

FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 136

Thanksgiving 2020



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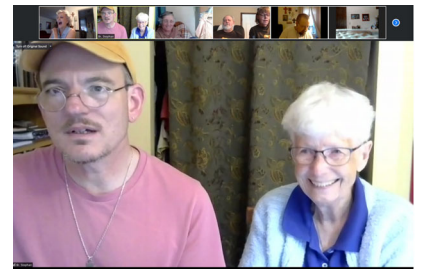
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Chapter 2020!



Yes, it really happened! In spite of Covid-19, we managed to have Chapter August 10 - 12, 2020. Of course, no in-person gathering took place. It was a great experiment in conducting an entire retreat via Zoom; and it worked remarkably well! Our theme this year was St.



Clare. There is not a lot of information out there about her life, and she tends to be a little neglected. Since we were meeting at Claretide, it seemed appropriate to honor her.

Some of our siblings who are a little more knowledgeable were interviewed, and we learned about some aspects of her life. For example, when Clare left her family to found her order, her sister joined her. Then their family tried to kill them both! Working with her hands was very important to Clare. She and her sisters gave away everything they made. We ended this interview with a discussion, sharing what information about Clare most interests us. As, we are confined this year due to Covid, we discussed the similarities of today's lockdowns with Clare's cloistered life.

Our first interviewer was Sr. Katie, who interviewed Sr. Petra. There was some discussion of the politics of the time, and Petra offered to create a chronology of Clare's life journey for us. After this session, we had some small group discussions in separate Zoom "rooms." In this first session, we examined the "First Letter of Clare to Agnes of Prague." Clare was teaching Agnes, who was a young teen, the attributes of spiritual wealth, and Clare's disdain for worldly wealth. Holy Poverty is gratitude for what you have, and freely sharing without money, divesting from the marketplace. To Clare, poverty of one's own ego and self interest, along with material poverty allows one to focus on God without distraction or obligation. We thought about how our lives would change if we tried to live as Clare taught, and discovered the reason for a Second and Third Order. We are not capable of living like Clare.

The next interview was Sr. Nancy interviewing Sr. Anjelika. Anjelika shared stories about her pilgrimage to Assisi,
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Chapter 2020... continued

and mentioned that Clare has always been relegated to the background.

We discussed how Clare became the patron saint of television! Apparently, one time when she was ill and could not attend mass,

she was able to see and hear it on the wall of her room. She was given this designation by Pope Pius the XII in 1958, when television was becoming commonplace.

Small group discussion followed, studying Clare's Second letter to Agnes. In this letter, she was teaching Agnes about persistence and focus: "What you hold, may you always hold..." her words about a "light step" and "unswerving feet" Alluding to self-awareness, awareness of others and steady focus in the same direction.

On Tuesday, we heard from Sr. Magdalena, interviewed by Br. Jacoba. Small groups studied the Third Letter to Agnes. Here she teaches Agnes gentleness and humility, encourages Agnes to be joyful and says, "Do not worry about anything..." Clare's vision of her community involved encouragement of her Sisters and the passing of the torch to the next generation of Sisters. She said, "Let your gentleness be known to everyone." This is something few people value today.

Next, was our associate member David Rensberger interviewing Sr. Anne Nancy. This discussion focused on the feminine energy in Franciscanism. Small groups studied the Fourth Letter to Agnes. We discussed Clare's encouragement to "study your face within (the mirror)" She is encouraging Agnes to study her own soul and see Jesus within it. Clare expresses the wonder and astonishment in realizing the poverty Jesus embraced. Wonder and



astonishment bring energy to follow:

"Draw me after You..." Clare finds glory in suffering, poverty and death.

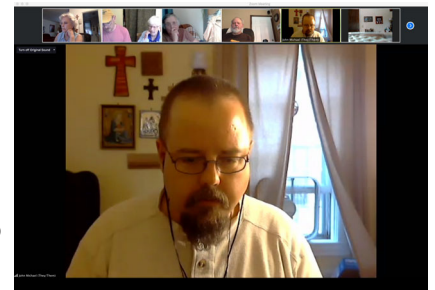
We learned a great deal about our Sister Clare in these discussions,

and are grateful to our siblings who shared their knowledge and insight.

So, what about the business of the Order? We accepted with sadness the request for release of vows from Br. Barnabas (Luis Antonio). He has been walking with us in discernment for more than a year. We are releasing him to the Community of Francis and Clare, an Anglican Order. He will remain a friend of The Order. We hope to see him again, maybe as a guest at Chapter?

Our profession class of 2020 was presented by Br. John Michael and the Formation Team! Steve Bowman of St. Louis, MO will now be known as Br. Salachar. (More on the meaning of that name follows in an article by Sr. Nancy Menning, page 7.) Jul Baker joins us from Olympia, WA, and will take the name, Sr. Julian. Sam Loudenslager from Little Rock, AR will be known as Br. Samuel. Last but not least, Daniel Miller from St. Johnsbury, VT will be known as Br. Daniel. We receive our new siblings with joy!

Our new novices this year are, Mir Plemmons, Catherine Maine, Gail Stephens and Steve Jerbi. Congratulations to them!



Chapter 2020... continued

There was discussion of a proposed new addition to our Statutes. Some folks who have been released from vows have requested to return to OEF. This statute would set a guideline for returning released members to walk with us for a year as a Novice-by-Transfer. Members were asked to discern about this idea before Chapter. The proposal will be finalized by the Council this year for formal presentation at next year's Chapter. Sarah Rose Ball was accepted back into the fold as a Novice-by-Transfer.

So, we've proven to ourselves that we can be together even in the oddest of circumstances! Look for more Zoom gatherings to come!

A Little More Order Business

Below is a link to one of the new resources that will be available on our website. If you are looking for Advent resources. For inspiration, for a bit of a retreat or maybe just for something new and different I recommend checking God Space Light out. I actually had the good fortune of hearing one of the founders speak in one of my classes and she is amazing! Anyway lots of great things to savor here and not just for Advent either! If anyone misses this thread the link will be posted in the resource section of our web page.

Enjoy! Br. Stephan

<https://godspacelight.com/>



Juniper Cup!

A virtual "Juniper Cup," you say? How is that possible? Well, when the year is 2020, you make it work!

We had a lot of respectable entries in response to the question, "What would you give Francis or Clare as a birthday gift?"

Deb & Mark Scott's entry, in their words: "Ours was very quick and simple for the sake of Zoom Vision! We offered Francis a pair of sunglasses to protect his ailing eyes and sunscreen

to protect the top of his head as he would walk about sharing the Word of the "Son" with mankind and animals of all kinds! For Clare, we offered a small solar panel that would

be placed just outside her cell, so it would draw in the 'Son' and allow the Word to resonate to all the Sisters of the Community! "



Peace Always- Deb and Mark OEF

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Linda Rose contributed this entry:

"Happy Birthday Chiara Offreduccio!

Happy Birthday, Clare!

Happy Birthday, Foundress of the Order of Poor Ladies!

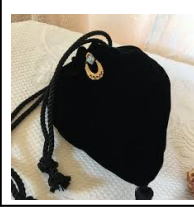
Happy Birthday, Author of the first set of monastic guidelines known to have been written by a woman!

Happy Birthday, St. Clare of Assisi!

(Continued on page 4)

Juniper Cup... continued

Okay, so what birthday gift befits a monastic foundress, Italian woman, saint and the Flower of Francis?



A reticule -- with a hole in the bottom!

Joy to Lady Poverty!"

* * * * *

Br. James' entry, unfortunately, has been lost in the shuffle of poor memory, but had something to do with a mask and a ten-foot pole. (Maybe for making contact with lepers? Or COVID patients?)



* * * * *

Now, on to the runners-up! In Third Place, Br. Daniel gave us the following text conversation between Francis and Clare:

"F: Today I got cyber-bullied.

C: I'm so sorry.

F: I guess I was really bullied too.

C: Are you okay?

F: No, it was wonderful. I had strapped my phone to my head, so when they threw me down the ravine, the view was wonderful. I have a video like a Go-Pro. My phone broke, though.

C: You could have been killed!

F: Martyred. It would be fine. LOL.

C:...

C: I messaged with some foreign dignitaries.

F: That sounds awesome.

C: I think a woman who will likely put Christ before all else found His love in her heart. I also got about 9000 signatures for a couple petitions.

F: I found a link to a few praise songs on YouTube.com. Let me send it to you.

C:...

C: That's not a praise song.

F: It is if you think about it right.

C: I guess...still questionable... Just don't send that to the Pope again.

F: He liked the last one.

C: No. No. He didn't.

F: I also had a bunch of people tell me that I wasn't the real Francis and had no authority to preach online.

C: Why didn't you get some Franciscans to back you up?

F: They were Franciscans.

C: That's insane.

F: It was perfect joy. Can you imagine the reaction when they find out?

C: I'm getting online to tell them right now.

F: No. No. Wait until tomorrow. I'm going to spend the night outside first. That'll make it funnier.

C: I sometimes think that being cloistered just makes everyone crazy, but now that I have the internet, I don't mind being cloistered so much. They act like this outside of the monastery too."

● * * * *

In Second Place, Br. Fred regaled us with a silent movie of the exploits of Br. Rat trying to find a gift for Francis:



"After a long hiatus of not participating himself in the Juniper Cup, Brother Rat decided that he could come up with a Birthday Gift for Francis on the spur of the moment. I let him give it his best shot. Pictures tell the story of each of his attempts to present an acceptable

gift And my evaluation of his choice. Until on the fourth try it was deemed acceptable.

(Continued on page 5)

Juniper Cup... continued



Simplicity Violation!

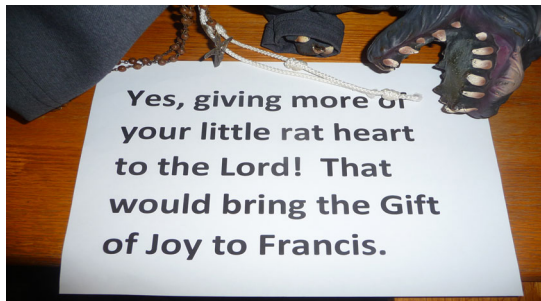
Besides that's my
phone you thief!



Your used
COVID mask...?
JUST - NO!



Better... but No,
Francis is long done
with collecting
Stones!



* * * * *

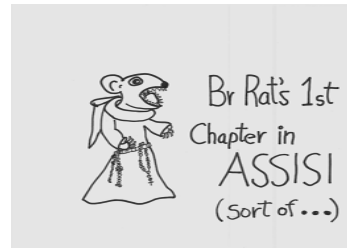
And, last, but not least, Sr. Denise in First Place, with her story:

"A bedtime story prepared for the 2020 Juniper Cup

The story was narrated and illustrated with cartoons

The real winner of Juniper Cup 2020 is Br. Rat, as he won both 1st and 2nd Place!

DeniseM



It was a few days before the birthday of our dearly loved Brother Francis.



Br Rat went to bed thinking about what he could give Br Francis for his birthday, and he got an idea!

He said to himself, "I'm going to need help for this", and fell asleep.

The next morning, after Morning Prayer, Br Rat gets on his laptop and writes an email to his little siblings in San Damiano.

"Dear Little Siblings,

Greetings! You are invited to our first ever Franciscan Rat and Mouse Chapter in Assisi.

However, since we are in a Pandemic, we will have to meet via Zoom.

Not to worry, you know the drill, all you have to do is click on the picture of the cheese and it will zoom you right into the meeting.

We don't want to waste time so the meeting will be tomorrow evening after Vespers. It's especially important that you attend, especially if you like cheese.

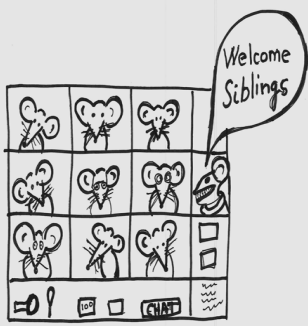
So, tomorrow then, just click on the cheese! See ya soon!

Your Big Brother, Br Rat, OEF"

(Continued on page 6)



Juniper Cup... continued



"The next day, all the little mouse siblings clicked the cheese link and zoomed right into the chapter meeting.

'It's great to see you all!' said Br Rat. 'I love your pointy little noses

and smooth grey fur, and long tails! So cute!!!!'

"Br. Rat continued. 'I have called you all here my dear little Franciscan siblings because I need your help.

You love our dear Br. Francis and like to scurry all over him when he is trying to sleep. I understand. I know that this makes you all feel good, everybody feels good being around Br Francis!

However, (pause) it has come to my attention that **SOME** of you, I **WON'T MENTION NAMES**, also like to nip at his ears and his toes!

"When the little mouse siblings heard this, they tried their best to look very innocent and pious.

Br. Rat continues, 'Now here's the deal:

I have planned to send you a really big chunk of the most delicious cheese. It will be delivered by drone on the outskirts of San Damiano tomorrow after Lauds.

You will have this deeeeliiiiicoussssss cheese all to yourselves and can party all day and night.'

The little mouse siblings cheered.

'But,' said Br Rat. (And the little mice all got

quiet.) 'You must promise NOT to go near our dear Br Francis the entire day and night.'

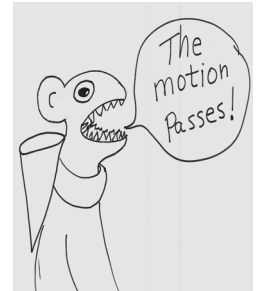
'Now, let's take a vote!

If you like cheese say Squeak!"

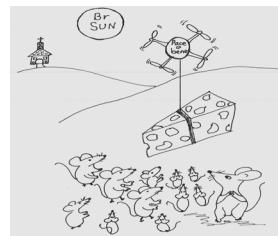
And all the little mice answered, 'Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!'

Br. Rat declares, 'The motion passes by a preponderance of cheese, er ... I mean **SQUEAKS!**'

'I your big Br. RAT, OEF, declare this Rat & Mouse Chapter **ADJOURNED!**'



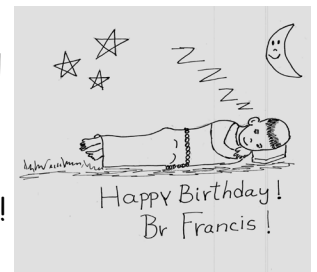
"The next day after Lauds, a drone delivered the big chunk of deeeelicious cheese to the outskirts of San Damiano. The little mouse siblings were all there looking up at the cheese as it was being delivered. And they had a great party all day and all night.



"That evening, Br. Francis went to Sleep.

It was a wonderfully deep and peaceful sleep. And this is the story of how Br. Rat, OEF, gave our dear Br Francis, a peaceful night's sleep for his birthday."

Happy Birthday Br. Francis!



Celebrating the Newly Professed Members of the OEF

First, for those of you unfamiliar with it, I want to assure you that "salad jars" are a thing. A beautiful thing. My beloved spouse Alison -- back in the days when I wasn't working from home due to COVID-19 -- used to make me a salad jar for lunch. Best. Lunch. Ever. Go ahead and do a Google image search if you have no idea what I'm talking about.

That said, I want to lift up for our love and prayers the newly-professed members of the OEF. The following good people took profession vows when we gathered online in August:

- **Daniel Miller** -- no profession name yet; perhaps in a future year. So we will continue to call him **Brother Daniel**.
- Sam Loudenslager -- profession name is his birth/baptismal name: **Brother Samuel**. **Steve Bowman** -- profession name is **Salachar**. The preference here is that it stand alone ("Salachar") -- think of the musical artist "Prince" -- but "Brother Salachar" is fine as well. And he will know we are talking about him if we call him "Brother Salad Jar."
- **Jul Baker** -- profession name is **Sister Julian**. She writes: "I took the name Julian, a yin-yang of my fondness for Julian of Norwich and atonement with my maternal grandfather, Julian Ray, who I met once as a child and none of us really ever knew."

Salad Jar jokes aside, a little more explanation of the term "salachar" is in order. While we were gathered online for Chapter/Convocation, Salachar posted the following comments in the Zoom Chat, explaining his choice of this profession name:

- Neither brother nor sister, the word means dirt/dust/grime in Gaelic
- I choose Salachar as the name for the fingerprint like spark of the Trinity that was

before Steve, lives in Steve and will remain after Steve

- Gen 3:19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to Salachar, since from it you were taken; for Salachar you are and to Salachar you will return."
- All life comes from, returns to and relies on Salachar
- Salachar is humble, trod on, the home of worms
- Salachar is God's paint
- Salachar neither needs nor desires thanks, praise, control, power, approval, pleasure, security -- Salachar simply is
- Francis chose to leave this world naked and in physical and spiritual connection with Salachar
- My goal is to continue to seek complete self-emptying, until then I seek to be aligned with all of creation spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically
- As I succeed, I bring my Creator glory and achieve lasting Unity and as I fail, I am still blessed Christ soaked Salachar

Please keep Brother Daniel, Brother Samuel, Salachar, and Sister Julian in your prayers...

Nancy Menning, oef





Words from The Servant Council



Y'all know that the Council meets every week via Zoom for about an hour. It is always a blessed time of gathering for us—we feel very fortunate to have an excuse to see each other (at least virtually) as often as we do. Every time we lovingly consider the Order, lifting up the life of our individuals and the life of the Order as a whole. The current Council is in its second year, and we have really come together as a group. We hope we show our love in our service to y'all.

So what have we done for you lately? Well, among other things:

--We've been digesting what happened at Chapter/Convocation this year. We sent out a survey about it, got feedback from 25 people (not bad! could be better!). Most responses were very positive about the experience. A common comment was that there was some Zoom fatigue which we'll try to address if there is a next time. Again, thanks to everyone who participated, making it possible for us to gather as much as we could.

--We've been working on our reporting structure, making sure that all of the professed have someone to report to. We've also been reaching out to folks that we haven't heard from in a while, making sure that no one is left alone in this difficult time.

--We held our first quarterly meeting of all OEF servants (or representatives from each team) via Zoom (of course) on Sept. 27. We started this having seen a need for better communication and coordination of the work of the Order, and it seems that this is a good way to go in that regard. Participants were enthusiastic about it.

--We are working on getting our efforts at Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation going a little more.

--We have been discussing conflict/harm issues that arise in the Order. This was to be a topic for Convocation this year, but we felt that we had to postpone such discussion until we could meet face to face. So this year, we intend to work on this, with particular attention at the

longer Council meeting we're planning for January.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to serve y'all.

The OEF Council, Betty Lou, Bruce James, Jacoba, Juniper, and Markie

PS:

Our deepest thanks go out to Sr. Deb and Br. Stephan for putting together OEF's Zoom Transitus service we all experienced on October 3rd! And thanks to everyone else who participated and helped. It was wonderful, and as some have said since, this should be an OEF tradition!

You may remember our siblings apologizing for not getting "permission" from the Council for doing the service. Just so y'all know: we don't need to give permission for such opportunities to share and meet. As your servant council, we are not the "boss" of the OEF; don't make us that! Indeed, no one is boss, but, led by the Spirit together, WE ALL are the OEF. Now more than ever, we need more opportunities for gathering and sharing together, as much as we can.

We only ask that people touch base with us, sharing what celebrations or other activities they have in mind--be it another worship service, book study, ... ---so that we may be able to help coordinate, plan, consult, provide resources, ... as needed. (It is always possible, for example, that others are planning something similar.) Rather than permission, we shall give you our blessings in any such endeavor. If the Spirit gives you an opportunity that just can't wait for us to get back to you, please go ahead with your plans.





Two Brothers' Accomplishments!



As of last evening, I am now a board certified chaplain (BCC) in Ireland. This is the certification for healthcare chaplains. Here in Ireland there are two chaplaincy certification bodies. The Healthcare Chaplaincy Board (HCB) is canonically accountable to the Catholic church and is the exclusive path for Catholic chaplains - similar to the NACC in the US. The Chaplaincy Accreditation Board (CAB) is administered by the Church of Ireland (Anglican Communion). Definitely a system reflective of the sectarianism of Ireland's past and also reflective of the established churches' struggle to preserve job positions in an increasingly secularized health care system and pluralistic patient base. Fortunately, although the CAB is a ministry of the Church of Ireland, they also provide an ecumenical / I nter-faith service by acting as the certification body for any stray cats and dogs (like myself). In that regard, the CAB functions like a mini version of the APC / BCCI in the US

Similar to the US, I had completed 4 units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) - 1 in the US and 3 in Ireland (two of those at Level-2). I did get some firm CAB resistance to accepting my certification application because of my not having a theology degree. I did push back that my partial completion of a MA in pastoral care, positioned me better in this area than did their requirement for completion of an undergraduate minor. I was also able to cite precedence where they had certified a non-degree holding Buddhist who had gone through a monastic novitiate. My assertion was that OEF formation program was of similar nature. So, my certification application was reluctantly accepted based on my arguments on equivalency.

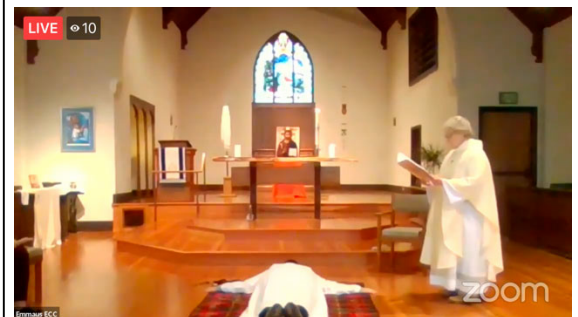
So, what will I do now? My prospect for a hospital position are quite tiny because of my age and the allocation of chaplain positions by denomination. Also, unlike North America, volunteer pastoral care is not encouraged by the hospital chaplaincy departments in Ireland. My current focus has been to define a chaplaincy outreach called "community chaplaincy" (see: www.CorkCommunityChaplains.IE). So, why

then bother with board certification? - because the chaplaincy profession is a community where I need to have a voice and a seat at the table. I can't help change systematic things from the outside.

Br. Neal Dunnigan

* * * * *

And a few photos from Mir Plemmons' Ordination



**Congratulations, Brothers!
We're proud of you!**



Formation Station



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

They are proud to recommend Jul Baker, Steve Bowman, Sam Loudenslager and Daniel Miller to profess as members. At the time of publication they are recommending four of our postulants to progress to novice status. They are Catherine Maine from Ontario, Mir Plemmons from Washington and Phil Waselik 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.

(from July 30, 2020)

... And these folks DID INDEED become Professed and Novice members of OEF at Chapter 2020! (See Nancy Menning's article on page 7 of this issue.)

Congratulations to all!



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





A Few Good Reads



Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent

To begin, I must briefly reflect on *Tragic Investment* (Addington, RJ), which was, for me, an eye-opening read. In the throes of reading and discussing the history and commissive collusion of the extractive economy that built the United States, I was deeply uncomfortable on many occasions. Yet, the depth and genuineness of our (OEF members') sharing gave me the courage to sit with my discomfort. After reading *Tragic Investment*, I accepted my need for more; my privilege had left me ignorant.

Caste (Wilkerson, I) is no less a compelling read. As Wilkerson writes, "When you live in an old house, you may not want to go in the basement after a storm to see what the rains have wrought... [but] choose not look at your own peril." Whatever we choose to ignore does not go away; racism remains.

Whether you use a metaphor (a word) or an allegory (a story), appreciate the United States is an old house with a structural skeleton – a caste system. Caste system, an artificial, fixed, embedded ranking of human value that is rigid with arbitrary boundaries, runs throughout human history. Wilkerson names three caste systems which have stood out: Nazi Germany; India; United States (US). She notes that *caste* (invisible) and *race* (visible) are neither synonymous, nor exclusive.

The author introduces the *American Untouchable* – the Reverend Martin L. King. The *Dalits* (Untouchables) of India welcomed and revered him. Dr. King was initially peeved, but quickly experienced a profound awareness, "Yes, I am untouchable, and every Negro in the United States is an untouchable." I was struck with the humanity of Dr. King's initial response and humbled by his realization. If I place myself in his shoes, how would I respond? I've visited India twice staying in an ashram, Gurudev Siddha Peeth. I was always treated with utmost respect. As I reflect on my experiences, I was blind to caste. It never occurred to me to question if I my travel companions (some of whom were Black women) were treated differently; I took no notice. Once again, I found myself *sitting* in discomfort.

Wilkerson found "startling, unsettling connects between the US and Germany leading to the Third Reich... American laws were the main foreign precedents for Nazi Germany's racist regime." Intentionally or unintentionally, the US system of race-driven laws became a handbook for Nazi Germany. Beware of a sanitized history.

Geneticists and anthropologists have long seen *race* as a man-made invention with no basis in science and biology. As bewildering as the *no-basis construction of race*, is the term *Caucasian* created to label people from Europe. Note, the term is relatively new, completely arbitrary, and crafted based on Blumenbach's favorite mountain range. How much damage has been done with labels?

I offer snippets of some of the chapters that resonated with me.

The parents who named their daughter, *Miss*, to ensure she was addressed respectfully struck me as clever and audacious. I celebrate her parents' commitment to ensuring their daughter's dignity. Today we offer our respect in addressing one another using preferred names and pronouns.

Lynching Memorabilia, confused with documenting history, was the continuation of our extractive economy. Photographers charged fees for posing in lynching photo ops.

Silence sometimes gives gravity and form to music; sometimes silence is a soft, comforting presence. In the face racism, silence is omissive complicity. We pay a steep price for a caste system that runs counter to our country's stated ideals. How often have I remained silent? What would Francis and Clare do?

I continue to read and reflect and recommend this profound look at caste and racism.

With gratitude to the author,
Linda Rose





Encouraging One Another: Prayer



Hi siblings!

As a way of getting to know and encouraging one another, I thought we could set aside an email thread each month to give a glimpse of what our personal rules look and feel like in our daily lives. So for November, I'd like to invite you to share a photo, brief recollection, or other snippet



that relates to the discipline of PRAYER. Here's a peek at part of my prayer corner at home:

Photo description: A metal, circular carving of a tree of life (including a trio of birds) hangs on a wall painted light purple. Below the tree are two rows of

small icons and paintings, including: Clare with a cat; Jesus and Mary Magdalene; Francis; Mary of the Disappeared; Compassion Mandala; and Eve

I'm looking forward to seeing and hearing from you all, and I promise my prayers as we navigate a stressful time in our nation and world _/_

Many prayers, and a lot of gratitude,

Jacoba :)

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I care for prayer in a variety ways; Taize in non covid Times is one of my favorite forms of prayer along with contemplative prayer. This time of year I also set up a prayer bowl at the prayer station in the hallway. Here you will find an East Indian prayer bowl with paper and pen to write prayers which will be read as part of our Christmas meal. There is a candle and in-



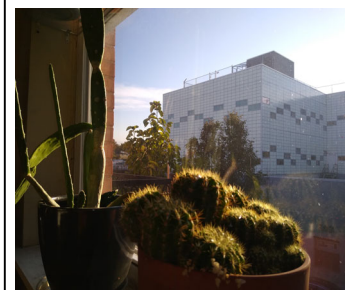
cense for the Virgin Mary, along with several items from India that remind me of my first real understanding of prayer. Above this prayer station is a San Damiano Cross and a prayer by Mother Teresa.

I love the idea of sharing in this way. Thank you Jacoba !

Take Care, Br Stephan

* * * * *

Ever since my conversion, windows have been a big center of my prayers. This has been my prayer window for the last 12 years. In the foreground are two of my cactuses that share this space. One surprisingly blooms for about seven hours once a year. Through the window is sunshine, rain, wind, new leaves, falling leaves, new moons and full moons. Across the street is the outpatient mental health clinic that treats about 3000 people each week. Before they added the top two floors, there used to be a wondrous weeping birch; but everything changes, and the kids (Continued on page 13)



Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Submissions for the Lent 2021 issue of "Fiddlesticks" will be accepted immediately.

Deadline for submissions is January 15, 2021.

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!



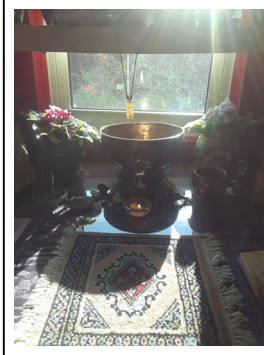
Encouraging One Another... continued

and families who come to the clinic need support. Off on the left, it looks out to the train line, the subway line and then across the giant, historic Evergreen cemetery. My window makes me look beyond what is going on between my ears and out to the wonder of God's world.

Br. Juniper

* * * * *

Our prayer space is large with symbols. You see a singing bowl from Nepal, a Muslim miniature prayer rug from a dear deceased Pakistani friend, stones from various Chapters and places drawing attention to the environment, a small vase from a street vender in San Fran to remember persons with AIDS



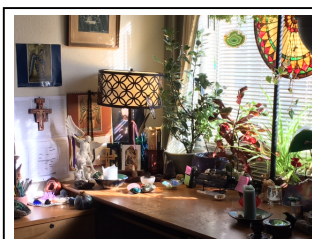
and the creative street community, a rainbow of bookmarks created by Sr. Debbie, a wooden dolphin from Bali, a crystal crucifix as well as an infant Jesus, an icon of St. Paul, original art that draws my heart to the Eternal, a necklace from the African Children's Choir. Underneath all of that is a shawl, given by Yoseph's mother, which was used in our wedding to bind our lives together. The window faces east to Jerusalem. There's a repurposed church across the street that's now a community rec. center. Bamboo grows as a screen in which the sparrows hide and dance on the porch roof. You can't see the small bronze Buddha sitting amidst the African violets. It's a wonderful place for us, an inclusive heavenly space.

-Br. David Delacroix

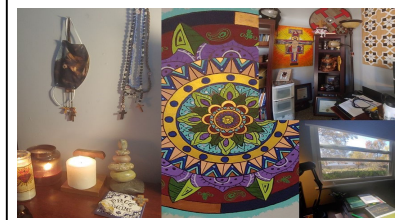
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My prayer space.

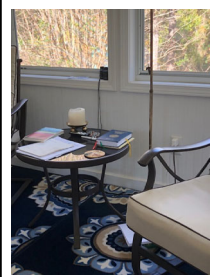
-Sharon Inglis



Salachar's Space:

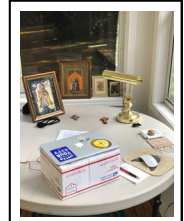


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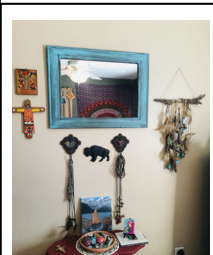


Two spaces in the same room. The table with two chairs is where I pray the daily offices. The other table is my "altar" for Sunday worship.

Br. Samuel



* * * * *



This is my sacred space first thing in the morning. Because our home is a little less than 700 sq ft. every place serves double duty. This is our bedroom, but in the wee hours, this is my sacred space. I have a kneeling rug and

a meditation pillow (not pictured.) I find sitting/kneeling, lying down most comfortable for long periods of time.

Thank you ALL for sharing your spaces!

Isn't it odd how something as simple as one's "personal space" enhances the feeling of "I'm not alone...?"



Peace and grace dear ones, Paula Clare

**There were more submissions to this thread, but not enough space. If you have not sent a picture and would like to, please respond to Jacoba's question on the chat list! I will continue this sharing in the next issue!*
-Sis Chris



Fellowship News!



Greetings to you, Siblings in the OEF & other interested folks! (A Day in the Life- 9/12/20)

TODAY at 2PM Central Time, **The Great Lakes Fellowship** gathers virtually, and the focus will include (or feature!) a Liturgical Ceremony for the speaking of the Novice Vow in the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans by Brother Dale Blesz of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Brother Phillip Waselik of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We pray for these Brothers and all who will be attending that gathering, and we rejoice for this manifestation of the movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of this Little Order.

At 7pm Central Time, **The Bluebonnets Fellowship** gathers virtually with its core of Texans and participants from other far places of Order presence. Pray for these Siblings and celebrate the energy and vitality of gathering as a part of Order Life.

Finally, **BROTHER SAMUEL LOUDENSLAGER**, of Little Italy, Arkansas, has been selected by the Council to succeed me, Brother Michael, as Fellowships Team Coordinator, and further such news-bearing will come from him.

Our Fellowships Team is comprised of Brother Samuel, Sister Markie Oliver, Brother Fred Jaxheimer, Sister Faith Kline, and I will be continuing as a Team Member. If the Spirit moves you to Order engagement as part of the Fellowships Team, do check in with Brother Samuel.

I have much enjoyed and been fed by serving as Fellowships Team Coordinator. For what I've done well, we all rejoice. For what I've failed to do or didn't do as well as it might have been done, we live our trust in God's Grace and I welcome your forgiveness. I look forward to

continuing service to and through the OEF as part of the Fellowships Team.

Peace to you, and joy, in the tragedies and uncertainties of our time!

- michael v./ oef

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Crossroads Fellowship Zoom Gathering October 17, 2020

- Zoom room check-in and greetings Those present: Markie Oliver; Mark Scott; Ron Nuss-Warren; Darryl Glass; John Fitch; Debra Snider-Scott
- Opening Prayer - Ron Nuss-Warren Prayers for all affected by tragedy and injustice; that we are moved to be Christic, following the examples of Christ and Francis.
- Fellowship Business:
- We were in agreement that meeting monthly by way of Zoom will be a great way to remain in touch as Franciscan siblings, especially through the winter months and Covid Pandemic



Fellowship News... continued

- For now, we will be gathering on the third Saturday of the month, at 10:00 am EASTERN TIME, for approximately a 2 hr session, with the possibility of a change to accommodate those who may be working Saturdays, or have other commitments (always open for change).
- Spiritual Enrichment (Deb) - "A Harvest Of Compassion" (Isaiah 58: 6-8)
- Prayers and Petitions: Prayers ascended for ALL of Creation
- Closing Prayer: Season of Creation 2020 Prayer
- Next Gathering: November 21, 10:00 am EASTERN TIME

* * * * *

Coming Event: All-Order Zoom Fellowship!**Greetings!**

The OEF will be hosting an Advent Service on Saturday December 12th at 3:00pm Central time.

As a courtesy to our zoom host, we ask that you sign in 15 minutes before the start of the service.

As this service will include an opportunity to light candles and share in an Agape meal, we invite you to bring the following: Your choice of bread and wine / beverage, Advent Candles (optional) and a prayer bowl to place your written petitions (optional). A zoom link along with a copy of the order of service will follow shortly.

For questions please contact Sr. Deb or Br. Stephan

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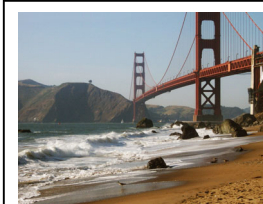
THE GOLDEN GATE FELLOWSHIP, on the evening of Friday, October 30th, gathered on Skype with Postulant David Chasteen as host;

but technical difficulties (Perfect Joy!) and David having to move to another engagement, compelled a shift to Zoom with Postulant Steve Jerbi as host from Lana'i, Hawaii, allowing Betty Lou L., and Anne Nancy and Michael V, and fellow Franciscan John Surinchak to check in with one another. We shared what's going on in our lives as we and our families cope with the Covid Virus pandemic.

We gave shared focus to: (a) Where we plug into Order Life as Ecumenical Franciscans. (b) Reflecting on living our Rule of Life — which of the 8 disciplines offers us the most satisfaction or delight, which of them occasions the deepest struggle &/or is most in need of revision, and which is the current central focus of my spirit journey?

Because we were headed into Elections Week, we reflected on how we read the spirit and soul of America — and what it means to walk and work as a Franciscan in these times. We prayed for our absent Golden Gaters: Kathy & Karen Lawler, Brother Lilith Bear, and Inquirer Kiel McFarland, and for the electoral process.

- michael v.



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.
 Nekeosa, WI 54457
 U.S.A.



Practice: A Prayer of Gratitude

A Meditation by Richard Rohr

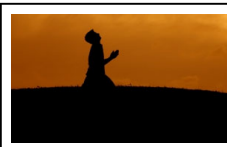


Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us, choosing gratitude until we are grateful, and praising God until we ourselves are an act of praise. Mature prayer always breaks into gratitude. This week's practice is a body prayer from Beverly Lanzetta. Adapt the movements to your body's needs so that you're comfortable. Focus simply on the feeling of gratitude and, as you are able, do the following as you read through the stanzas: bow, kneel, lie down, rise, put your hands over your heart, place your hands together, bow your head, and open your arms wide.

Holy Earth, Holy Cosmos,
 I bow before you
 With my whole being.

Holy Creatures, Holy Nature, I kneel upon the earth
 In honor and thanksgiving of your blessed bounty.

Holy Waters, Holy Mountains, I lay my body on your temple in
 gratefulness for nurturing my tender soul.



Holy Passion, Holy Longing, I rise up before you
 A devotee of truth, following wherever you lead me.

Holy Silence, Holy Solitude, I place my hands over my heart
 Breathing in serenity, breathing out your peace.

Holy Sorrow, Holy Suffering, I close my hands in prayer
 May I bear every wound with compassion and non-harm.

Holy Humility, Holy Emptiness, I bow my head before you
 I have become open, for your All to shine in my soul.

Holy Freedom, Holy Rejoicing, I open my heart to the world
 Offering myself to this day, in joyfulness and gratitude.

Amen. [1]

Submitted by Tobias Caskey, n/OEF

