

FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 135

Claretide 2020



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Some Thoughts Toward Ongoing Formation

Since 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 as we make our way into our community gathering.

In Great Love,

John Michael (JM), OEF

(Continued on page 2)

Ongoing Formation... continued

From, “Poverty, Chastity and Obedience in a Secular World,” Ronald Rolheiser

The vow of poverty isn’t primarily about living with cheaper things, not having a dishwasher and doing your own housework. It’s also not about renouncing the kinds of riches that can make for the full flourishing of life. A life of voluntary poverty is a lived way of saying that all material possessions are gifts, that the world belongs to everyone, that nobody owns a country and that nobody’s needs are first. It’s a vow against consumerism and tribalism, and it brings its own wonderful riches in terms of meaning and in the happiness and joy of a shared life.

Likewise for the vow of chastity: Properly understood, it is not a missing out on the joys of sexuality. It’s a rich modality of sexuality itself, given that being sexual means more than having sex. Sexuality is a beautiful, God-given drive within us for lots of things: community, friendship, togetherness, wholeness, family, play, altruism, enjoyment, delight, creativity, genital consummation and for everything that takes us beyond our aloneness and makes us generative. And so the very real joys that are found in community, friendship and service of others are not a second-rate substitute for sex. They bring their own sexual flourishing in terms of leading us out of our aloneness.

The same holds true for obedience. Properly understood, it’s not a missing out on real freedom. Rather it’s a rich modality of freedom itself, one practiced by Jesus — who repeatedly says, “I do nothing on my own. I do only the Father’s will.”

Obedience, as a religious vow, is not an immature sacrificing of one’s freedom and adulthood. It’s rather a radical submitting of one’s human ego — with all its wounds, desires, lusts, private ambitions and envies — to something and someone higher than oneself, as seen in the human and religious commitments in persons from Jesus, to Teilhard de Chardin, to Dag Hammarskjöld, to Simone Weil, to Mother

Teresa, to Jean Vanier, to Daniel Berrigan. In each of these we see a person who walked this earth in a freedom we can only envy, but clearly too in a freedom that’s predicated on a genuflecting of one’s individual will to something higher than itself.

Submitted by Sam Loudenslager, OEF

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Hey Sibbs,

I know that conversations on social media aren't always illuminating, but I do find that writing out my answers does help me to clarify my thoughts.

Today I'm churning on the idea of chastity, which is one of our three knots. A conversation that was creating a false binary between chastity and sexuality led me to wonder:

What is the broadest definition of the term I could give that felt really life giving. Here's my answer, I'd love to hear yours:

Chastity for me is about a conscious decision to enter into every relationship with other people, regardless of the romantic or sexual content, with the basic understanding that no person is a thing. As a Franciscan, I would further extend this to all creatures, so that my commitment is to subject relationships with all my kin.

Submitted to the OEF Email List by John Michael Longworth, OEF

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For me, chastity is the gift of a pure heart that comes from committing my life to Christ/Franciscan way.” Replace in me, O Lord, my sinful heart with one white as snow! Keep my thoughts, prayers, and actions chaste and pure! Keep my heart and eyes clear so I can see You in everyone I meet; that I see You in all of creation and embrace You with purity, love and tender care!”

DebiSu (Scott), OEF

Ongoing Formation... continued

Hi JML,

Thank you! I love your expression here, with the emphasis on our conscious awareness of how we relate to one another. It connects strongly with the conviction that all of creation is sacred and worthy of respect and care.

In the context of spending a lot of time (pastoral care, conflict transformation, organizational policy, etc.) on issues of domestic and sexual conflict and violence, I've really appreciated this expression on sexual conduct from the Engaged Buddhist traditions –

“Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I vow to cultivate responsibility and learn ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long-term commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.”

(<http://dharmateacherorder.org/practice/the-five-wonderful-precepts/>)

There's lots of room within it for the wonderfully diverse experiences of gender and sexuality, and keeps the emphasis on our responsibility to create cultures and communities where we aren't harming one another and can, instead, thrive.

Jacoba Katya Kethum, OEF



I know I'm out of order here, but there is a chapter with the same title (“Chastity”) in James Martin's (SJ) book, The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything that is one of the better things I've read about chastity. Perhaps I was just shocked by the lack of guilt and condemnation, but I seem to remember it being quite well done. Quotes aren't coming to mind, but it's worth a read.

Daniel Miller, n/OEF

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I'll followup on Daniel's reference to James Martins's *Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*. I read that book earlier this year (and took extensive notes), primarily because I've been doing the 9-month version of the spiritual exercises (with about three months yet to go).

Here are my notes from James Martin on "chastity":

Poverty, chastity, and obedience are core values of vowed religious life. Theologically, this is a way of emulating Jesus. Logistically, they help with the daily life of the religious community. For lay people, these values can produce a more satisfying life.

Chastity, “the proper and loving use of our sexuality” (216), “is about love” (215). Technically defined, chastity is an appropriate goal for all people; celibacy is something different. But, Martin notes, popular usage generally confuses and equates the two terms. Therefore, Martin uses the term chastity here to refer to religiously-vowed chastity.

“One of the main goals of chastity [read, celibacy] is to love as many people as possible as deeply as possible (220). Chastity [celibacy] is also a reminder that it is possible to love well without being in an exclusive relationship and without being sexually active. In this way, the chaste person can serve as a signpost in our hyper-sexualized culture (221).”

(Continued on page 4)

Ongoing Formation... continued

This love is not possessive or exclusive. “It had to be freely given and freely received (223). This may be one of the greatest gifts that the chaste person can offer: showing not only that there are many ways to love, but that loving a person freely, without clinging to him or her, is a gift to both the lover and the beloved. Often we are tempted to think that loving someone—a spouse, a boyfriend or girlfriend, or even just a friend—means clinging to them, which is a subtle form of ownership. But love means embracing the poverty of not owning the other (223).”

People under vows of celibacy—just like people in vowed marriages—sometimes fall in love [with someone other than their spouse]. “In both cases, you remind yourself of your commitment and take the right steps to honor it (224). [W]e are often presented with competing desires in life. In Ignatian spirituality, we are asked to discern which is the greater desire, or the ‘governing desire.’ Competing desires do not negate the choice that you have made: they simply make it more real (225).”

Even those in a committed relationship are called to “love chastely” everyone other than their spouse. So, listen compassionately. Be present. Do something practical. Love freely. Forgive. And, pray.

Attributed to Pedro Arrupe, S.J.:

“Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything.”

Shared by Nancy Menning, OEF

Resources & Options for the Continuing Education of the Professed Continuing Ed Team

In 2019 a survey was conducted among the professed to see what if anything might be wanted in the way of formative materials, classes and or written exercises beyond formal profession. This survey was conducted by John Syvertson, Louis Canter, Carol Stiver and Stephan Gerhardt. The general consensus in light of this survey was that most folks preferred to make their own choices from: what is currently offered within OEF chat; independent study and self-discovery; groups created for social and biblical studies.

Following the formation summit in 2020 and at the council’s recommendation, the continuing ed team has and continues to care for the following:

- The creation of a resource list that will give **the professed along with the rest of the OEF** a place to explore visual, written and interactive applications appropriate to individual self-identified formative needs. **Originally we were just going to create a resource list for the professed but concluded that such a resource list should be made available to everyone as that is more in line with our desire as a community to be inclusive.** This resource list will include but not be limited to; the original source materials pertaining to St. Francis of Assisi, contemporary authors on all subjects of a Franciscan orientation, written and interactive applications for the exploration of various prayer forms, social justice issues i.e. systemic racism and LGBTQIA rights and life stages i.e. aging / death and dying. **Ideally this resource list would become part of the OEF website.**

- The possibility of creating a peer group for the professed. This group would be an opportunity for an **optional** gathering with other professed for the purpose of sharing around a reflection question to be provided at or just prior to each gathering.

- Br. Stephan Gerhardt on behalf of the Continuing Ed Team; Br. John Syvertson, Sr. Dale Carmen, Br. Stephan Gerhardt, Br. Louis Canter and with special thanks to Carol Stiver who helped us with the initial survey.



Profession as a Journey

Dale Carmen, O.E.F. 7/2020



Not long ago I had a book on snowflakes. It was a fascinating mix of math, science and spectacular photographs. I gave it to my dentist who skis all over the U.S. No two snowflakes are identical which seems impossible, yet it is possible, as is the fact that the fingerprints of seven billion people are different. Knowing these things can happen in the natural realm, it is easy to accept that souls are uniquely different in and of themselves in the spiritual realm and in their relationships to God. Like snowflakes, souls are individually shaped by a multitude of external, internal and supernatural forces.

I was asked to participate in making a recommended list of resources for the continued spiritual growth of Professed members of O.E. F. This request unleashed an avalanche in my mind, heart and soul! You see, I came to Franciscan formation completely ignorant of spiritual growth; yet the instinct was too strong to ignore.

As a Postulant and Novice, there were the basics: The Omnibus of Sources: St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies. There were also Franciscan writers like Richard Rohr (Simplicity), Murray Bodo, Michael De La Bedoyere, Johannes Jorgensen; and non-Franciscans who wrote about Francis like Zofia Kossak (Blessed are The Meek) and Nikos Kazantzakis. Franciscan sources continue to feed me in Profession.

Early on other faith traditions gave me insight into the 'how' of practicing a Rule. Authors such as Evelyn Underhill, Anthony Bloom's Beginning to Pray and Courage To Pray, Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline, Ann and Barry Ulanov's Primary Speech and Your Word Is Fire by the Hasidic Masters.

I learned ethical and moral dimensions of our Rules and Principles through black authors like Richard Wright, James Weldon Johnson, Eldridge Cleave and, recently, Ta-Nahisi Coates (Between The World And Me); and native books like Black Elk Speaks (John G. Neihardt), and Bury My Heart At

Wounded Knee (Dee Brown). Books like those by Canadian Farley Mowat (Never Cry Wolf) led environmental awakening to my Franciscan vocation.

I owe a debt of soul formation to authors and activists such as Dorothy Day (The Catholic Worker), Martin Luther King, Jr., William Sloane Coffin, Dorthee Soelle and many, many others.

In spiritual growth, I think it is crucial to face the reality of evil and mortality. I credit many mentors who have helped me do so; Elie Weisel and Simon Wiesenthal (holocaust), Letters and Papers From Prison by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and It's O.K. To Die by Monica Williams Murphy, M.D., and Kristian Murphy, MKU, LLC. In spiritual growth, I feel I need to face the sins of the church and Christianity in general, as well as hard questions and dark nights. Author Karen Armstrong has helped me and also Silence by Japanese author Shusaku Endo and recently, Brief Answers To the Big Questions by Stephen Hawking.

Lastly, I mention Jeff Foxworthy's Redneck Dictionary because I knew every word and concept and finally claimed my grounding with prairie dirt between my teeth and toes.

Every one of these resources contributed to the making of my Franciscan soul, and these mentioned are just the tip of the iceberg. Remember, an iceberg is just multitudes of individual snowflakes transformed.

Each and every one of us in O.E.F. Community could make a 'Brief List of Recommended Reading for Professed', and no two would be alike. We would share some required readings and there would be similarities; yet our lists would have vast and wonderful diversity. That is the beauty of who we are as a Franciscan Order.

May we feed on whatever helps us be faithful and in communion with each other, the Divine and with our needy world.



Words from The Servant Council



Greetings siblings,

We are looking forward to our time together for Chapter and Convocation. Our Convocation time will be focused on St. Clare with times for Morning and Evening Prayers with worship and renewal of our vows. We are adding this year a Mid Day Prayer each day. Please check over the last letter sent regarding times for our sessions together. We also come together for business - Chapter. During this session we hear highlights on various reports from different ministries/tasks from within the Order, which will include a report from the Council and the Treasurer. These reports will be posted on the web site and on the OEF-Chat around July 9th giving us all plenty of time to review the materials. Please bring any and all of your questions and comments to the business session. If you have any business to bring to Chapter, please contact the Council, ASAP, so we can place it on the agenda. We are now planning for each session and it's a little different doing everything online. We do have one statute question for discussion. An additional statement to be added to our statute under membership.

"Any previously professed individual returning to OEF after they have been released from their vows will be considered a Novice by Transfer and will follow the path set in the Novice by Transfer process."

An online gathering is something many of us are using on at least a weekly basis some even on a daily basis. We hope we can fellowship well with this form, but we do realize it's not the same as we have come to know. Please pray for Chapter/Convocation.

For the safety of our members and friends, the reservation for this year at Pallottine has been canceled. The current schedule for our online gathering can be found on page 11 of this issue All times listed are from the Central Time Zone This is one way to be "normal." Remember, we are dealing with lots of time zones.

We'll send out the Zoom ID# soon. There will be someone online all day and evening during Chapter/Convocation for fellowship and conversation. We are planning during our time together to have small groups. More details coming as we get closer to C/C and during the 1st day.

We do encourage you all to read up on Clare before Chapter/Convocation.

Be safe, be well and be you.

Peace and all good,

Betty Lou, Bruce James, Jacoba, Juniper and Markie

Juniper Cup:

After much thought and discernment I am asking Juniper Cup entrants to tell us what they would give St Francis or St Clare as a birthday gift and why. This can be presented in any way that is zoom friendly.

I do not propose to mail the shirt of James the Least back to the USA. Current Covid-19 issues are making international mail painfully slow and, also, I am reluctant to commit such a treasured and important relic to the vagaries of NZ post and US Mail. We can't let it get lost!

Blessings.

Sr. Kiwi, OEF





Walking & Waking Up: The Conservation Couplets: A Manifesto for Moving Forward From Earth Day 50 into a More Just, Regenerative and Restorative Society by Br. Coyote



We once feared that “The world is doomed and the selfish actions of the earth’s many people are what is dooming it.”

We can see now that “If humans have the capacity to wound the earth, we also have the capacity to heal it. We have the humility to recognize, utilize, and to celebrate our collective healing capacity, and to somehow be healed ourselves by participating in that restoration process.”

We once self-righteously felt “We have to demonstrate the drive to fix environmental problems for others who cannot immediately see the necessity of doing so.”

We now understand that “We need to make change happen by working with others and changing ourselves. We need to include others in envisioning and implementing shifts toward a more inclusive set of players.”

We once passed judgment that “Destructive human behaviors need to be constrained so urgently that top-down regulation must become the most expedient and dominant means of protecting the environment and saving species.”

We now concede that “Our tool kit of conservation and restoration strategies will need to offer far more options than regulation, restriction, and punitive actions. Instead, we will need to unleash our personal and collective capacities to foster fresh innovation at the same time we maintain cultural traditions and voluntarily practice self-restraint.”

We once assumed that “Placing more wildlands and waters under the management authority of government agencies will allow us to avoid the tragedy of the commons.”

We must now admit that “Co-management with local communities can level the playing field. Why? Top-down command-and-control management of resources and landscapes by bureaucracies can often disenfranchise or bankrupt local communities’ capacities as long-term stakeholders. Tragically, it has resulted in pushback from local communities, and even armed conflict or clandestine destruction of resources conservationists had hoped to protect.”

We once presumed that “Hunting and fishing by the poor and hungry are killing off the earth’s fish and wildlife, so we have to been forced to pro-

tect nature from people in order to prevent the over-harvesting that will extirpate species if left unchecked.”

Today, we are delighted by the successes that are achieved when “We positively reengage people in supporting the processes of nature, rather than isolating them from other species and nature’s own regenerative processes. At the same time, we must acknowledge that the loss of plants and microbes due to chemical and physical fragmentation of habitats and landscapes is now imperiling more biodiversity than is hunting and fishing of vertebrate animals.”

We once felt inclined to “Write off the conservation value of disturbed, anthropogenic, and cultural managed habitats as well as the value of domesticated species. We opted for investing only in the protection of wilderness and the remaining diversity of wild, untrammelled species.”

We now feel emboldened to “Engage people of all ages, races and classes in the restoration of diversity in culturally-managed landscapes. That includes embracing the recovery of diversity in the cultivated crops, managed livestock, and fermentation microbes that are essential to regenerative agriculture and healthy diets. Some community-based initiatives begun in degraded habitats may now allow us to test restoration methods which we may someday use in more pristine habitats.”

We once fatalistically asserted that “Poor minorities in urban areas and indigenous communities in the hinterlands often become the victims of hazardous wastes and other contamination. That is because they have yet to develop the economic power, political standing, or environmental leadership capacity that will keep bad things from happening in their midsts.”

We now relish that fact that “People of color are not inevitably victims; they are valued leaders in and essential to our broader society’s efforts to care for creation. That may be because they so deeply express their sacred duty to integrate social justice and environmental quality issues to ensure the well-being of their families and communities for the next seven generations, and for all of humankind.”

(Continued on Page 8)

Walking and Waking Up... continued

We once believed that "Science alone should be enough to ensure the rational management and wise use of natural resources for the public good."

We now humbly recognize that "Scientists, policy makers and on-ground resource managers need to be in constant dialogue with ethicists, faith-based communities, and culture bearers. If we ignore the need for dialogue between science and the spirit, we will not be able to achieve just, equitable, and morally-appropriate means to care for creation and the poor still living in our midst."

We once held that "Biological conservation is about the rescue and relegation of imperiled species to protected in fortress-like parks, zoos, botanical gardens, and seed banks."

We now sense that "Lasting biological conservation comes from restoring relationships among plants, animals, and microbial populations in a gradient of habitats that all include both natural and cultural elements."

Economists once warned us that "Conservation will cost so much money and jobs that the growth of local and regional economies will inevitably be slowed, disrupted or diminished."

It has become evident that "Cooperative restoration strategies generate more livelihoods with livable wages, valuable ecosystem services, and local multiplier effects. These can be done in a manner that sustains local assets and enhances regional economies so that they become less vulnerable to external threats and more resilient in the face of uncertainty."

Live with the uncertainties, but move with compassion and love toward greater unity-in-diversity. We are all we've got!



Spring in New York City, 2020

Words by Juniper Robertson, OEF; Adapted to poetry by Shoshana Kay, OEF

This virus is definitely showing us
that we are one people on the planet.
Whether or not we have any connections in our networks,
whether or not we speak the same language,
whether or not we share the same world view,
we are sharing the same breath.
For years, the labels on my clothes
have shown just how global my life is.
Now, in the space of mere months,
we are all connected
in the breath and in the droplets that
that breath
spreads into the atmosphere.
How to live in this connected world
where I am intimately connected
to people whose existence I'm not even aware of?
Everyone shares my fear and anxiety and uncertainty
~ ~ wherever they are on the planet ~ ~
So what do I know? What has my faith taught me?
This is the Most High's world,
and it remains so, even now.
The Holy One of Blessing
is with me and around me and holding me
~ ~ and holding you ~ ~
What do I have to fear?
My path has been prepared for me.
It is a path built on love.
My ancestors, our ancestors lived through really rough times.
And the hope and knowledge of the
Love at the center of the universe
brought them through.
Spring is all around me in New York City.
This pandemic makes it obvious that I don't know.
But, in fact, that is my every day.
I don't know what is coming, what is just around
the corner.
Living in this "I-don't-know" locates me in
a place of listening.
Listening to the struggles of those around me.
Listening to fear, to anxiety.
Listening to the birds, to the signs of spring.
The labels on my clothes show how global my life is.
We are one people on the planet.
Everyone shares this fear, anxiety, uncertainty.
We are one people.
We are sharing the same breath.
Spring is all around me in New York City.
Listening . . .



A Few Good Reads



Hey... has anyone else read *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor? I am so blessed, having so many God-encounters, through her writing right now. Her sense of reverence, of being aware of The Holy everywhere, is so refreshing! Love it, and HIGHLY recommend it for your personal transformation.

- Br. David Delacroix, OEF

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White Fragility

Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism:

Robin DiAngelo

In addition to being a professor, author and lecturer Robin DiAngelo was a diversity trainer. She held diversity training sessions in organizations that wanted to diversify their workforce or increase their employee's racial knowledge. She interweaves, throughout the book, many of her personal experiences during these sessions to highlight the premises that she makes.

She says when we try to have a conversation about race we often become angry, silent, argumentative, defensive or fearful. This is white fragility. This pushback is the result of growing up and living in a society that says being white is "normal" and of living in a cocoon of white privilege. No white person is immune.

"Naming white supremacy changes the conversation in two ways: It makes the system visible and shifts the locus of change onto white people, where it belongs. It also points us in the direction of the lifelong work that is uniquely ours, challenging our complicity with and investment in racism."

She says interrupting the forces of racism is a process of learning that will never end. We must be able to build our capacity to feel uncomfortable when talking about race or being called out

when we say something racist... This is integral to interrupting white fragility.

"It can be a door out to escape the discomfort or in by asking why it is uncomfortable."

Reading, Listening, Learning

David Fournier, n/OEF

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My recommendation: Fred Rogers (Mister Roger's Neighborhood) and his writings. He is the best 'Applied' theologian I know.

Dale Carmen, OEF

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Have you ever wondered whether you are really an extrovert or introvert? I just read a book called, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain. It was fascinating to learn why things that energize others, like being at a party or in a crowd, tend to drain me. Why I need rest and quiet by myself after meetings or long phone calls. This book will teach you how to give yourself the things you need without guilt. I highly recommend it!
Sister Chris, OEF

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Submissions for the Thanksgiving 2020 issue of "Fiddlesticks" will be accepted immediately.

Deadline for submissions is October 15, 2020.

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!



Heaven on Earth (A Little Reflection) by Br. Stephan Gerhardt

The roads are quiet these days as are all the urban spaces. The people have begun to spend their days playing in the yard and enjoying time with their children. The airplanes and restaurant workers who ensure our daily rush to keep the urgency of life before us are few and far between now. Although thousands have died, the world is coming to life in a new way. People are rediscovering the joy of hearing a human voice, neighbors greet each other in passing, families are taking their meals together, and the birds are singing loud and clear while the fish reclaim their waters. The skies are getting clearer by the day. Even Calcutta has clean air now. It seems that the earth is finally starting to recover from man's desire for progress. Will it last? I don't know but I hope so. I think our hearts have been broken long enough by what we have failed to do better, by what we have chosen to ignore or been too busy to appreciate. Maybe the world has slowed enough that people will finally come to appreciate the little things long enough to see that there really is a heaven on earth. It is the realization that yesterday's seedling is now a small tree, it is the sound of kitty purring in your arms, it is the warmth of a loved one's hand as you share the silence, it is the realization that you love this world and the simple things in it are enough to sustain you. Heaven on earth is here right where it's always been waiting for us to slow down and experience it; Waiting for us to acknowledge the never-ending flow of presents that has and remains a never ending sign of God's presence.



OEF Online Bible Study

A group of six or seven have been 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. We alternate between Monday and Tuesday evening @ 8:00 PM EST. **Everyone is welcome!**

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!

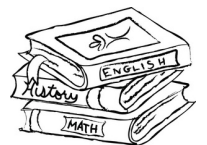
Br. Juniper, OEF.



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



OEF Chapter/Convocation 2020 centered on St Clare

From the OEF Council: Betty Lou, Bruce James, Jacoba, Juniper and Markie

OEF Chapter Convocation for 2020 will happen over St Clare's day. The Order will gather Monday August 10th till Wednesday August 12th. This will be a Chapter/Convocation in place. Following a practice that we have learned from our Buddhist siblings, we are all invited to spend the time together each in our own location.

Each day will start with a morning worship and end with an evening worship. We will gather in two sessions of one and one-half hours each on Zoom. The rest of our gathering can be built of times of prayer, times spent on Br Coyote's walks to reflect on Mother Earth. We can also gather informally on Zoom for meals/snacks and just to hang out. We may find that there are multiple Zoom accounts that we can use for the gathering allowing multiple hangouts. For the daily worship and sessions, we will use one Zoom account including the breakout rooms allowing us to meet in small groups to reflect and work.

Since our Order now spans the world, we must attend to time zones:

1:00 pm Monday Pacific Daylight time /Arizona time is

2:00 pm Monday Mountain Daylight Time (MDT) is

3:00 pm Monday Central Daylight Time (CDT) is

4:00 pm Monday Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) is

9:00 pm Monday in Ireland is

5:00 am Tuesday in Tokyo and is

8:00 am Tuesday in New Zealand.

For our gathering all times will be given in CDT



Here is our working schedule in CDT:

Monday

10:00 am – Morning worship

2:45 pm – Come early for a time of prayer

3:00-4:30 pm – The community gathers, checks in about the last year under the care of Clare

5:00-6:30 pm – First Convocation session exploring the gifts given to us by our Sister Clare

9:00 pm – Evening worship

Tuesday

10:00 am – Morning worship

2:45 pm – Please come early for a time of prayer

3:00-4:30 pm – The Chapter of the Order including elections, budget and other business

5:00-6:30 pm – Second Convocation session exploring the gifts given to us by our Sister St Clare

9:00 pm – Evening worship



Wednesday

10:00 am – Morning worship

2:45 pm – Please come early for a time of prayer

3:00-4:30 pm – Gather for renewal of vows and possible welcoming of Postulants, Novicing and Professions

5:00-6:30 pm – Juniper Cup & Wrap up on "exploring the gifts given to us by our Sister Clare"

9:00 pm – Evening worship

There is no cost to this in-place gathering. The council has spent much time considering the Order's responsibility for the health of the members. We also remember that all OEF members are adults living under the direction of the Spirit. Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in the US and especially in the Midwest we have canceled our reservation at the Pallottine Renewal Center in St. Louis. We hope to have a face to face gathering at Pallottine next June (2021).

This is, of course, a new method of being together. We are inventing it as we go along. Please pray with us and think with us and communicate with us about how to most creatively and intimately use our time to build the common life of our little order. These are strange times. We wish that you all remain safe, and that together living our rules of life, we can shine the Light of Jesus' love sharply in all the places that God put us.



Fellowship News



Crossroads Fellowship Zoom gathering April 25, 2020; present were Markie Oliver OEF; Ron Nuss-Warren OEF; Deb Snider-Scott OEF.

We spent time catching up on each household and how we are fairing during this time of Pandemic, home quarantine and social distancing. Each household had positive input on being "home bound." It was unanimous that online technology is such that none of us are lacking Worship or praying in communion with our local church community, and even beyond with state, national and world Faith communities. It was brought to our attention that FAN is currently offering through FB, Zoom and their web site access to viewing Virtual Franciscan Ecumenical Advocacy Days Gathering. Typically they have an annual conference in Washington DC, but rather than cancel totally, this virtual gathering has been orchestrated. This year they (we) acknowledge the 50th anniversary of Mother Earth Day and the 5th anniversary of Laudato Si.

We acknowledged our need to view Mother Earth as the living, breathing gift she is from our Creator. Also to "gaze on weak humanity and see there the presence of God, and to unite with what one sees." (quote from Clare of Assisi- A Heart Full Of Love). From this heart full of love we are called to view ALL of humanity as essential, important, and viable contributors to community! No one is expendable! Our planet is not something to dominate and be treated as just a resource to control and extract from, but a living entity to nurture and care for. We also acknowledged that we cannot deny death, but from death comes rebirth! Another video recommended was "Planet of the Humans" accessed through YouTube.

Our two hours went very quickly! We will make plans to gather again soon to continue on in prayer, conversation, fellowship and mapping out our role to play in our "new normal!" We are each participants and active in our own way, laying one brick at a time!

Deb Snider-Scott OEF

We celebrate the Zoom Gathering of the **Crossroads Fellowship** on April 25th! And on that same morning the **Northeast Fellowship** also had a Zoom gathering not yet reported, methinks!

So April 25th was a good day for us to be gathered in Fellowship with the technological aid of Zoom.

The Golden Gate Fellowship gathered by Zoom for a Saturday Morning Fellowship, Sat. May 3rd, and included Karen & Kathy Lawler who live in Elk Grove, just south of Sacramento. They served as Zoom hosts with a fantastic breakfast buffet for two. Betty Lou Leaver joined us in San Juan Bautista, the most Franciscan town in the country. Also joining us were Anne Nancy and Michael Vosler from Sonoma County, land of cows and grapes and awesome shoreline; Postulant Steve Jerbi, once of Milwaukee and Southern California, and now serving an Interim Ministry in Lana'I, Hawaii; recent Postulant David Chasteen, living in St. Francis City itself, and presencing his 1st Fellowship Gathering, and Kiel (Kelley) MacFarland, an Inquirer from down near Pasadena. We welcomed John Surinchak, who is a lone Franciscan presence of The Universal Anglican Inter-spiritual Church, lives in San Raphael, Marin County, works with people without stable shelter, and has decided to do his Franciscan fellowshiping with the Golden Gate OEFers. We missed Brother Lilith Bear Longino, who was needed as part of a medical care event. It's worth noting that we have doubled our presence in the City of St. Francesco of Assisi, from 1 to TWO! (See David Chasteen's introduction in this issue's Formation Station.)

In addition to the Prayer Time of our beginning and end and our Check-ins, we covered:

- The shared concern of the OEF being so "White" in God's diverse Kindom. Who are we reading that speaks to that concern? We talked about the upcoming OEF Zoom Book Study of James Addington's "Tragic

Fellowship News... continued

Investment." which started the following week

- Thinking about Franciscan stories that speak to our experiences of the C-19 pandemic and focused on Francis's profound encounter with the person with Leprosy, and with the Canticle of Creation as a lens to relate to C-19. Hmmm!

- Discussing the ways available to us to have OEF Chapter/Convocation 2020. Ideas were shared and are being forwarded to the Council.

- We rejoice in the camaraderie-at-a-distance here in California and Betty Lou's note-taking!

* * * * *

In New Zealand we are blessed that we can meet together in person. So, on Saturday 18th July the Kiwis Down Under (Helen and Reg) met with the Wellington Region TSSF group at St Aidan's Church in Miramar, Wellington.

The day began with the Eucharist followed by a time where we compared our experiences of lockdown. These were varied; some enjoyed the slower pace of life while others were busy helping their churches to operate on-line.

A pot-luck lunch followed and then we settled into a study session looking at Justice. Much of the discussion centered around the "End of Life" (Euthanasia) bill which is going to be the subject of a referendum at our forthcoming general elections for Members of Parliament. The fate of this bill will depend on the public vote. One of the TSSF members is a retired doctor who has been much involved in Palliative care and he outlined the reasons that the vast majority of New Zealand's medical profession are against euthanasia. We were encouraged to write slogans that the "NO" lobby could use.

The discussion also touched on the other bill which will be a subject of a referendum at the general elections which, if it gains a majority of "yes" votes, will legalise the use of recreational cannabis. Medical use of cannabis is allowed already.

Sister Kiwi

(During this time) we can look back and celebrate Zoom gatherings that allow us to travel great distances and social distance as well, and feel the energy of gatherings yet this week and next

On Saturday 6/20 the **Bluebonnets Fellowship** gathered, graced by participation from Ireland! Sam Loudenslager did the hosting. They'll next be meeting next on Sept. 5th.

Then on Sunday 6/21, the **Great Lakes Fellowship** gathered with Kiwi presence; and they gather every other week! John Son of Syvert serves as host,

On 6/23, the **OEF Bible Study Group** Zoom-gathered and found intrigue and meaning in 4 translations of Matthew 10:40-42 - a lively hour on just those 3 verses. Every Tuesday! this group meets with John Juniper as host — email him if you'd like to participate!

The **Book Study Group**, finishing up "Tragic Investment" gathered on 6/25 with Kiwi presence around the gallery. Brother Juniper hosts this gathering as well.

Friday, 6/26, Karen Lawler was ordained as Priest in the Episcopal Church! That service took place at the Episcopal Cathedral in Sacramento, CA, and we of the Golden Gate Fellowship were vicariously present with her and Kathy. OEF was also represented at a follow-up party on Saturday, 6/27.

The Northeast Fellowship Zoom-gathered on Saturday, 6/27, convened by Sara Holliday.

All that from June 20th to 27th!! Perhaps more... we're a Zoomin' dynamic these days of social distancing, and mindful of the "cases & deaths" that mark this time...

Kyrie Eleison! God of love, presence the families that grieve!

And right over the chronological horizon, in August, here comes Chapter 2020...

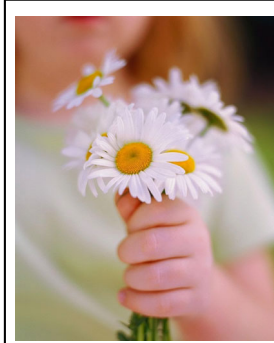
- michael v. for the Fellowships Team

Seven-Point Formula for Happiness

Leon Knapp, *Leader. The Little Shrine of truth Spring Lake Michigan*

**...From my grandmother, who was a Theosophist, is still, and always will be influencing my life.*

1. On arising, ask God what you can do for Him this day.
Love is givingness.



2. Remain pleasantly silent when in the presence of negation.
Love is tolerant.



3. Be slow to express your opinion, for it has value only as it brings more happiness to others.
Love does not seek its own.



4. Control your emotions by speaking slowly, for haste is fear in action.
Love is patient.



5. Speak that blessed word of praise. Do not try to solve problems, but prove the answer.
Love is the answer.



6. Be cheerful. The fragrance of the rose remains with the giver.
Love is joyous.



Attitude ♣



Gratitude

7. Be grateful. Your gratitude is the deed of the flower of human happiness.

All is well.
God is love.

**Shared by Jul Baker n/OEF*



Formation Station



The formation committee (John Michael, Helen Bathurst, Paula Clouse and Carol Stiver) is anticipating four Novices to Profess at our first virtual chapter meeting in August.

We are proud to recommend Jul Baker, Steve Bowman, Sam Loudenslager and Daniel Miller to Profess as Members. At the time of publication we are recommending four of our Postulants to progress to Novice status. They are Catherine Maine from Ontario, Mir Plemmons from Washington and Phil Waselick and Dale Bliesz from the Great Lakes region. Phil and Dale will be taking their vows with their regional sisters and brothers.

This leaves us with 10 Postulants actively working with their companions. Our thanks go out to all who accompany the Postulants and Novices who travel the journey in the OEF.

Carol Stiver, OEF

Introducing:

David Chasteen:

I'm David Chasteen. I'm from Indiana but live in San Francisco, CA. I'm a former Army and CIA officer who rediscovered the gospel while studying Islam in the Middle East. As a consequence, I resigned from the CIA, left Washington and started researching religious life. I landed with a community of friends in San Francisco and worked for the San Francisco Police Department. I started doing Mass with the San Damiano Friary here in San Francisco. Through them, I discovered TSSF and ultimately OEF. Now, I'm a cybersecurity consultant and television writer and am still trying to figure out how to align my life with the way of the cross.

Bethany Woychik:

My name is Bethany, and I'm a social worker in Wisconsin. I've been looking for something like the OEF for a very long time, and I'm overjoyed to have found you!

Aviva Rios:

I am married to my sweetheart Calvin and have two teenage sons. I'm a homeschool teacher, a homesteader, and a studio artist. We live in the beautiful Pacific Northwest on the Canadian Border with my parents, four cats and a flock of ducks.

I am a CMA working in Speciality, and a patient advocate currently working with Advanced Care Planning. My hope is to be a full-time end of life Patient Navigator in the next three years.

I currently attend an Episcopal church and Shabbat services with other believers. I serve with Parish Nursing and the Altar Guild. My faith journey has been wide and varied through several Christian traditions. The Ordered life has long been pursuing me and I'm now ready to pursue it.

Welcome, one and all!



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**





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



Thanks

W. S. Merwin- 1927-2019*



Listen
 with the night falling we are saying thank you
 we are stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings
 we are running out of the glass rooms
 with our mouths full of food to look at the sky
 and say thank you
 we are standing by the water thanking it
 standing by the windows looking out
 in our directions
 back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging
 after funerals we are saying thank you
 after the news of the dead
 whether or not we knew them we are saying thank you
 over telephones we are saying thank you
 in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators
 remembering wars and the police at the door

and the beatings on stairs we are saying thank you
 in the banks we are saying thank you
 in the faces of the officials and the rich
 and of all who will never change
 we go on saying thank you thank you

with the animals dying around us
 our lost feelings we are saying thank you
 with the forests falling faster than the minutes
 of our lives we are saying thank you
 with the words going out like cells of a brain
 with the cities growing over us
 we are saying thank you faster and faster
 with nobody listening we are saying thank you
 we are saying thank you and waving
 dark though it is

From *Migration: New & Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 2005). Copyright © 1988 by W. S. Merwin. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

*Shared by Nancy Menning, OEF