



# Good News Report

Secular Franciscan Order  
Trillium Regional Fraternity



Number 82

Winter 2017

## A MOMMENT WITH THE MNISTER

The humble donkey. I am fortunate to live fairly close to a donkey sanctuary called 'The Braying Reigns Ranch.' I often go and watch them grazing or interacting with one another.



The humble donkey brings thoughts of the Christmas Spirit. The donkey isn't mentioned in Luke 2, but we often assume that Mary rode on the back of the humble beast for the almost 80 mile trek from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Imagine the Saviour of the world on one of the lowliest of creatures? St. Francis also thought highly of the lowly donkey as he incorporated the beast in the very first Nativity scene!



*My favourite one is Sam mule. I don't know why I named him that but it seems to suit him. Sam looks like he has had quite a life, and that if he could talk I would imagine he would have a story to tell. Sam mule looks as if he literally has carried the weight of the world on his back! Sam has been at the Ranch as long as I have been visiting there and that's ten years. He is an old soul and the other donkeys respect him. He is a bit of a loner but when he wants something not one other donkey will stand in his way. One interesting note is that donkeys are mentioned in the book of Samuel!*

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## SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

St. Francis had a great love for the feast of the Nativity, the birthday of our Lord. Thomas of Celano has an interesting account of this great love. *"Francis observed the birthday of the child Jesus with inexpressible eagerness over all other feasts, saying, 'It is the feast of feasts, on which God, having become a tiny infant, clung to human breasts.'*



*When the question rose about eating meat that day, since Christmas was a Friday, (Francis) replied to Brother Morico, 'You sin, brother, calling the day on which the child is born to us a day of fast. It is my wish that even the walls should eat meat on such a day; and if they cannot, they should be smeared with meat on the outside.'"*

*On Christmas, Francis wanted the poor and the hungry to be filled by the rich; he said that more than the usual amount of grain and hay should be given to oxen and asses. "If I could speak to the emperor, I would ask that a general law be made that all who can should scatter corn and grain along the roads so that the birds might have an abundance of food on that day of such great solemnity, especially our sisters the larks'" (2 Celano, 199-200).*

The saint was deeply moved by the simplicity and the poverty of God, who entered our world as a poor little baby. We know of St Francis celebration of Christmas midnight mass at Greccio. Francis wanted to recreate the lowliness of our Lord's birth at Bethlehem. Ever since that night, the focus of the feast is on the humble birth of Jesus: Immanuel, 'God is with us.'

So, as you put up your Crèche at home or look upon the one at church, take a few moments to meditate on the scene. Place yourself in that barn or cave. Ponder the unbelievable reality that our God became one of us to share his love with us and to show us how to love.

May the Babe of Bethlehem bless you and your family this Christmas and throughout the new year.

*Fr. Peter Knaapen  
O.F.M. Conv*



Notice the one donkey rolling in the dirt. Jenny is doing this to insulate herself from the biting insects and to keep herself cool on a warm fall day.

The foal beside her mom is still nursing and that mom

would not take her eyes off of me. Notice her ears perked up listening to me talk to her. She finally relented and went to the barn



God bless the humble donkey and may the Saviour of the world come into each of your hearts this Christmas Day!

***“It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed.***

***The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise.”***

Deus meus et omnia;  
Catherine Payne ofs



## VICE MINISTER

Advent:

The Second Coming.

The Season of Advent began on December 3 with the First Sunday of Advent. It is the beginning of the Church’s liturgical year. Someone said that on that day we should have been wishing each other “Happy New Year”. It is the beginning of the season of excitement, high expectation, and hope as we prepare by greater charity, fasting and acts of penitence to celebrate the birthday, the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ on December 25.

In preparation for this great Feast, and as “we prepare the way of the Lord”, we should reflect on the promises made by the Father: (Gen .5:15) that He would send a Redeemer, a Saviour, someone whose life we could imitate who would lead us to eternal life. He also revealed both through the prophecy of Daniel in the Old Testament and St. John the Apostle in the Book of Revelation what would be the outcome if we do not listen to His Voice

The thoughts of the Secular world however, tend to focus more on the material rather than the spiritual; on shopping and gift giving, and the hype of the season rather than preparing-hearts for the coming of the Messiah and the Spirituality of Advent.

We sing “Santa Claus is coming to Town.” Yet, more than Santa Claus is coming. It is the Son of God, our Redeemer, our Saviour; what we attribute to Santa Claus, we should attribute to our Saviour. For He knows when we are sleeping, He knows when we’re awake. He knows if we’ve been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake.

Because of the various cultures in which we live, there is a greater tendency to be greeted with “Happy holiday” than with “Merry Christmas.” The



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replaces 'Christmas' with 'Xmas.' Political correctness is an excuse for removing Christ from Christmas. Still, I consider that even those of different faiths should be respectful of other cultural or religious norms.

On Christmas Eve we encourage the children to go to sleep early so that Santa would come. However, the Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent, reminds us that we should not be asleep, but awake and alert, for we do not know when the Son of Man is coming.

We awake on Christmas morning filled with joy, excitement and expectations. Some are looking forward to attending Christmas Mass; others have already attended Midnight Mass (which holds a certain mystique and anticipation.) Others are anxious for Christmas dinner: turkey, ham, dressing and the opening of gifts. The air is filled with the sounds of Christmas Carols. After all, Christmas is a celebration, the celebration of the birthday of Christ, our promised Redeemer, and that is cause enough to celebrate and be joyful, to renew old friendships and to wish everyone a Merry or Happy Christmas.

Christians all over the world celebrate the birth of Christ on December 2. Our celebrations may differ in each country, (for example without snow in tropical countries,) but we all the whole world celebrates Christmas together.

To all reading this newsletter, I wish you a very Merry, Happy, Healthy and Holy Christmas and a Bright and Prosperous New Year.

Peace

*Teresa Viechweg, ofs*



## VICE MINISTER

Blessed Solanus Casey ofm cap



Franciscans were given an early Christmas present with the beatification of Friar Solanus Casey in Detroit on November 18, 2017. He is an American and this is also noteworthy.

Solanus was born sixth in a family of sixteen children. Two died as children in a typhoid epidemic. His baptismal name was Bernard, and he was known to his family as Barney. Two of his brothers were diocesan priests. The Casey family was poor and lived in a log cabin in Wisconsin. The father was a cobbler, but his business crashed and so he joined a farmer co-op. As a perk they were given a bigger house.

They were pious people who had faith as their anchor. As the children grew they took on paying jobs to keep themselves fed and clothed. Solanus had three jobs at different times.

In the third of these he was a trolley driver. One day he saw a woman lying on the tracks of his route. He sounded the bell but as she did not move - he slowed and stopped. She was covered in blood. She had been stabbed to death by a drunken sailor. People and police were gathering, and the police took the man away.

This was the beginning of his vocation. He said later "*I felt like I was staring evil in the face.*" Soon he applied to the Capuchin Monastery of St. Bonaventure in Detroit Michigan. Solanus was not a brilliant student. He was just about average. His lack of scholarship and his weak eye sight were seen by his superiors as impediments to priestly ordination, but his prayerfulness and kindness shone brighter than most.

He was given a type of ordination that is no longer done, a simplex ordination. This was an ordination with restrictions: he could say mass, but could not preach a homily, or hear confessions. He accepted this with deep humility.

We should think about this when we are having regional or fraternity elections. This holy man of God was willing to serve in any way that was needed. Perhaps he understood that God makes the unworthy worthy, and fills the timid with courage.

Our Franciscan vocation is service-oriented, and sometimes it will mean wearing the heavy yoke of leadership. Remember it is only for a time and God will do most of it. What you will do is perfect the virtue of patience. You will pray for it hourly. Trust me.

## Blessed Solanus Casey



Eminence Angelo Cardinal Amato from Rome, Italy. Prefect of Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, Representative of the Holy Father, Pope Francis uses incense around the relic during the Beatification of Father Solanus Casey on November 18, 2017 at Ford Field in Detroit.



The reliquary, or the vessel in which the relic is housed, was designed by Brother Mark Joseph Costello. It is a simple wooden cross that incorporates into its design a wooden dinner plate, which would have been used to feed both the Friars and the poor alike during the lifetime of Blessed Solanus. This provides yet another link to the Blessed Friar who served the poor and who was instrumental in the foundation of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. This relic will eventually come to reside at the St. Bonaventure Chapel at the Solanus Casey Center, where it can be venerated by the many pilgrims who visit the center.

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The advice of Solanus was the same to everyone, "Thank God ahead of time."

Like St. Francis, he believed that prayer should always be in praise of God. Too often our prayer is nothing but a nag fest filled with 'gimmee'.

Blessed Solanus' feast day is July 30 the eve of his death.

Merry Christmasto all of you with love.  
Pax et bonum!

*John Francis*

### TREASURER

Peace,

*"And Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (Lk 2:19)*

May we try to imitate our Blessed Mother and treasure **the Word** and always ponder Him in our hearts.

Merry Christmas, everyone.

*Mark Rozario ofs*



### FORMATION

Joy to the world!

Peace my sisters and brothers.

Christmas is a very special time of the year for Franciscans because the incarnation is central to our spirituality. God became flesh!! not only did He descend to embrace all humanity with His overflowing love, but also sanctified creation. For St. Francis, this is the greatest miracle.

Blessed John Duns Scotus, a great Franciscan theologian, enabled the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and also issued the thesis on the Absolute Primacy of Christ: both intrinsic to the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. From the beginning, God's will was to dwell among us in the humanity of Jesus; that is "THE REASON" for creation. Thus, Christ would have come even without Adam's sin.

Because of the fall, there was a need to

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reconcile sinners and creation to the Father. But no one on earth or in heaven had the abounding charity to die for the sins of Adam and his descendants. God himself, in his love for us, assumed such sacrifice.

The three Divine persons of the Holy Trinity chose Mary to become the mother of Jesus, the Word incarnate. It would not have been possible without our Lady's loving and humble YES.

This is the Christmas story I find so beautiful. Mary's parents, Joaquin and Ann, were still childless when they made a promise to God to offer their child to Him and bring her to the temple, just like Samuel's mother did. The Immaculate Conception of our Lady is God's merciful response to their plea, and in fulfillment of such a promise, Mary was presented to the Temple when she was only 3 years old.

In addition, tradition tells us that angels waited on Mary and brought her special food. She also recognized God as the heavenly father and came to believe in the promised Messiah. St. Elizabeth of the Trinity wrote that through faith, Mary first conceived Christ in her heart. but even when the words of the Archangel Gabriel reached her ears, she could not fathom that she would be the mother. In all humility, she submitted to the will of God.

I want to draw you to the parallel of our Lady and St. Francis. As soon as Mary conceived Jesus in her womb, she was moved to serve and made haste to attend her cousin Elizabeth. As soon as St. Francis was converted he was also moved to serve and love the poor and the rejected lepers.

My dear sisters and brothers, with faith let the Holy Spirit guide you, and with humility welcome the Word and allow Jesus to be incarnated in your heart, so that it is no longer you but Christ that lives in you. Serve the poor with the same joy, love, and humility as did our Lady and St. Francis.

Merry Christmas.

*Bro. Xavier*



Looking for a place for a Retreat?

**Regina Mundi  
Retreat Centre**

19309  
Warden Ave,  
Queensville,  
ON  
LOG 1R0  
Phone:  
905 478 4264

## YOUTH ANIMATOR

### Franciscan Youth Mission Opportunity



The Trillium Regional Council of Secular Franciscans is announcing a special initiative for youth ages 17-29!

In July of 2018, St. Peter's Parish in Woodbridge, ON. is embarking on their annual mission trip to serve the poor in the Dominican Republic. The Secular Franciscans have received permission to bring a group of youth on the mission trip with them! The names of the villages we will visit are *Las Pajas*, *La Cachena*, and *Alejandro Bass*. While there we will be bringing life saving food and supplies, and working in a school and medical clinic. The people in these villages lack even the most basic necessities, and this is a chance for young people to make a difference in their lives.

We are asking all the fraternities in the Trillium Region to consider approaching a young person (age 17-29) and inviting them to take part in this mission trip.

The exact dates have yet to be determined but it will be early in July of 2018. The approximate cost for someone to go on the mission is \$1,000 which includes airfare, room and board. The duration of the trip is 7-10 days. In addition to asking a young person to attend the mission, we are also encouraging fraternities to consider sponsoring the individual with whatever funds they are able to contribute.

All participants will be responsible for attending monthly planning and formation meetings starting on Friday, January 26, from 7-9 p.m. at St. Bonaventure Church in Toronto.

If you are interested in taking part, or have additional questions, please contact Chris Elliott at [chriselliottym@gmail.com](mailto:chriselliottym@gmail.com)

Pax!  
Chris

# Local Fraternity Bulletin Board



Members of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Sarnia, taken at a visit on October 19, 2017.

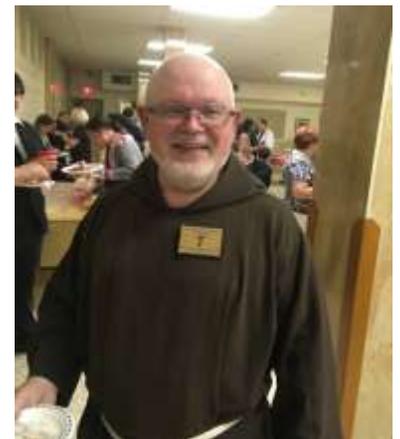


## TRANSITUS

Brother Alan Gaebel organized a very well attended Transitus service at St. Philip Neri Church on Tuesday October 3, 2017.

Many fraternities were represented and helped out with the celebration.

Food and fellowship followed the Transitus.



*Brother Alan Gaebel is available to your fraternity for a day of reflection or workshops. He can be reached at: [alan.gaebel@gmail.com](mailto:alan.gaebel@gmail.com)*



Members of St. Peter's Fraternity, Woodbridge celebrating the Feast of St. Francis and two Professions on October 4, 2017.



Members of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity in Brampton taken during a fraternal visit in November 2017.



The whole fraternity gathered at St. Peter's Church on the Feast of St. Francis to celebrate 2 Professions.

Being welcomed into the Franciscan Family at St. Peter's, Woodbridge on Wednesday October 4, 2107 two newly professed members, L to R- Teresa Elliot, Regional Minister- Cathy Payne, Marisa Sweeney, and Minister of St. Peter's Fraternity, Mary Filangi.

The City of Toronto has accepted a request from Bro. John Frampton, animator of St Francis Table to name the lane that runs behind St. Francis Table. On Oct 4th, 2017 at 11 am the lane will officially become "St Francis Lane", to celebrate the 30th anniversary of St. Francis Table.

## OBITUARIES

**Martha Ostrihon ofs** a member of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Sarnia, passed away on October 27, 2017. Martha's husband John (1998) was also a member of St. Anthony's Fraternity. A Mass of Resurrection for Martha was celebrated on October 31, 2017 at 2 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church, Sarnia.

**Rita Monti ofs** ... St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Sarnia members attended the Internment of Rita Monti, on September 27, 2017. We will miss Rita's warm and cheerful personality that led us in the direction of God. Rita moved to British Columbia after the death of her husband, John Monti ofs: in 2007. She passed away in 2016. Her ashes were sent to us for the Internment, and to be buried beside her husband (originally a First Order Franciscan before leaving the seminary in his 7th year to attend to his sick and dying brother. From there, John met Rita and they were married). Rita was in our Fraternity from 1989 to 2007, where she joined a Fraternity in B.C.



### Profession Milestones

On October 4, 2017 St. Peter's Fraternity, Woodbridge celebrated the anniversary of two members. L to R: Regional Minister, Cathy Payne, Maria Villamagna celebrating 35 years professed, Clelia Malerba celebrating 20 years professed and Fraternal Minister, Mary Filangi. Congratulations!

### Bird Seed Bags

Members of Sacred Heart Fraternity in Guelph were busy at their December meeting getting bird seed bags together for the children to scatter seed on Christmas Day as St. Francis had requested.

Some of our members leave the packets in a basket at the back of their Church for parishioners to take. They got a new candidate that way last year.

### Trillium Certificates

For Trillium Certificates to mark Professions, Anniversaries of Profession & Service Recognition for Spiritual Assistants, (usually 5 year milestones) please contact: **Clelia Malerba, ofs;** [malerbac@yahoo.com](mailto:malerbac@yahoo.com) Please apply in good time if you wish to have them on the profession day or anniversary

### The Good News Report

is the official newsletter of the Secular Franciscan Order, Trillium Region. We aim to publish it between the middle and end of: July, September, December, and April.

Any items you wish to include are warmly welcomed and will be published space permitting. Articles may be sent by the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month of publishing, to *deacon maurice Prindiville, ofs*, [mprindiville@golden.net](mailto:mprindiville@golden.net) Note: If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please let us know as above.