

FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 143

Post-Chapter/Claretide 2022



Inside this Issue:

- A New Novice's First Chapter Experience
- A Visitor's Observations
- Final Reflections on Chapter 2022 by The Principles Revision Team
- Post-Chapter Thank-Yous
- An Invitation from The Great Lakes Region
- Words from The Servant Council
- OEF History Project
- Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity
- OEF Online Bible Study
- Fellowship News
- Siblings Discuss: A Cautionary Note on Franciscan Peacemaking
- Juniper Cup!
- The Exploits of Br. Rat in Texas
- Formation Station
- Lifelong Formation Station
- Why Am I Here?
- Next Fiddlesticks Deadline
- A Few Good Reads
- An Important Reminder
- Prayer of St. Francis - Another Version
- Our Easter Surprise

A New Novice's First Chapter Experience

By Dawn Dreisbach, n/OEF

Before I could throw my keys on the bed, I glared up toward God. "No!" I shouted. "No, no, no no nooo!"

Here I was at Chapter on Saturday, following God's prompting. 48 hours prior, I had been in the middle of a riotous and difficult discussion between school staff and administrators about white people and racism. Now, having landed in St. Louis after midnight, I had been at Chapter fewer than 12 hours when the siblings had... a difficult discussion about white people and racism. I was fed up. "Not here, God! It is NOT happening here!"

I eyed my teaching bag, the only luggage I needed for a 36-hour stay. Maybe this whole Novice thing isn't going to work. Maybe I'm too tired from being a white special education teacher at a school with 99% students of color, from every level of income. Maybe the OEF takes on too many of the issues that I live with every day. "God, I think maybe you steered me wrong on this one. There's no time for me to make a rational decision! I only have seven hours until the Rites of Passage." Ever the parent, God answered my angst with, "Get some lunch."

Lunch was tasty and I did enjoy the conversations. Our table group got smaller when someone left to continue the morning's discussion with a few serious-looking siblings. After lunch, we all reconvened. The breakout group presented a modified plan which met the concerns aired in the morning. Consensus had been found! Through the entire process, the siblings had followed their disciplined way of listening and communicating, inviting The Spirit to breathe into the community. If only my school folks had done that...

Then on to the Juniper Cup. The Holy Spirit seemed to have swept away the tension from the morning. While we were waiting for the competition results, I took out my recorder and started the wait music from *Jeopardy*.

(Continued on page 2)

A New Novice... continued

But I had chosen the wrong key and the top notes were going to be too high. I stopped playing, thinking, "uh-oh." But once again the siblings found a solution. They started singing and finished the tune for me, laughing. Well, this was getting better. "Okay, God," I thought, "maybe this will be alright." God smiled. "I told you so."

That evening at the Celebration Liturgy, I dedicated myself to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Novice in the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans. It still felt a little risky, but like an exciting and loving risk.

In retrospect, I am glad that my first morning with OEF was challenging. I was able to see the remarkable commitment that my siblings have for one another and for this Franciscan

journey, with God and the Spirit leading the way.



Sr. Kathy's sermon

A Visitor's Observations

Siblings, I don't know how to put in few words how much it meant to be with so many of us this weekend, laughing, talking, worshipping and striving to follow "The Little Way."

But Kris (my wife) posted this about meeting you all, and gave me permission to share here.

Thank you, my Franciscan family.

"Mir brought me with him to his OEF meeting. It's been a much-needed rest for me with a special group of people that have made my social-anxiety, strung-out self comfortable and welcomed at every opportunity. I am so grateful Mir has found this God-filled community and that they have welcomed him."

- Mir Plemmons,
OEF



Zoomers! Sr. Kiwi, Br. Michael,
Br. Jahiro & Sr. Markie at the mic.



Family Portrait 2022

FINAL REFLECTIONS ON CHAPTER 2022 BY THE PRINCIPLES REVISION TEAM

One of the beautiful, holy, challenging, painful, and solemn experiences of Chapter 2022 was our communal discernment on the report of the Principles Revision Team. While we in fact reached a point of impasse, siblings bound by conscience implored us not to move forward casually, we began that very conversation in affirmation, and it was those affirmations that brought us to new understanding together.

The Chapter affirmed the 2016 Statutes that provided us with a model of Prayerful Discernment that we employ in each Chapter Session. We said "yes" to listening deeply to God and to one another as a matter of organizational governance.

The Chapter adopted a new Principle 17: *We commit to a process of prayerful discernment, making decisions through careful and holy listening to one another, the needs of the world, and to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We abide by the statutes and norms that we have prayerfully discerned. In so doing, we said "yes" to listening deeply to God and to one another as a matter of observing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

It was through this very process that time was created for more listening, deeper reflection on who and how we want to be as an order in the world, ultimately committing to the very interior work and change that the Gospel calls conversion by discovering the ways that our call to "littleness" invites us to dismantle systems of privilege, power, and violence rooted in white supremacy and patriarchy. In our discernment about the final item in the report, inviting the entire Order into further reflections on the Principles in the coming year, we were not of one mind as we began. We listened deeply to one another, spoke the truth we heard in the Spirit, and found a way with the Spirit among us to gather words that reflected the Spirit's call to us.

When we affirmed the new invitation, a work of the whole Chapter, we embraced once more the ways that commitment to prayerful discernment as a community draws us deeper into loving community, with each other, with God, and with the world, even when the path is challenging.

- Neal Dunnigan, Kathy Lawler, John Michael Longworth, Nancy Menning, Owusu Slater

POST-CHAPTER THANK-YOUS

The 2022 C/C happened because lots of siblings did a lot of extra little things that were really big things. Thank yous need to go out to all those siblings who did airport/train station runs (Chris P., Worth and Angie H., Eleanor T., John S., Katie C., Kelly T., Jonathan S., and James Schratzo of the OFR) (Hope I did not miss anyone.)

Also thank you to all the siblings who did community service activities, such as the garden wedding (Gail S., Ron N.-W., David F., Mir P., Jacoba K. and Deb S. and again I hope I have not missed anyone). There were several bead bracelets made by Mark S. who also volunteered in the office. All of the bead brackets, about a dozen, went with James S. of OFR to the nursing home where James ministers. I hope we can do more of these activities along with other tasks (already thinking of some things to do together). I do hope we can get a few siblings off site to places like *Love the Lou* or community food tasks, rallies or centers. We will see what next year brings. Thank you all for your hard work at this year's C/C.

Also thank you to those who helped with the tech side of things. A big shout out to Salachar, Jonathan, Andrew C. and Eleanor for their assistance throughout our time together.

And thank you all for being such good sports with the scavenger hunt. I hope you all had some fun with this. The small group discussion was awesome. The various small pieces you all found at each clue site are now part of the mosaic we were creating. Thank you for participating in this activity.

And the puzzle was only about 2/3rds finished so it has been requested that it be returned for next year's puzzle. Ron N.-W. and Dawn D. want to finish this puzzle. So be prepared to take on the challenge.

Our annual Chapter/Convocation happens because of all the little things siblings do, including at our Morning and Evening Prayers, Vespers, and Worship Service, and everything in between Wed. afternoon to Sun. afternoon. Thank you all for a great time together. See you next year.

*The 2023 C/C dates are the following: early arrivals Wed., June 21st - Sun., June 25th at Pallottine Renewal Center, St. Louis, MO
Peace and all good. Markie Oliver, OEF



An Invitation from The Great Lakes Lighthouse Region



**Greetings from The Great Lakes
Lighthouse (GLL) Region!**

Our Region is planning a Francistide Retreat Thurs. Sept. 29 - Sun. Oct. 2 at the newly renovated Franciscan Spirituality Center (FSC) in La Crosse, WI
<https://youtu.be/YjTZVD-2oA0>.

We will meet at the Dublin Square Irish Pub and Eatery for Dinner on Thursday (<https://dublinsquarepub.com/>). Our time at these dinners is fun and light hearted. From there we Caravan about 2-4 miles to the FSC. Once we are settled in our rooms, we will have a "meet and greet" with shared snacks and Birthday Cupcakes to Celebrate our Birthdays all at once.

Our theme for the weekend is "Share Your Spiritual Heritage and Cultural Traditions." Each year we try to do activities both on and offsite. This year, we plan to go on a tour of Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine Devotional areas and Grounds https://youtu.be/xFkg9sIRd_0.

We are also asking to have private prayer with teaching time in front of a First Class Relic of St. Francis of Assisi
<https://youtu.be/1KrgaVgkC6o>.

The next day, we will meet with one of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA) who will share the history and traditions in the Perpetual Adoration and Mary of The Angels Chapels. We also will be given some time to experience Perpetual Adoration with prayer leaders in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel
<https://youtu.be/ysL9eY4A2Kg> which is an exact replica of the altar of where it sits behind the altar of the Mary of The Angels Chapel <https://youtu.be/jryaOuZZWG0>.

After our tours and sharing sessions, we will meet the rest of OEF for our Annual

**Transitus Service on Sat., Oct.1 at 3pm
CST led by Sr. Debra and Br. Stephan via
Zoom.**

On Oct. 2, we will celebrate the start of Transitus and Francistide at 10am Mass with the FSPA Sisters and other guests which includes Franciscans from other Orders and pilgrims.

We are excited to meet, as the pandemic has kept us from gathering. You are invited to gather with us!

If you have any questions or wish to register, please contact Sr. Kiara-Mychal at KMHeartOEF@outlook.com.

**DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS
SUNDAY 9/11/22.**

We hope you will join us!



Fellowshipping!



More togetherness!



Words from The Servant Council



Dear Beloved Siblings and Followers of The Little Way,

At our annual gathering, through a process of prayerful discernment, you chose us to serve as the third Servant Council of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans and we assented to do so by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and as the Holy Spirit inspires, equips, and enables us in the spirit of Francis and Clare. We are each deeply humbled by the trust you have placed in us to be your servants. We recognize the sacredness, seriousness, and enormity of the task we have been given and the difficulty of the time in which we are living, but we are not daunted because we believe that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is on The Order and she will not fail us.

Thus far, we have met via Zoom every Thursday since Chapter: three times. We have met with the members of the previous Council, and they assure us that they will work closely with us as we call on them for help and guidance during this time of transition. We have also met with Sister Nancy Menning, our Treasurer, and we will continue to work closely with her. We also look forward to meeting with the Servant Team Members (Formation Coordinator, Fellowship Coordinator, Scribe, Fiddlesticks Editor, Technology Coordinator, JPIC Animator, JCFU Representatives, and the Principles Revision Committee). We are beginning to chart our way forward based on the responsibilities laid on us, the ongoing tasks handed off to us, and the expectations The Order has of us. The pastoral care of The Order is a major priority. We also anticipate that planning for Chapter 2023 will take up much of our time. Our communal reflection on the Principles and where that leads us to action is also a priority.

The Holy Spirit is the governing authority of the Order. We are only your servants as we are able to listen to the Spirit and be led by her. Like Francis, we are also beggars. Our work will be fruitful when we have the help of each and every member of the entire Order. We ask for your participation. Tell us what is on your heart. Keep us in your prayers. Like yourselves, we are poor in spirit, poor in the face of the task that has been assigned to us. It humbles us. We are dependent

on the grace of Christ and the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, we rely on your prayers. We are confident that as we pray for you, you will also pray for us. Blessed be the Holy One forever and ever.

Your Servant Council in the peace of Christ,

Siblings Kathy Lawler, Ron Nuss-Warren, Owusu Slater, Magdalena Stebbing, and Petra Aleah Strand

**The Servant Council is reviewing the Minutes from Chapter 2022. There will be a report in the next issue of "Fiddlesticks." Stay tuned!*



Outgoing Servants: Jacoba, Juniper, Betty Lou & Markie
(Not pictured: Bruce James)



OEI 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





Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity



Good and Blessed Day to you all. Br. Ron and I want to share some exciting updates for the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity! We just had our annual Zoom planning session (June 9-10) to map out the remainder of 2022 and 2023. This planning meeting also brought about change in formatting for this team. Our opening prayer was for the wind of the Holy Spirit fill us with hope, inspiration and guidance. Indeed, the Divine delivered! Salachar was kind enough to get this last minute, hot off the press, update loaded onto our OEF web page of 2022 reports for everyone's review prior to our Order's Gathering this coming Saturday. Ron and I hope you get a chance to take a peek! See you all Saturday!

Peace and Prayers Always-

Deb OEF
Ron OEF

The Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity is holding a series of online mini-conferences to invite ecumenically-minded Franciscans into conversation and reflection on what the Committee has discerned to be "Elements of Franciscan Unity." These mini-conferences will each center on one of the five elements around which the Joint Committee organizes its work.

Our first mini-conference, scheduled for Saturday, September 10, 2022, from 4pm-6pm EDT, will center on baptism as the entry point to Christian and Franciscan unity. It will include a joint presentation by representatives of each of the Joint Committee's constituent Orders - Marie Bianca (Order of Secular Franciscans), Andrew Chavanak (Order of Lutheran Franciscans), Ron Nuss-Warren (Order of Ecumenical Franciscans), and Masud Ibn Syedullah (Third Order Society of St. Francis) – and time for small group discussion and prayer.

To facilitate small-group discussion, you are invited to register by September 1 at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/JCConfSept22>. There is no cost for the retreat, and you do not need to be formally affiliated with a member Order to register.

Questions? Contact Andrew Chavanak, n/OLF, at achavanak@gmail.com.

OEF Online Bible Study

The weekly OEF Bible Study has moved to Wednesday, at 8:00 pm EDT. You can join the study on Zoom:

Topic: OEF Bible Study Time:

This is a recurring meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89760718708?pwd=N2ROTHcrWUpWSzlyM2N3eEdG-dEF0QT09>

We study the Gospel for the coming Sunday as listed on the Revised Common Lectionary. We use the "African Method" Bible Study: Read the passage, everyone picks the word or phrase that stands out for them. Read the passage again (in a different translation), everyone identifies how this impacts them as a person. Read the passage a third time (in a third translation) and everyone identifies how this impacts us as a community. Then time for general sharing on the passage.

You are most welcome to join!





Fellowship News



Good and Blessed Day to all! Our July 16th Zoom Fellowship was six Franciscans strong! We opened with prayer and time of catching up with each other. Plans were made for a Fall in-person gathering on September 24th at Summit Lake State Park, located in New Castle, IN. On site camping would be available, or just a day trip, for us to gather, share stories around the campfire, pray for one another, and have a great time in Franciscan fellowship and fun. (Of course, good food is always the centerpiece for good fellowship)! Please mark your calendars!

Kelly and Markie shared about the joint podcasts that took place Friday night (July 15) between Sidewalk Monastery (OEF) and youth-led OUTcast by Muncie OUTreach (LGBTQ+ Ministry in Muncie, IN). These podcast ministries give voice to all people, all lifestyles, all ethnicities, all ministries, all walks of life! If you have a story, it will be heard!

Crossroads took time to remember July 16th as the day on which, in 1228, Pope Gregory IX canonized our dear Francis of Assisi, just two years after his death. We followed the Morning Praise from *Franciscan Morning and Evening Praise Volume II* with reading of Psalm, Scripture, Prayer and Petitions. May we all follow in the footsteps of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and our brother Francis.

From there we opened discussion about the OEF as a "penitent" Order (Chapter 3 in the Formation Handbook) and what that means to us personally, and as an Order in today's world.

Our next Zoom Crossroads gathering will be on Saturday, August 20th at 10:00 am Eastern. Kelly will be leading us in discussion of Chapters 1 & 2 from our Formation Handbook concerning our Rule of Life. As we continue to gather each month, a discussion on the next subsequent chapter will be led by a Crossroads sibling.

Please always feel free to invite a friend, inquirer, or fellow OEF sibling to our Crossroads

Fellowship. "Our doors are always open!"

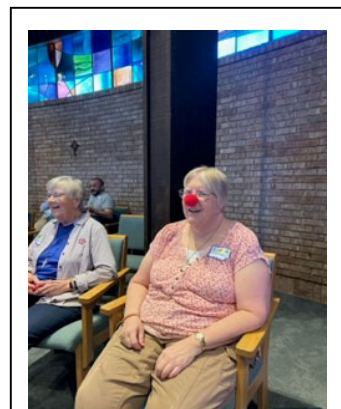
"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle." - Francis of Assisi

I, Sister Kiwi, was privileged to meet with several members of the Wellington based Gubbio Fellowship of the TSSF on 12th August to celebrate St. Clare.

We began with a short biography of St. Clare and then placed symbols of St. Clare's passion for Christ on a table; a Candle as a symbol of light on the night when Clare was received at the Portiuncula by the friars, a San Damiano Cross to remember that the passion of Christ was read to Clare on her deathbed, a decorated box for Clare's belief in the power of the Blessed Sacrament to save the sisters from the Saracens, a small plant to represent Clare's humility (the little plant of St. Francis) and a mirror as a symbol of Clare's call to contemplate the face of Christ and then reflect his life. We finished with a dramatic reading of Clare's last days on Earth.

Most of us then went on to enjoy lunch at a local cafe.

**Don't forget, gang, as you are meeting in your regions, either in person or via Zoom, please send me a report, so that we can see what everyone is up to between Chapters! -Your Editor*



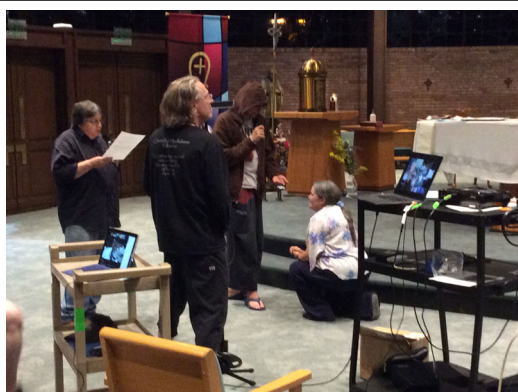
Sr. Denise & Sr. Chris

Siblings Discuss... continued

way. The ones that stand out for me include the mass marches, the boycotts and the communication of the clear goals of the movements that combined all worked to bring about change. One side was peaceful. The response often was not. Many lives were lost among the pacifist groups. One must be willing to be scarred for life, physically wounded and suffer other consequences for the 'cause.' Addressing the nationalistic white supremacy groups in the US is but one level of injustice. How does a third way address international crises such as the genocidal, murderous war being waged by Russia against the Ukrainian people and their culture?

The real question is: what am I willing to sacrifice in the process? Am I willing to be beaten bloody, arrested, bullied, harassed, tormented and maybe even tortured for a cause?

Br. David
Delacroix



Francis and the Leper: Sr. Markie, Br. Andrew, Sib. Jacoba (in hood), Sr. Betty Lou



Juniper Cup!

This year's contest, devised by Sr. Kiwi: What if Francis dropped into modern times? How would the media interview him?

Sr. Dale came in third with her skit as a news anchor, interviewing an invisible Francis. He sent along a gift: a cereal box full of clown noses which we distributed and wore in a family picture.

Second place went to Denise and Sr. Chris, who imagined an interview where Francis commented on they way people allow themselves to be swallowed by a gigantic flying monster, flown to another location and spit out at the other end! He also said he was amazed by the invisible beings called "Alexa" and "Siri," who were so wise that people seemed to depend on them for everything.

Br. Rat went home with Denise.

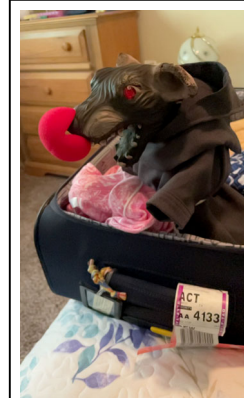
In first place, taking home the coveted shirt of St. James the Least were Sr. Markie, Sr. Katie and Br. Kelly with their podcast, "Sidewalk Monastery." Br. Rat pretended to be Francis.

The Exploits of Br. Rat in Texas

Br. Rat, OEF, made it safely to College Station, TX wearing the Red Nose!

He was taken aback by the triple digit heat and has been hiding in the closet since arriving. Lately, I'm hearing stirrings in there as temps are beginning to cool to the 90s. Let the fun begin!

Sr. Denise, OEF





Formation Station



Introducing:

Joan Schroeder

Shalom everyone! I'm Joan Schroeder, a former academic who loves storytelling, testifying about the goodness of the Lord in my life and proclaiming the gospel to anyone who will sit still long enough to listen. For those who won't, I write poetry. And for those who are not so much into poetry, I don't mind; we can enjoy a cup of tea or go for a walk and by our very being together we are automatically sharing with each other the essence of our God-given gifts. I am ecumenical through and through. My family background is Protestant. My local church is Catholic. When the Lord said to me, "Stand up, pick up your mat and walk!" that's precisely what I did. Walking with the Lord, becoming a living epistle, has given me altogether new desires which I wake up to each day with joy. I believe that faith in Christ, whichever colour this takes, is of itself a healing force which it is our duty as believers to share in a respectful, non-invasive manner so that people will know: better awaits us. In February, I begin a training course to become a hospice worker so that, on the days where I don't have dialysis, I may provide comfort for those who are in the same situation as I, myself was not so long ago.

*Joan is in Germany

Seaghán Ó Murchú (pronounced "Shahwn Oh Muir-eh-khoo")

Born in Los Angeles to Irish immigrants, I attended Loyola Marymount, Claremont, and UCLA for my respective degrees. I've taught literature at the adult/college level since 1984, and lectured in the humanities since 1995. My wife and I, now that our two sons have flown from our nest, anticipate emigrating to Ecuador.

Muhammad Marian Pillay

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I greet you all with a universal greeting of peace.

I am Muhammad Marian Pillay formally Buckus, I'm 33 and live in Richards Bay South Africa. I am a personal assistant and legal secretary by trade but unfortunately I'm not employed at the moment.

I am a Baptized Christian and attend Mass at our local St. Francis Parish. I have been deeply connected to St. Francis from a young age, and I am very pleased and happy to be joining the order. I'm a person that's very reserved, quiet and aloof. I'm a simple human that likes simple things in life. I am ever thankful to all the members and facilitators for their acceptance of me and ongoing support especially Sister Helen who has been a great help and guidance in my formation and discernment.

Welcome one and all!

And congratulations to our siblings who took vows as new Novices and Professed at Chapter:

New Professed Members:

Linda Rose Barley (Sr. Caritas) -
 Dale Blesz (Br. Dale Paul)
 Mir Plemmons (Br. Mir)
 Clair Slomski (Sr. Francesca Clare)

New Novices:

Clinton Bennett
 Dawn Dreisbach
 Kris Eterea
 Crystal Minugh-Brutscher
 Kevin Przbylski

WELCOME ONE AND ALL!



Lifelong Formation Station



The Lifelong Formation Team would like for everyone to mark your calendars for our annual Transitus Zoom Service, to be held on Saturday, October 1, 2022 at 3:00PM CENTRAL TIME. The Zoom link is: Join Zoom Meeting ID: 813 276 5508

We will be posting on the OEF chat as we get closer!

Also, The Lifelong Formation Team wishes to give a big THANK YOU to John son-of-Syvert for his time, dedication, and contribution to our team. We appreciate you so very much, and wish you well on your next OEF adventure! We would like to welcome Sr. Francesca Clare to the round table! We look forward to working with you on this Transitus project and much, much more!

Dale Carmen, OEF
Stephan Scott-Gerhardt, OEF
Francesca Clare, OEF
Deb Snider-Scott, OEF

Repairing God's House

Many books sit on my Franciscan shelf. Now and again I reach for one, any one, as the Spirit leads. Murray Bodo's **The Way of St. Francis: The Challenge of Franciscan Spirituality for Everyone** seemed to call out. As I did a quick thumb through, Chapter 5 caught my attention: Repairing God's House. As Franciscans, on the surface, it may seem like that would just automatically come with the territory, so to speak. After all, we are Franciscans! We learned from the best (Francis and Clare), right?

This chapter begins with a prayer that Francis would pray over and over again. "Most High, glorious God. Illumine the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, a certain hope and a perfect charity; and grant me insight and wisdom, so I can always observe your holy and true command." Bodo points out that Francis was always able to "set the tone" for his life and life events by always starting with prayer and praise to the Most High, with emphasis on devotion. Devotion, not the somber sense of the word, but an "eagerness and cheerfulness in doing the will of God."

As many writers have done, Murray too, sets the stage of Francis praying before the San Damiano Cross when he hears: "Francis, can't you see my house falling into ruin? Go and repair it for me." Trembling with awe, Francis replied, "With joy will I do it, Lord."

From then on his heart was smitten and wounded with love and compassion for the suffering Christ..." Who was the suffering Christ that Francis came face to face with in his day? Whose eyes was he staring into? We can easily remember the lepers, the poor, the outcast, the oppressed. Bigger still, he was staring into the eyes of the Church! He saw Christ crucified over and over again. As Murray points out, Francis heard a call, a "Grail" for reform. "It is the human, suffering Christ who speaks to Francis and the first brothers." By bringing the human Christ to life, in the flesh of all those around him, and in the church, Francis reminded people that the Most High is human, as well as divine. Incarnate!

Murray Bodo finishes the chapter out by reminding us that Francis "made the gospel ring true for his own time" and that "the gospel of Jesus Christ is eternal." He states: "To try to imitate Francis, rather than listen to the Lord in our own time, as he did in his, only stops time and absolves us from restoring God's house, which is once again falling into ruin." He asks "What are the stones that will restore it, and who is the one who will listen, and not be ashamed to beg, and what is the house of God?"

We have an obligation, as Franciscans, and as an Order to come eye-to-eye with the suffering Christ of today. Look deep into the soul of life, here and now. What is our Grail? Unless our head is in the sand, we don't have to look far to see the suffering Christ in ourselves, our families, our communities, our churches, in our true history on this continent, and in history from around the world. Pray fervently, Listen deeply, Pray fervently again, then start begging and collecting and piecing together the stones that will repair the house of the Most High... and who/what is the house, you ask? Gaze into the eyes of all you meet and you will see the house of the Most High! Incarnate! Amen.

Debra Snider-Scott OEF
Lifelong Formation Team



Why Am I Here?

The Woman at The Well*



I am here to love you, Lord.
Your love falls into my hand.
I was waiting to be found,
Hoping to be found.

You were waiting to be found,
It's time that you won.
I found you.
I fell into your love
A bottomless pit
But not a bone broken.

I am here to praise you, Lord.
All praise!!
Lord of all mystery and glory,
Whose promises held
Glisten through the blackness of despair.
Of flesh and blood,

God's wisdom has come close to me
With sweet-smelling name
And affectionate flowing voice.
You love me beyond all measure,
I nestle within the warm shade of your wings.
Lord of perfection and plenty. All rejoice!!
I lack no good thing.

*I am here to defend you, Lord.
You, whence all blessings flow.
Unrestrained passion for you is my sword.
I will not love you in secret
But put on your armour then
Shovel this putrid world aside.
I burn for the One who is rich in
Forgiveness and peace.
He has made me gloriously.
Has gone ahead of me,
The door to open all doors.*

*I am here to thank you, Lord.
To recommit to you, breath by breath.
To pursue you.*

*To dare to follow hard teaching.
Your eyes are on me.*

*They know where I have come from,
Where I am going.*

Your heart, thrown wide open.

My hope breaks open.

Reliant and assured of (your) grace,

I may call myself heir

And stand, not crouch before you.

May call myself friend

Reveal my bruises, my remnants to you.

May call myself your righteousness.

My life a sign for all to see:

I am here because you are.

*Author wishes to remain anonymous and writes under the pseudonym, "The Woman At The Well."

NEXT "FIDDLESTICKS" DEADLINE

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

Deadline for submissions is October 15, 2022.

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!





A Few Good Reads



Hi all,

A resource I have been studying with my local TSSF group. It got me thinking:

The Franciscan Forms of Service - Hopeful Reflections in a Perilous Time

by Rev. Canon Jeff Gollhofer, PhD

Kiwi

In our OEF Chapter/Convo... and even long before, The Order has been looking at racism and how to combat it in our corner of the world, our country and for that matter the entire world. I sought out many opinions on reading material how to start my education about racism in society today. Truth be told, in my mind I didn't feel I was racist as I didn't grow up around people of color but rather in a community that was nearly all fair skinned and blue eyed. I saw and I hope to continue to see people through the lens of their heart and not of their skin tone. I hoped and continue to hope that I see people as equals instead of a hierarchy of who is "better" and who is "lesser." With that being said, several people overwhelmingly recommended the book **Caste, The Origins Of Our Discontent** by Isabel Wilkerson.

Ms. Wilkerson begins the book by talking about those who are placed in different categories such as the Caste system in India, in addition to the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany. In doing so, she compares the history of how the Nazi's came to power through studying the laws of the United States in its slave trade, segregation based on color and ethnic origin. My initial assessment of the first third of the book was that she went too far in comparing the Holocaust with what went on and continues to go on in the United States. While my family was indirectly and in some cases directly involved with what was going on during that period, my feeling was in no way could what was comparable to what racism was in the US. As she continued, I was deeply educated on the

plight of those who were and are discriminated against in my corner of the world. I was educated on how Caste works in India and is openly practiced here without apology.

Case in point on a personal note: I lived in a county of 18,000 Native Americans and 8,000 Caucasians; lived 30 miles away from a reservation and didn't know their history of their people or a single Native American personally, but could tell the history of the white people coming to the Americas back to Leif Erickson coming to the shores in the year 1000. There was segregation and "structured history" about the European race coming to this land with only a passing mention of the First Nation people.

I highly recommend to anyone to read this book to see how racism developed and continues to thrive today without us being aware or even if we are aware ignoring the problem. To me and all who read it, the book expands our minds to look at the other with new eyes, and ourselves with new eyes.

John Son-of-Syvert

I can't recommend this book highly enough - **Practice Showing Up: A Guidebook for White People Working for Racial Justice** by Jardana Peacock.

While not specifically about race, I also recommend **Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City** by Matthew Desmond.

(Continued on page 14)



Profession! Br. Dale Paul, Sr. Caritas, Br. Mir (assisted by Br. John Michael, Br. Juniper & Sr. Paula Clare)

A Few Good Reads... continued

Hi everyone, I'm forwarding the following message in hopes that some of you will be as intrigued as I am by the book by Patrick Saint-Jean...

Sr. Nancy Menning

Dear colleagues,

Matt Wickman and I are very happy to announce our **FIRST SSCS WEBINAR of the year!** (Is it our first Webinar ever? If so, that's even more reason to celebrate!) Please mark your calendars for **Monday, August 1, from 3-4:30pm EST.** Matt and I will be interviewing Patrick Saint-Jean, S.J. and Rob McChesney, S.J. on their respective book, **The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice: A Month of Meditations with Ignatius of Loyola** (Anamchara Books, 2021) and the forthcoming **The Trauma-Informed Spiritual Exercises: Spirituality for Survivors of Violence** (Paulist Press, 2023). Following the interview, Fr. Rob will lead us in a short guided imaginative contemplation, utilizing the tool of "Composition of Place" from the Ignatian tradition. Come join us for our first-ever SSCS Webinar and be nourished by the Spirit and by the gift and wisdom of *The Spiritual Exercises*. We look forward to seeing you then!

We'll send out a Zoom link shortly before the event as a reminder, but for now invite you to mark your calendars. FYI: This Webinar is being co-sponsored by the newly emerging Center for Contemplative Leadership at Princeton Theological Seminary. Their next conference date, if interested, is March 9-11, 2023. All are welcome, whether in person or by Zoom!

Hi siblings,

As I've been traveling and enjoying the exotic sites, sounds and tastes of wonderful Java, and have been richly blessed by the love of its people, and Yoseph's many friends and family here, I also have been reading the latest work by Brian McLaren, **Do I stay Christian?** The book certainly gives me pause as I relate to so much of what he's

disclosed. His gift of words describes so much of what I often described as my own 'love-hate' relationship with the Church. Has anyone else read this book yet? It's new this year.

The book has 2 sections. The first is an airing of the grievances about Christianity as a religion expressed by the church since Constantine's corruption of it. Chapter by chapter Brian points out with candor many historical reasons to dump the Church and Christianity in general. Painful, emotional, honest reading here. The second section (that I'll likely finish while sitting in Dubai) explores reasons to stay. Again, the candor is welcome. The truths are shining, so far.

What struck me this morning as I read by the hotel pool is that this book seems to be an excellent treatise or apologetic for our vocation as Franciscans to rebuild, or better word for me... to HEAL the Church. Millions have been leaving Christianity due to no small degree to the extremism and bigotry proclaimed by followers of the last president. Evangelical Christianity leaves a bad taste in many mouths. But people still hunger for the love of God and we disciples of Christ and The Little Way of Francis and Clare have golden opportunities to show this struggling world a better way, in fact The Way.

To close this, I encourage the reading of McLaren's and invite dialogue about it. I may well share more after finishing my globe trotting next week.

David Wirick Delacroix, OEF
(From July 28, 2022)

Hi Sibs – Diane and I recently read **Jesus Wants to Save Christians: A Manifesto for the Church in Exile** by Rob Bell and Don Golden. I want to share this quote with you:

"A church is the new humanity on display. She's in graduate school, and he's in his nineties; and one couple has a million



A Few Good Reads... continued

dollars, and another doesn't have enough money for dinner; and he arrived in this country three years ago with a small suitcase, and they've never been out of the country; and they have a son fighting in the war, and they're going to a war protest later today; and he's got serious doubts about what he was taught growing up, and she's just decided that God might even exist. All of these people—who are divided, who never sit down and listen to each other—in the new humanity, in the church, they meet, they engage, they interact, they begin to feel what the other feels, and the dividing wall of hostility crumbles. In the new humanity, *them* becomes *us*,"

That's the kind of new humanity I pray for and try to foster.

You can start reading this book for free at:
<https://a.co/585Dt52>.

*Peace and all good,
 Br. Reg Weeks*

This review comes from the English Society of St. Francis newsletter, ***The Francican***:

Br. Juniper Robertson

- Margaret Carney OSF **Light of Assisi: the Story of Saint Clare** ISBN: 9781632533708 Franciscan Media, 2021

- Wendy Murray **Clare of Assisi: Gentle Warrior** ISBN: 9781 6406 0183 3 Paraclete Press, 2020,

Here are two introductory-level books on Clare of Assisi, but each well worth reading by anyone interested in Franciscan origins. Of the two, **Light of Assisi** is the more straightforward. Written by an established academic, who was for twelve years the president of the prestigious St. Bonaventure University, New York, it carries its scholarly authority lightly, with short chapters and without footnotes. It presents all you need to know about Clare, according to current scholarship, in an easily readable style.

Clare of Assisi: Gentle Warrior is altogether a more challenging read. This time the author is an award-winning writer and journalist, who comes to the story of Clare with the eye and ear of someone who can sense a good story. The style is brisk and engaging, carrying the reader along with the sensation of joining in a breathless treasure hunt, or the resolution of a hitherto unsolved crime. Authorities quoted are often not academics in American universities, but avuncular friars in Assisi, each with a sense of the historical possibilities of this most intriguing relationship. Murray's previous book on Francis: *A Mended and Broken Heart: the Life and Love of Francis of Assisi*, forms the background to this sequel on Clare, but both books stand alone on their own right. Among the more startling conclusions are that Clare was the mysterious companion meeting with Francis in a secret place at the very beginning of his conversion, and that it was Clare who wrote the document now known (erroneously) as ***The Legend of the Three Companions***. Underlying all the events of the early Franciscan movement, according to Murray, was the constant support and mutual love of Francis and Clare. I would like to think this was true, but I just wonder if such an understanding meets the criterion of allowing for the strangeness of the past. Twelfth century Assisi is a foreign country to us all now: can we really see into their hearts from this distance in time?

Both books are worthy additions to any Franciscan bookshelf, but I have to say that I enjoyed Murray's version more, and am already keen to read it again just to see if she really did say what I think she said. But read them both, in the order set out here. You may be surprised.
 Nicholas Alan SSF

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
 3175 Duke Snider Ave
 Eugene, OR 97402**





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



Prayer of St. Francis - Another Version



Where there is gunfire,
Where there is silence,
Where there is laughter,
Where there is light,
Where there is love,
Where there is hope,
Where there is You,
Amen.

let there be silence.
let there be laughter.
let there be light.
let there be love.
let there be hope.
let there be You.
let there be life.

Leonardo Alishan (1951-2005)
 - Shared by Br. David Delacroix



Our Easter Surprise



Thanks to those good sports who participated in our Easter eggs and peeps hunt! Our first place winners were Br. Stephan and Muriel! They were the first to report all of the correct locations and received the grand prize of a rainbow Peeps Bunny (pictured below.)

Second place prize of a purple Peeps Bunny went to Br. Sam Loudenslager.*

Congratulations!

**There were no other entries*

