



Minister's Christmas Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, St. Francis and St. Clare,

Where, dear brothers and sisters, do you set up your Christmas manger? Under a tree, on a coffee table, entertainment center, or a special box set up with white fluff for snow? Are you involved in telling the story as Francis did at Greccio, with animals, children dressed as shepherds, and a real crying baby Jesus? Or maybe just reading the story out to your children and grandchildren, or maybe even singing the songs of Christmas to family, friends and community? As many of you, I will be doing all of that, and also making a very special manger in my heart. I, too, am waiting for Christ to be born, truly, in my heart. I hope to carry him in me, keeping that simple manger uncluttered and clean for the infant Jesus....not an easy task as the busyness of the season threatens to distract me from the spiritual preparations for which this season of Advent is intended. My prayer for you is that Jesus comes to your hearts and finds a home always ready.

May your preparations and spiritual exercises of the Advent season dawn into peace and joy on Christmas morning!

Trillium Regional Fraternity News:

With great regret the Trillium Regional Fraternity Council was required to cancel the planned retreat on "The Spirituality of St. Clare" for November 1st and 2nd. Our sincerest apologies to all who registered and were inconvenienced by this announcement.

In the hope that we can still mark this 750th Anniversary of the death of St. Clare with a reflection on her spirituality, the Trillium Fraternity Council has successfully rescheduled this same retreat for March 19th to 21st at Mount Alverno Spiritual Center in Caledon, just minutes west of the St. Frances Center, off highway 9 on Heart Lake Road. Sr. Daria has graciously agreed to come back to make her presentations. The space at Mount Alverno provides for primarily shared accommodations for 2, 3 and 5 people, a dormitory, (no bunk beds) and common bathrooms. The Chapel and cafeteria are on the first floor, with meeting rooms on the second floor (there is

no elevator). The price for registration is reasonable and perhaps more accessible to many of our members, and to interested young people. We do hope that many more of you will be able to join us there.

A registration form which may be copied, is included in this mailing. May this present a new opportunity for us to meet in prayer, fraternity and thanksgiving to God for all of His blessings!

Just a note to all fraternity members: the management at the St. Francis Center informed us of the impossibility of an overnight stay just days before the retreat; retreat centers do require a minimum number of participants for overnight stays. This last retreat was in danger of being canceled due to low registration. The numbers increased in the last week, and people were calling in just days before the scheduled retreat to sign up. But if the retreat center had not canceled due to unforeseen circumstances, they had every right to cancel due to the low number of registrants. The lack of interest from fraternities in this region puts future retreats at risk. It is important for us to know what your needs are. Is there a need for a regionally run retreat? Does it have to be overnight? Should the Trillium Regional Council consider day retreats only? Are there fraternities who run retreats and would like to invite fraternities from across the region? For now we have decided to reschedule. The future of weekend regional retreats will be pending on the success of this next one.

Peace and all good!

Debbie Tessier, Minister.



Spiritual Assistant's Message Dec. 2003

With the Season of Advent we begin a new liturgical year. Once again we, as a Church, prepare for Christmas by focusing on the message of Advent. John the Baptist is the person who we most identify with this season. He is the voice in the wilderness preparing the way for the Lord. How can we prepare the way for the Lord? How can we prepare for Christ's coming this Christmas? Perhaps this little reflection entitled 'Lonely voices' may help us. Perhaps you will hear echoes of the Peace Prayer of St. Francis, which is so dear to our hearts.

The voice of John the Baptist was a lonely voice
which many of contemporaries ignored.

There are many lonely voices in our world.

Somewhere at this moment a child is crying –
crying for love or maybe simply for bread.

Somewhere a young person is crying –
crying for a listening ear or understanding heart.

Somewhere a old person is crying –
crying for a visit or a word from his/her children.

There are a thousand unheard cries in our world,
coming from the victims of injustice and neglect.

Lord, help us to listen to these voices.

Above all, help us to listen to your voice,
whispering to us in the wilderness of our hearts,
telling us that we are loved by you,
and that we are to love one another.

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us: authority rest upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9: 5)

*May the Prince of Peace fill your hearts with his love this
Christmas and throughout the new year.*

Fr. Peter



Ongoing Formation

By Trillium Formation Director
Kay Craig

When we are in the Candidacy phase of our Secular Franciscan vocation, we are constantly aware of the rule, the life of Francis, prayers and writings of St. Francis and St. Clare. Once we are professed, the monthly learning sessions abruptly cease. This does not mean that we have learned everything we need to know to be a good Franciscan. Formation is ongoing for the life of the Franciscan, and it is important to keep up this constant learning, praying, etc.

The ongoing formation of the professed members is an important link in the process of formation, and does not end until our life on earth is over. The purpose of ongoing formation is to support the professed members' commitment, and to strengthen our Franciscan vocation so that the conversion process will continue as a lifestyle.

Article 44.1 of the General Constitutions says: "Begun by the preceding stages, the formation of the brothers and sisters takes place in a permanent and continuous way. It should be understood as an aid in the conversion of each and everyone and in the fulfillment of their proper mission in the Church and in society."

Ongoing Formation is a process of renewal for the entire fraternity by which we are encouraged and challenged to live our vocation in the actual situations of daily living. It is a frame of mind, and attitude acquired during Initial Formation, that we are in a continual process of conversion and growth all the days of our lives.

Ongoing formation necessarily includes additional information and updating in various areas of spirituality, and deepening of our commitment to the gospel life. None of us ever completes formation; it is a lifelong process.

Though the Fraternity Council is primarily responsible to see to it that there are programs on ongoing formation, every member of the Fraternity shares that responsibility. The gatherings of Secular Franciscans are always shared time. That means the involvement, in some way, of everyone.

As an example, my own fraternity council has recommended using either the Triennial Action Plan, put out by the National Fraternity, or the Archdiocese of Toronto Study Kit on the Eucharist.

Again, in my fraternity, professed members take it in turns to prepare the ongoing formation presentation for that month. This is given even if the Spiritual Assistant has something for spiritual enrichment. Time should be made for member's presentations, even if something else has to give, because of the importance of renewing our commitment to the Franciscan lifestyle. If, for any reason there is not enough time for the ongoing formation, copies should be given to everyone for their personal enrichment.

The Triennial Action Plan gives you a theme, and several sources of reference such as the Rule, the Constitutions, Scriptures and Franciscan documents. These are only for your consideration. You may have other sources for reference such as Franciscan books and magazines etc. You are not limited to using the sources listed, but are encouraged to research your topic.

If you decide to use the Study Kit on the Eucharist, it can be tied in with #8 of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, which states: 'As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. Let them participate in the sacramental life of the church, above all THE EUCHARIST. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.'

Your fraternity council may already have recommended a course of study. And that's fine too. Enjoy your research!

I hope this helps to strengthen your commitment to Ongoing Formation. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me at:

kccraig@cogeco.ca or 905-354-8451 or

18-2684 Mewburn Road, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6S4



Local Fraternity Bulletin Board

St. Bonaventure Fraternity

Obituary

Sadie Leeson went home to the Lord in October. Sadie had been in the fraternity for ten years and her joyful enthusiasm will be missed by all.

Sacred Heart Fraternity

Congratulations to **Tarcia Gerwing** on the occasion of her Profession into the Secular Franciscan Order!

The profession took place on July 6, 2003 at an outdoor Mass at Loyola House in Guelph.

Welcomed as candidates were:

Gail Brenner	Sandi Coppin
Michel Guilmette	Vicki Veri

Prayer Network

The e-mail prayer network that comes from **St. Workshop Joseph's** (bookstore) now includes at least eight religious communities. The TRF suggests that anyone who has prayer requests and those who would like to pray, may contact Rita Siekierko at RSiekierko@aol.com

Certificates

For Trillium Certificates to mark professions and anniversaries of profession, please contact:

Cathy Kruger	Phone# 905-732-7479
782 Cope Road	or
Welland, ON	ckruger@hotmail.com
L3B 5N7	

Since certificates are signed by both the Minister and Spiritual Assistant please apply in good time if you wish to have them on the profession day or anniversary date.

At the Heart of the Manger

**"Let your body be the stable
Let your heart be the manger
Let your life be like the child's
with the blessing of the Father upon ou
as the Spirit goes before you
and Jesus lives within you."**

Joke Corner

Fast Food

A monastery in the English countryside was having a hard time with its cash flow because of the dwindling number of monks available to help with all the work. Then one day two of the monks, who had been discussing the problem, suggested they open a fish and chips stand down on the highway, right next to a scenic vista area popular with tourists.

The other monks agreed, and the two put up the stand. One day a tourist who wanted to offer a compliment, asked the monk on duty,

"Are you the fish friar?"

"No, sir," retorted the brother, "I'm the chip monk."

Editor's Note:

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Franciscans a blessed and joyful Christmas.

May we all look to Greccio rather than the local shopping mall and see Jesus in all those we meet each day.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

