

This month, we are looking into how best to provide ongoing formation to those who have already professed. This includes the possibility of putting together a formation team separate from or in tandem with the current Formation Team (configuration still being discussed) as well as considering how

to make the reporting function of our Order to work more smoothly and effectively.

We expect that for some of these topics we will need committees to help us. We hope all members will be open to considering serving in some of these ways.

We also focus on those Brothers and Sisters who may be in need of help, but do, in many cases, rely on all of you to let us know when that may be the case. We are happy, as your servants, to do any outreach on behalf of all to help anyone in distress.

Please reach out to any one of us with requests, desires, ideas, suggestions, and the like. Our agenda depends upon knowing the needs of the Order.

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





## A Few Good Reads



I know it's early, but put this Advent book on your list. Consider it an investment in refreshing your spiritual journey and vision of what we are called to as God's children in a fallen world. The book is "Watch For the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas" published by Plough Publishing House, copyright 2001. You can learn more about it at Plough.com and the good folk of the Bruderhof behind such intriguing and edifying books. This volume is a collection of dated readings that begin on November 24 and end on January 7 of any holiday period. Authors include reflections from authors such as Sylvia Plath, JB Phillips, Christoph F. Blumhardt, Kathleen Norris, Jurgen Moltmann, Henri Nouwen, St. John Chrysostom, Philip Yancey, Martin Luther and more--quite an ecumenical spectrum very fitting to our community. The readings vary in length from a page to 12 or so. I found each selection to be an opportunity for stimulating prayer dialogue and further reflection, journaling and sermonizing. To be brief, it met my expectation: a reading that created an oasis of refreshment and encouragement in a desert of dark and stifling negativity and despair. I met with Jesus and I was reformed throughout Advent and Christmastide. I hope you will find it a worthy purchase. At about \$20 new for a hardbound book to be used every year, it's a terrific spiritual vitamin!

Br. David Delacroix, OEF

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At the beginning of my journey, my wonderful Formation Counselor recommended *Celtic Prayers for Iona* by J. Philip Newell. Except for *Lord* and *Father*, it is gender light. One of my favorite parts are the evening Intercessions. Here's an example:

*Peace between nations*  
*Peace between neighbors*  
*Peace between lovers*  
*In love of the God of life*  
*Peace between man and woman*  
*Peace between parent and child*  
*Peace between brother and sister*  
*The peace of Christ above all peace*  
*Bless O Christ my face*



*Let my face bless everything*  
*Bless O Christ my eyes*  
*Let my eyes bless all they see*  
*Recall the events of the day and pray for justice and peace.*

"We have lived our lives by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. We have been wrong. We must change our lives so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption, that what is good for the world will be good for us. And that requires that we make the effort to know the world and learn what is good for it." Wendell Berry

Jul Baker, n/OEF

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Greetings from Paraclete Press!

I am reaching out to the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans about a new book we are publishing in our San Damiano Imprint.

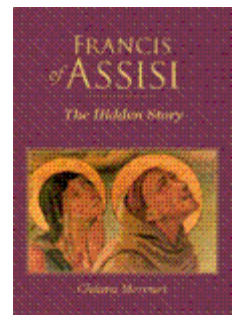
Francis of Assisi: The Hidden Story by Chiara Mercuri is a challenging new biography of the world's most popular saint. Mercuri takes the reader back in time to the real Francis of Assisi, revealing with wisdom and clear scholarship the complexities of the social, family, religious and economic dynamic of the Middle Ages, and the concentric circles of those who knew and wrote about St. Francis from firsthand knowledge.

Chiara Mercuri is an Italian historian whose book on Saint Louis' Acquisition of the Crown of Thorns won the prestigious prize of the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. She writes for the Italian magazine *Medioevo* (Middle Ages), and spent years reconstructing, on the basis of unofficial sources, this life and teaching of Francis of Assisi

Pax et Bonum,

Sr. Estelle, CJ

"Never lose hope in the mercy of God." The Rule of St. Benedict



# A Visit with Father Mychal

By Sara Holliday, n/OEF

On September 11, 2001, I was in Manhattan. Almost 3,000 people died there. I was moderately inconvenienced. And completely freaked out, but not in a way that mattered compared to the evacuees, the responders, the dead, the bereaved. It triggered some personal upheaval, but all of a philosophical nature. I was busy with work and theater, and since I didn't have a TV, I mostly missed the footage that kept re-traumatizing everyone else. When I glanced down Lexington Avenue at the lingering cloud or saw those *Missing* posters all over the subway, I looked away. I couldn't stand to look, and I had the privilege of escapism.

Later the very phrase "nine-eleven" began to set my teeth on edge as it ginned up irrelevant and murderous wars and we squandered the goodwill America had gained in our moment as an underdog. I passed up even the quality films – Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*, *United 93* – feeling like that was valid dissent from macho patriotism, not avoidance.

And then a few weeks ago this guy started getting to me.

It wasn't intrusive: the odd mention, a notice of a statue dedication in Syracuse, someone citing a prayer attributed to him. It wasn't anything to do with this year's upcoming anniversary. Yet when I noticed the date was imminent and got ready, unconsciously, to shunt away any feelings it might bring up – I realized I didn't have to. Somewhere in the last seventeen years, I got strong enough to look 9/11 in the eye.

With maybe a little help from twinkly-eyed Fr. Mychal. Certainly that's in the spirit of a man who (according to biographer Michael Ford) strode constantly into difficult situations, never doubting that God would give him the strength to be present with those who were sick, injured, angry, or grieving.

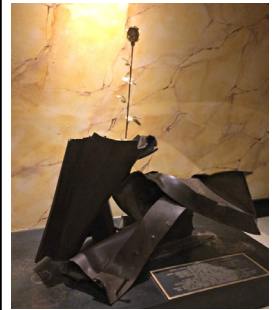
So I took the 1 train to his house.



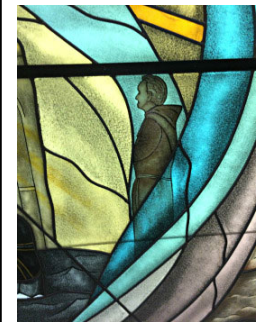
This is [the Roman Catholic church of St. Francis of Assisi](#), whose friary was Fr. Mychal's base of operations while he was the FDNY chaplain. It's about a block from Madison Square Garden in midtown Manhattan.



This internally lit stained-glass window is just outside the chapel on the church's lower level. Made me cry, I don't mind telling you.



This memorial to the 9/11 victims associated with the parish dominates the left side of the main sanctuary.



Compassionately facing whatever's coming his way – (Inset from stained glass window at left - lower right pane)



This memorial is inset in the wall of the firehouse above, just below where it says *Engine*. It shows firefighters carrying Fr. Mychal's body out of the wreckage of the World Trade Center.

The plaque below the memorial at left includes a prayer that seems to have been a touchstone for Fr. Mychal:

*Lord,  
Take me where You  
want me to go  
Let me meet who You  
want me to meet  
Tell me what You want  
me to say  
And keep me out of  
Your way.*



## Br. Neal Dunnigan's Interview with Author, Fr. John O'Brien, OFM



The interviewer, Neal Dunnigan, OEF is a Professed Brother in The Order of Ecumenical Franciscans. Neal relocated to Cork, Ireland from the United States in 2018 to continue his studies as a hospital chaplain intern.

Fr. John O'Brien, OFM joined the Order of Friars Minor in 1975 and studied Philosophy and Theology. He has been an ordained priest since 1985, and has worked as a teacher, chaplain and advisor. John is the author of several books (available through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)), including:

- *Loneliness Knows My Name*
- *Love Rescue Me: The Healing Power of Love*
- *My One Friend is Darkness: A Lament for Those Who Weep*
- *Rachel's Tears and Mary's Song*
- *Return to Gethsemane*
- *Silent Music of Love: Teach Us to Pray*
- *Theresa and The Little Way of Love and Healing*
- *Waiting for God: From Trauma to Healing*
- *With Thee Tender is The Night*

**Neal** - I see that you have been a Franciscan since at least, 1975. Would you share with us some of the places that you have served and some of the ministries that have been most significant to you?

**John** - I joined in 1975. Before that I had the dream of becoming a scientist, but a nagging voice called me to the religious life. There are many places I served. I worked as a teacher for a time. I learned a lot from my students and tried to engage with their questions. I worked (and still do) as confessor and that is the role that stands out for me. My most interesting public role was with London Wasps Rugby Union Team. Shaun Edwards is a friend of mine. He brought me over to Wasps' games and they started winning when I came over. They became European Champions. It was a blessed time and I met so many who were searching for faith (There are some articles on the internet on Fr. John and Shaun Edwards).

**Neal** - I first located you last year on LinkedIn when I was relocating to Ireland and looking to find some friendly Franciscan faces. That is also how I found out about your books. People often think of LinkedIn as a social media site for job seekers and business networking. How has this kind of social media been helpful to you in your ministries?

**John** - I came late to social media. I met people who only communicated via social media and so I joined. A friend put me on LinkedIn and I met many people there. The same is true of Facebook. It is the modern way to meet people.

**Neal** - One of the reasons for this interview is that in the US people are so familiar with contemporary Franciscan writers like Murray Bodo and Richard Rohr. I thought it would be good to help introduce the American Franciscan community to some contemporary Franciscan thought from outside of the U.S. Before we go more into your own writing, can you share with us what contemporary authors Franciscans in Ireland (yourself included) are reading these days?

**John** - There are many varied writers. You mentioned Richard Rohr and Murray Bodo.

(Continued on page 8)

## Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

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

**Deadline for submissions is January 15, 2020.**

Send submissions to Sister Chris at [capoef@solarus.biz](mailto:capoef@solarus.biz)

or snail-mail to:

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

**Thank you!**

**\*Note the new address!**



## Fr. John O'Brien..continued

Our men in Central America would read the liberation theologians. I read people like Raymond Brown and his work on scripture. I am also influenced by Walter Brueggemann. I found his work on "The Psalms and The Life of Faith" very powerful. I read Karl Barth and Hans Urs Von Balthasar. They wrestled with faith and its expression in the modern world. I learned so much from them.

**Neal** - At what point in your life did you feel the call to write and how did you pursue that calling?

**John** - When I was in Cork I wrote a little piece for the SFO newsletter and I found people read it. I began writing at that time. C.S. Lewis said that we read to know that we are not alone. I was aware of the great number of people who suffered mentally. A psychiatrist friend of mine used prayer and meditation as therapy. He was more influenced by Buddhism. I saw scripture, and the lives of holy people, as providing resources for prayer and healing. I see my books as a shared prayer and meditation leading to acceptance and healing.

**Neal** - I was very struck when I first looked at your list of book titles. A lot of powerful and potentially scary words: Gethsemane, Waiting, Trauma, Rescue, Loneliness, Darkness, Lament, Weep, Night. Do these suggest a common theme or evolution of thought across your books that you could share with us?

**John** - They represent a common theme. The reason these issues are so scary is we do not want to face them. We run from them, but that doesn't make them go away. The only way out is through. In our age, so many face this struggle alone and the rate of those who take their lives in our society is alarmingly big. I write to let those who suffer know they are not alone. Acceptance leads to healing.

**Neal** - One of the interesting things that I noticed in *Loneliness Knows My Name* is that you make extensive use of secular literary references to describe the human condition. The references are from both popular culture and literary "classics". Can you tell us more about your approach of leveraging secular literature to illustrate spiritual points?

**John** - Secular literature lays bare the human condition. We can only approach God as we are, broken

and unsure, and place our lives in His hands. Writings, songs, art and poetry help us express who we are and it is in our darkness that we allow God's light to shine. I was influenced in this by St. John Paul II and Von Balthasar. Barth quoted extensively from secular culture. I remember John Paul quoting Bob Dylan. Von Balthasar quoted from literature. This helped me look at using secular culture as a means to express the human condition and our need for healing. Meeting Jesus in our darkness is the means for healing.

**Neal** - In the U.S. currently, Christianity is challenged both by the growing population of disillusioned "nones" who view Christianity as ineffectual and irrelevant, and also by the "religious right" who see Christianity as an apologetic for an Ayn Rand style capitalistic dystopia. In your lifetime, you have been witness to major changes like Vatican Council II, the secularization of the Irish Republic, and the extensive scandals of clergy abuse and its ecclesiastical cover up (something shared in the U.S.). What is your own perspective or message as to how you see God calling this generation of disciples/apostles, particularly Franciscans?

**John** - The abuse scandals have rocked all our faith. I, too, was abused and it has blighted my life. I write about this, sharing the things that have helped my own healing journey. I see one of the challenges is facing our reality. We must look at why people found the priesthood and the religious life a safe place to live. We must also look at why so many young people entered our life and then left. Some said it was because of the lack of faith they found. Related to this, others said it was the lack of humanity and compassion they found. This is surely related to the lack of faith. Because people leave the Church, this doesn't mean their pain goes away. The suicide rate among so many is a witness to this. Because of the abuses, people no longer find the Church a safe place, and feel alienated from the comfort of the Church. This is a great injustice. A friend whose son had been abused asked me to write *My One Friend is Darkness* so that her son could see that there is someone who cares. He was an altar boy and was devout in his own way. Now he lives in a world of loneliness and pain and feels far from the Church. A friend who suffers from depression asked me to write about St. Thérèse because she found

Fr. John O'Brien...continued

her a great help, but didn't know about her. So I wrote *Thérèsa and the Little Way of Love and Healing*. Thérèsa said she would be love in the heart of the Church. I never believed this was an innocent, pious remark. Indirectly she points out that love is often lacking, and from this I believe abuses arise. We have to look at who Jesus the Christ is for us today. We have to meet Him in prayer. The Holy Spirit is love and we are called to incarnate this love. None of these are automatic, but we must begin a journey to discover true faith in the modern world and also to incarnate the love of the Holy Spirit.

John O'Brien can be reached at: FrJohn754@GMail.com

## A Few Words on Vows

Last month I happened to attend an event with Matthew Fox, he of the whole Creation Spirituality thing. I impetuously bought his most recent (co-written) book. It turns out to be a blueprint for a neomonastic organization with an ecological bent. (He inscribed it, "To Sara - Dance Sara's circle in honor of Mother Earth!") Not reviewing the book here except to complain that it's so badly edited and proofread as to be almost unreadable, though I might also be picky. But Fox, who spent decades as a Dominican friar, does say a few evocative things about taking vows in an order. Since some of us are preparing to do that this month, I thought I'd share a brief excerpt. Peace & love - Sara Holliday

From Matthew Fox, *Order of The Sacred Earth: An Intergenerational Vision of Love and Action*

Why do people take vows? Why did Mahatma Gandhi take numerous vows in his lifetime? A vow allows one to focus.

A vow allows one to look ahead and define the future choices we make in light of the value one has committed to at the time of pronouncing a vow.

A vow clarifies when the confusions and problems of life can easily distract or set one on a detour from one's



Profession, 2018: l-r - Br. Ed, Sr. Kathy, Sr. Karen, Sr. Helen, Br. Stephan

Vows... continued

life goal and purpose.

A vow allows one to gather all one's energy for a particular and noble purpose. It allows for, indeed calls for, some heavy lifting.

A vow supports one's vocation in good times and bad. In the time of a 'Great Turning,' vocation is everything. The calling of the human species but also the calling of the individual and the calling of our communities speaks more loudly. A vow assists us to define and clarify vocation and to keep it on track even though it may evolve dramatically as circumstances and culture evolve.

In a time of chaos, a little bit of order can be good. Not law and order but Spirit and order, creativity and order. A spiritual order that wells up from that deep place in most all of us where vision and generosity, life and eagerness, spring from. A spiritual Order to bind, support, energize, create and learn together. Because our times are new, the dangers are real, and evil happens, we need to resist and offer other avenues to engage and live joyfully and justly.

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The question comes up frequently: "Now that I am life professed, what do I do?"

Surely this question could be answered by pointing to any number of tasks that are the work of the Order: Formation, Communication, Joint Committee, Bearing greetings and love to other Orders, etc.

We could point to our rules, our reports, our life of small gatherings and large. All of these things are true. I would like to suggest that we embrace the possibility of a common task that will be embodied in as many ways as we have siblings:

We exist to provoke the conscience of the church and the world both through our unashamed proclamation of a Loving God and our fearless demonstration of that love to our neighbors. We are called to be so small that we could never make a difference, and so foolish that we are bound to make a dent. We are called to be hopeful in the mud puddles, joyful in the pouring rain, and grounded in God when all hell breaks loose. We are here to volunteer to be taken next. We are here to let others have the megaphone and we will skip to the margins of the crowd to put ourselves between harm and our neighbors. We are here to love each other without shame and to trust that our Spirit-Chosen family is a testimony to the powers that would splinter us into struggling households. We are here to be as wildly and unreasonably in love with God, as God already is with us.

Let us ponder this incredible calling.  
In Great Love,  
John Michael (JM), OEF





# Fellowship News



## **Fiddlesticks: OEF Fellowships, Fall 2019**

TRANSITUS 2019 and THE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS provided a most suitable occasion for Franciscans of all stripes to gather. And gather we did where we could! We Zoomed or met up where that alternative was provided; and I'll trust that the rest of us found some meaningful way to pause, to reflect, to pray, to read in ways that reminded us of the poor man of Assisi,

Francis, at the end of his days, welcoming Sister Death in fellowship with his followers, with The Order of Poor Ladies of San Damiano, with 3rd Order folks "out there" in their own places of providing a witness to this path of simple faithfulness.

And now, in 2019, we Fellowship as followers of Jesus in the way of St. Francis and St. Clare.

We gathered as the CROSSROADS Fellowship in Muncie, Indiana (Markie, Brendan, Mark & Debra) just prior to Transitus, at Markie and Eleanor's home.

We gathered as THE NEW YORK METRO portion of the NORTHEAST FELLOWSHIP in New York City at St Francis of Assisi Church (John Juniper, Sara, and Linda Rose Barley offering her Vow as a Novice in the OEF)

We gathered as the GREAT LAKES LIGHTHOUSE FELLOWSHIP, at Assisi Heights in Rochester, Minnesota (Chris, Craig Robert, Dale Carmen and Dale Blesz, with Kiara Mychal praying her presence among them), and did so in partnership with Brs. Jeff, Ron and Andrew of the OLF.

We gathered as the GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP at the Vision of Peace Retreat Center south of St. Louis, in Pevely, Missouri (Bob, Jacoba/Katya, Jonathan, Paula Clare, & Steve) on the banks of the Mississippi River.

We gathered as the PUGET SOUND portion of the NORTHWEST FELLOWSHIP (Stephan, Jul, & Muriel) with Members of other Franciscan Orders.

We Zoom gathered as the BLUEBONNETS FELLOWSHIP (Katie, Denise, Magdalena) joined by a couple (literally) from the GOLDEN GATE

FELLOWSHIP (Anne Nancy & Michael) and two from The Ecumenical Franciscan Order of Lesser Sisters and Brothers (OSFM, Ordo Sororum et Fratrum Minorum) one from Texas, and one from Florida. (Colin & Joygiver)

Sister Kiwi, as part of the KIWI FELLOWSHIP gathered with TSSF colleagues. Though the last mentioned here, she was into Transitus way before the rest of us. Brother Reg wished he could have been there.

And perhaps we gathered at still other places not currently known by me.

We gathered to symbolize that we belong to one another, that we care for each other, that each one of us represents the whole of us as the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans.

- michael v, for the Fellowships Team

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What a wonderful list!

To this, I'd add that five of us (Bob, Jacoba, Jonathan, Paula, and Steve) gathered as the Gateway Fellowship on August 17, 2019. Out of that meeting, we decided to begin an online book discussion, starting with Rohr's *The Universal Christ*; we've met once now and plan on meeting every other week. We also are planning our first (hopefully, annual) retreat together at Vision of Peace Retreat Center, October 4-6.

So grateful to see all the ways we are gathering together!

Br. Jacoba Ketchum, OEF

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TRANSITUS AND FRANCISTIDE:

Summer is o'er! The seasons pass, while God's love is before all beginnings and all ends; and the quest for Franciscan Fellowship is a component of our being the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans.

CROSSROADS FELLOWSHIP (our newest Fellowship configuration that includes everything from western Illinois to Ohio and northern Kentucky to Michigan) gathered in Muncie on

## Fellowship News... continued

Saturday, Sept, 28th, with 3 from Indiana and 1 from Michigan — Brendan, Markie, Mark, and Debra. They focused on St. Clare in their reflections. Their report and picture! appeared on the Chat-list this past Monday, the 29th. Note that it was sunny and warm! DO CHECK THIS OUT for their shared discovery of a JPIC/OSF Project being promoted by the OSF calling for Tote Bags for migrants at the border, in cooperation with Amazon that allowed our Crossroads colleagues to send socks for adult & children that very day! Any and all of us are invited to participate with the Tote Bag items to be received by Oct. 15th.

THE BIBLE STUDY gathered via Zoom the evening, of Wed. 10/2, and will again — contact Brother John Juniper for evolving dates.

Also note that OEF was present at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in the Village on Sept. 14th for the 100th Anniversary Celebration the founding of the Society of St. Francis Order in the United States,

John Juniper described it as "a spectacular event." OEF presence included Petra, Owusu, John Juniper, Sara, & Linda.

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I celebrated Transitus with the local Wellington OFS group. Also present were some members of our local WellingtonTSSF. The service was led by two OFM Capuchin priests who serve our local Catholic Parish. This has become a tradition now that these folk all gather together for Transitus. There was also renewal of vows for all professed written in such a way so that all could participate. We finished with a yummy shared supper.

Kiwi

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Lovely service last night, October 3, at St. Francis' Roman Catholic Church (currently celebrating its 175th anniversary) attended by Br. John Juniper, Sr. Linda Rose, and yours truly. Highlights included being taught, and then singing (with a certain amount of appropriately humorous stumbling) the refrain to the Canticle of the Creatures in the original Umbrian!

*Altissimu, onnipotente bon Signore,  
tue so' le laude,  
la gloria, l'honore*

*et omne benedictione,  
Ad te solo Altissimo se  
konfano.*

Then - both sneakily and with all due reverence - we briefly appropriated a side altar for Sr. Linda Rose's novice vows. (I got participants to recreate the ceremony for the camera - followed by a quick group



Linda Rose receiving her novice cross



l-r: Linda Rose, Br. Juniper, Sara

selfie and a shot next to Francis and Clare.) And on to a pleasant informal dinner.

In a teeny-tiny follow-up miracle, I led Morning Prayer at my church this morning and then handed around the remainder of last night's marzipan.

There was just enough for everyone present to enjoy one square. Historic Brother Jacoba for the win :)

Love to all in this holy time -

Sara Holliday, n/OEF

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Greetings, beloved siblings--

I will report on the Bluebonnet Zoom gathering last evening. Denise spent a lot of time carefully and lovingly creating the service for us, and we had (if I'm counting correctly) four bonafide folks. We also had my friend and star Seeds reporter, Chelle Samaniego, who is inquiring into the TSSF. And we had two OSFM folks--Colin Stebbing, a bonafide and longterm Bluebonnet, and a new friend in Port Lucy, Florida, whose name I can't remember, except that his professed name had

Continued on page 12

## Fellowship News... continued

"joy" in it.

The time together was precious, and, as it should be among Franciscans, part jocularity and part profundity.

I want to say one more thank-you to Denise for her work getting it together for us.

Peace and good,

Sr. Katie

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Here are a few photos from the Seattle Transitus gathering which included the Poor Claire's Franciscans of Reconciliation, the OSF and from the NW corner of the OEF.

Jul and Br Stephan



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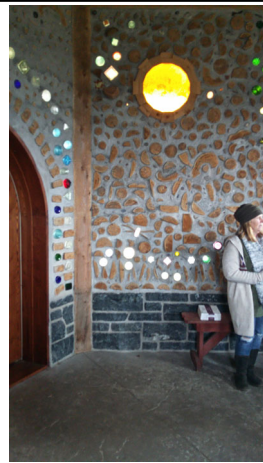
And last, but not least: The Great Lakes Lighthouse Fellowship gathered at Assisi Heights Spirituality Center in Rochester, MN. In attendance were Sr. Dale and husband Ken, Br. Craig Robert, Sr. Chris, novice Dale Blesz, and Brs, Andrew, Ron and Jeff from the Order of Lutheran Franciscans.

We missed having our Sr. Kiara with us, but were able to include her by phone a few times. We had a wonderful time of fellowship and silliness, made a video in sheep's ears singing, "I Just Wanna Be A Sheep!" with Sr. Dale Carmen, joined the Assisi Heights Sisters for Transitus service, and took a field trip to "Kinstone Megalith and



St. Francis Chapel

Retreat Center" across the river in Fountain City, WI, along with dinner at The Legendary Monarch: A Public House.



Br. Sun

Kinstone is a fascinating place! The owner has built a huge collection of megalith sculptures on her family farmland such as stone circles, standing boulders and small buildings. The stones were brought from a nearby quarry, and resemble the type of structures at Stonehenge. There is a small chapel dedicated to St. Francis, and it has glass set into the walls representing Br.



"The Eternal Flame" - l-r: Brs. Jeff, Craig & Dale

Sun, Sr. Moon, and the entire Canticle! There is a sculpture of petrified wood in the center representing the Eternal Flame.

In this chapel, visitors write their prayers and intentions on bits of ribbon throughout the year, and hang them on a tree. At Francistide, the ribbons are burned in a fire circle to release the prayers. We were blessed to participate in that event.



Burning Intentions

Of course, the Pub was an adventure in Irish cuisine, and Sr. Kiara sent us along with a poem called, "St. Francis at the Corner Pub" (printed below.) He would have been right at home!

Finally, Dale Blesz shared a talk on "St. Claire--The Perfect Franciscan?" It was a wonderful collaborative retreat with OLF, and we



"Grace & the Hedgehog"

Fellowship News... continued

plan to continue inviting each other to retreats.

Peace and all good.  
Sister Chris

\* \* \* \* \*

### *St. Francis at the Corner Pub*

Approaching the door, you can  
already

hear his generous laughter.

He stands on the bar upside  
down for a moment

to get a new perspective on  
things,

a flash of polka-dotted boxers

as his brown robe cascades  
over his head,

sandaled toes wiggling in the  
air in time with

a fiddle playing in the corner.

Rain falls heavily in the  
deepening darkness and he  
orders a round of drinks

despite his vow of poverty and  
the single silver coin

in his pocket, multiplied by  
the last Guinness poured.

Nothing like a good glass of  
wine, he gleefully says,

heavy Italian accent echoing through the  
room,



The Monarch - Fountain City, WI

he holds it up to the overhead light, pausing  
for a moment

lost in its crimson splendor, breathes deeply.

At ease among fishmongers and plumbers,  
widows and college students, and the  
single mother sneaking out for a moment  
of freedom from colic, cries, and diapers.



*Dancing Monk Icon*  
© Marcy Hall

As the wind blows rain  
sideways, in come the  
animals,

benvenuti to  
pigeons, squirrels, seagulls,  
crows, and the neighborhood  
cat balding from mange,

a chorus of yowls, coos, caws,  
and meows arising,

all huddle around him. No  
one objects to the growing  
menagerie, just glad to be  
dry and warm.

He clinks glasses all around,  
no one left out.

—Christine Valters Paintner

*(Poem and art work reprinted  
with permission.)*

## 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.  
 Nekeosa, WI 54457  
 U.S.A.



## INTO THIS DEMENTED INN



(Last year's) posts regarding OEF's 35th anniversary drew me to these famous words of Thomas Merton, who died 50 years ago. They are from his essay "The Time of the End is the Time of No Room," published in *Raids on the Unspeakable*:

Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for Him at all, Christ has come uninvited. But because He cannot be at home in it, because He is out of place in it, and yet He must be in it, His place is with those others for whom there is no room. His place is with those who do not belong, who are rejected by power because they are regarded as weak, those who are discredited, who are denied the

status of persons, tortured, exterminated. With those for whom there is no room, Christ is present in this world.

It seems to me that this is something essential to the Franciscan charism, and perhaps to that of *Ecumenical* Franciscans in particular, to become a place for those who have no room elsewhere, and to be willing to be those who have no room, like the homeless infant Jesus. As our planetary inn becomes ever more demented, such places become ever more necessary!

Peace and blessing,

David Rensberger  
 Associate of the Order of  
 Ecumenical Franciscans

