



Eastern Canada OFS Update: Celebrating Our Franciscan Way of Life

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A Few Words from Your Regional Minister

Dear Franciscan brothers and sisters we are soon entering into Lent, in this Jubilee year celebrating the Transitus of St. Francis into eternal life. Your Regional Council has chosen to offer a series of reflections on the six themes of St. Francis' spiritual journey that were celebrated by the Franciscan family in the Basilica of the Portiuncula, in Assisi on January 10th, 2026. It is our hope that these reflections will help you enter into your Lenten journey, more effectively in the spirit of Francis as you explore the six elements of St. Francis' legacy: Prayer, Fraternity, Mercy, Work, Peace, and Blessings.



St. Francis between two angels by the Master of St. Francis (around 1255)

More broadly, your Regional Council would like to encourage each of the fraternities to celebrate this 800th anniversary of the end of Francis' earthly journey. Are there special events that might be planned: a pilgrimage to the shrine of Blessed Father Frederic our Regional patron in Trois Rivieres, collectively praying a multi-day novena, choosing to celebrate Eucharist together more frequently, taking on a particular outreach ministry to those in need or another form of service?

Your Regional Council extends to you wishes for a jubilant Jubilee year! May God bless your fraternity and your fraternal endeavours in this year dedicated to St. Francis.

Fraternal regards,
Gerry Gabriel, ofs
Minister, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

Reflection On My Prayer Life

Brother Gerry Clyne ofm, Spiritual Assistant, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

When I think about the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' death and his journey in prayer, I see my own prayer life reflected. Francis went through stages and periods of prayer as does anyone who takes the spiritual life seriously.

There must have been a time in his life, for instance, when prayer was superficial. I'm sure that as a good Medieval Italian, he attended Mass with his family. But as we know from his worldly

pre-conversion life, his prayer must have been shallow – probably only when he “needed” God to rescue him from some jam he had gotten himself into.

Although my life differed from St Francis, in that I did not go through a rowdy adolescence when I drifted away from God, still my understanding of prayer was quite shallow. Raised in a strong Free Methodist family, I was taught from the beginning to be conscious of my Christian life. And so, I grew up “saying my bedtime prayers” and “grace” before meals and Scripture “devotions” after supper. I received a Bible early on and began reading it daily.



Francis also probably grew up with at least some sort of family devotions. But remember that the Rosary really hadn’t developed yet – at least to its present form - and Francis lived before the printing press (Gutenberg) had been invented. So, there were no personal Bibles and, besides, most people were illiterate.

My family’s church life was also full. On Sundays we usually went to morning and evening services. (Evening service was different than in the morning.) There were also weekday programs like CYC (Christian Youth Crusaders) when I was a kid and FMY (Free Methodist Youth) when I was a teen and also College and Careers after that. And there was always Wednesday night Prayer Meeting. With these, along with choir practice, there was a time in my family’s life when it seemed we were always at church.

But for all this, my understanding of prayer was still pretty shallow. There was a strong sense of prayer as *adoration* and *thanksgiving* in public worship, but when it came to private/personal prayer, that seemed limited to *petitions* (supplication, asking God for something - including for yourself) or *intercessions* (asking God for something on behalf of someone else).



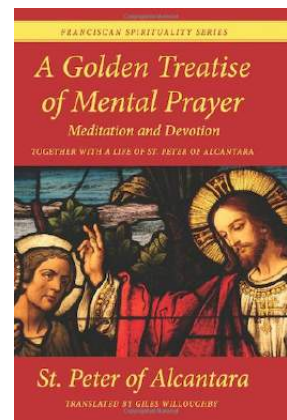
When it came to prayer as *adoration* in my personal life I was closer to that of St. Francis’ experience. Like him, as a child I had a sensitive “poetic” nature and it was, in fact, in nature that I experience deeper prayer. I recorded an emotional, perhaps quasi-mystical, experience I had on Saturday, February 10, 1973 (12 years old). It took place in the woods close to where I lived in Ottawa. My spiritual life, in fact, has always been linked with creation. Still today, I pray more naturally when I am in nature than when I am in a church. And, as you know, countless are the references of St. Francis praying in, with and through nature.

Other stages of prayer in my life happened when I moved away from home and went to Bible College in Saskatchewan. There I encountered more “traditional” forms of prayer. This awoke in me a latent longing for a greater sense of 1. a form of worship that incorporated art and music and a closer wedding of spirit and matter (found in the Sacraments and liturgical worship), 2. a greater sense of historicity (found in the communion of the Saints) and 3. a greater sense of authority (found in the Magisterium). In one word, unconsciously I had been seeking a more “*incarnational*” approach to prayer”.

I also encountered Religious Life. And this appealed to an approach to life that I had developed from very early on in my life (long before I was a Catholic). Since I always struggled with coping with the pressures of life, this approach included simplicity of life, and celibacy. These were so that I could be free of responsibilities associated with ownership and marriage and family. This, in turn, while trying to cope with the ordinary demands of regular life, afforded me more time for prayer, ministry and access to nature. Essentially, I discovered the “contents” of Religious Life, before I discovered there was such a thing! This is one of my strongest confirmations of a vocation to Religious Life. Discovering *Franciscan* Religious Life was an even greater meshing of my natural inclinations (a life of simplicity and celibacy for the purpose of greater time for prayer, ministry and creation) and Religious Life.

It was in St. Francis that all the elements of incarnational prayer and Religious Life (refer to the above paragraphs) came together. They all converge in St. Francis.

Further development in my prayer life was during my time as a Franciscan. In my formation period I had been taught the importance of *meditating on the Scriptures* – especially the Gospel reading for the day. An important moment occurred on this score, when I discovered the book *A Treatise on Prayer and Meditation* by the Franciscan St. Peter of Alcantara. This book confirmed what I had been experiencing: that of *Oral/spoken Prayer* evolving into *Meditative Prayer* (“Meditation” or “Mental Prayer”) which, in turn, naturally evolved into *Contemplative Prayer*. I found this to be a most Franciscan approach. I was convinced that this was St. Francis’ experience. Discursive (thoughts) prayer on the Word of God found in both Scripture and nature, led him into non-discursive silent prayer. “Oratio > Meditatio > Contemplatio”.



These are a few thoughts as I ponder my prayer experience with that of St. Francis’ on the 800th anniversary of his death. As I still struggle to cope with life – especially as I am now looking after my aging and ailing parents – it is only prayer that keeps me together. So, keep on praying dear Seculars! Keep on growing in prayer - in your personal life and together as a fraternity!

A Reflection on Fraternity

Gerry Gabriel, Minister, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

Clearly, Francis valued fraternity. It was no accident that Francis integrated fraternity into the three Orders of brothers and sisters that he founded or helped to establish (with St. Clare). Why was that? Why did Francis view fraternity as an integral aspect of living the Gospel life? What are the attributes of fraternity that support and contribute to our individual spiritual growth and development?

Quintessentially, fraternity (i.e. journeying together) is part of our Christian reality and our Christian objective. Furthermore, fraternal community is meant to be a keystone of our parish life. In fostering this essential characteristic of pastoral living, we are called to emulate Christ, and follow His teaching and example. In the New Testament parables, we are instructed to care for our neighbour and to provide for those in need (e.g. those who are hungry, those who are thirsty, those who are in prison or ostracized).

God has given us the gift of our Franciscan vocation:



And we are called to fulfil this way of, life in fraternity with others. It is true that genuine fraternal living can be a challenge. Yet having fraternal brothers and sisters can be full of blessings. Looking back on my own OFS experience, I must readily admit that I have learned much from my fellow fraternity members and have benefitted greatly from their spiritual encouragement, sharing, and support received over the past 30 years. As a result, Franciscan fraternity has been a blessing to me and the source of my spiritual growth.

In reflecting upon fraternity, I am led to contrast fraternity with that of community and communion. These three interpersonal relationships are related but I would suggest are different in substance and scope. For the purposes of this reflection, I wish to offer my personal understanding of this trilogy of journeying together or interacting communally with others.

In my view, living in and interacting with the broader community is an essential part of our human experience. Commonly, as an individual or within a family, we are part of a neighbourhood which in turn is related to other nearby neighbourhoods, that together constitute a local community. From my perspective, fraternity is a deeper relationship. Often those with whom we journey in fraternity share a common understanding, beliefs or approach to living. And finally, communion represents, in my mind an even deeper, more intimate, and lasting relationship with one person or at most a few people or ultimately with one's God.

Note, I offer the above differentiation as strictly a personal point of view. These thoughts have no basis in theology or sociology, for that matter. They are simply my thoughts and ideas. However, I do hope that they might instill some clarification for others, or at least cause others to ponder these potential differences.

I wish to close my reflection with a reference to St. Pope John Paul II. It is my understanding that John Paul II, defined the Blessed Trinity as a "communion of love". I have always liked this definition. To my way of thinking, there is a depth of meaning within its simplicity. I want to underline, that John Paul II, did not say that the Trinity was a "community of love" or a "fraternity of love". Pursuant to this definition, I have always believed that communion implied a much deeper relationship than fraternity or community.

I would like to pose a question for reflection: Does the experience of community aid us to enter into fraternity more effectively and in turn does our experience of fraternity enable us over time to enter into communion? Personally, I would answer this question in the affirmative. What about you, how would you answer?

A Short Reflection on Mercy

Mary McKenna, Vice-Minister Quebec Area, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

I selected two Scriptural references to consider in regards to Mercy. The first is from the Old Testament Lamentations (3:22-23): “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness”. The second is Matthew 5:7 (Beatitudes), “Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy”.

In my view, the virtue of Mercy means showing and granting mercy (with compassion, forgiveness, friendship, love, and understanding) to others each and every day. In doing so, we must listen to God for He has a plan for us to help others; we need to be open to God’s merciful expectations even if it is more difficult than anticipated.

As Scripture tells us, Jesus forgave the adulterous woman (John 8:1-11), reminding us all, “Let anyone who is without sin be the first to cast a stone”. Jesus showed her mercy (and compassion), because all human beings commit sin and we should not judge others. Rather we need to take the time to understand and attentively listen to the other person.

In Matthew 9:1-8, four friends lowered a paralyzed man through a roof to reach Jesus, because they could not enter the house. Jesus forgave and healed the man by saying “get up, pick up your mat”. Here, Jesus showed mercy because of the strong faith of these four men.



In imitating Christ, Francis showed mercy by embracing the lepers. He would wash their feet, kiss their sores and provide for their needs. In the process his fear was transformed into love (in this way did God show him mercy?). Francis as we all know had a great respect for all of God’s creation: we might say that Francis was also merciful to animals and all elements of nature. In his actions and in his advice to his brothers he emphasized: reconciling relationships as a mediator, advising followers to use gentle words and offer mercy (and forgiveness) rather than holding onto grievances.

Sculpture by Timothy P. Schmalz

As Secular Franciscans, we are called to follow in the footsteps of Francis in our daily lives showing compassion, humility, love and mercy, as Francis did. Similarly, we need to help the poor, be peaceful mediators, and care kindly for our earth, and animals (both pets and wildlife). In exhibiting the virtue of Mercy in our daily actions as Francis did, it is necessary for us to become more aware of our surroundings and the needs of our community members.

If I stop and review my life, I can recall that I have personally experienced mercy (small and life changing). I can recall, that when I fell ill, God showed me mercy and helped me recover. Looking back on this experience, it makes me think of St. Francis who was also very ill. In becoming involved with the SFO, little did I know at the time that God was calling me (as He did Francis) to share my gifts and talents “to build my church”.

In closing, I believe that Mercy can be a new direction for me, as it has opened up my eyes to see my brothers and sisters in need of Mercy through compassion, love, and understanding. In this way, my daily living and actions can be informed by Mercy. Since I have experienced many mercies, I would like to help others better appreciate the “little and great mercies” that come our way, and thereby, be open to God’s Will as St. Francis was, to show others Mercy always.

Work as Gift and Grace—Legacy of St. Francis

Claudia Batchilder, Regional Formation Director, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

We have heard or read many exhortations about work: “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: the one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” (2 Thessalonians 3:10)
 “Let them esteem work both as a gift and a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community”. (OFS Rule, Article 16)
 “For Francis, work is a gift and a grace...to serve God and neighbor and to develop one’s own personality...every form of work deserves respect...all persons may have the possibility of work ...and conditions may always be more humane. ...Maintain a balance between work and rest”. (OFS General Constitutions, Article 21.1 and 21.2)
 “...we believe that through the homage of work offered to God, humanity is associated with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ ...having regard for the common good”.
 (The Church in the Modern World-Vatican II)

That “work” has been included in our Rule speaks to its importance in living out our Franciscan Spirituality. Most of our time is spent working at something. But even Jesus would take time to be with family and friends like at the Wedding Feast at Cana, or at Bethany with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He would take time to be away by Himself in prayer with the Father. Francis, in imitation of Christ, stressed taking time for rest and relaxation with God and others.

So where would Francis start on his work journey? With Jesus of course! And Jesus learned it in His Holy Family. Joseph the Worker (May 1st) would have used his gift of being a carpenter to support his neighbors. I imagine his workshop as a meeting place for the community where all were treated with respect and kindness, with a ‘pay as you can’ policy, while Mary provided an listening ear for those who needed one. Joseph and Mary must have remembered being refugees in Egypt, and how important it was to be accepted and supported; they would have lived this out in Nazareth after their return from Egypt. And Jesus would have taken lessons from His parents’ example into His own ministry.

As Jesus did, Francis learned his father’s trade (in Francis’ case, as a fabric shopkeeper). Remember when a beggar asked in the name of God for a hand-out, and Francis turned him away? And what happened next is why I love Francis. Like us, he was a saint in the making. He reflected on what he had done and ran after the beggar. He owned up to his wrong, and made it right. He worked his whole life asking the question: What Would Jesus Do? (just as young people today ask, WWJD?). But this slow growth in understanding is what gives us hope. If Francis could learn to strive to work for God at all times, so can we! The challenge is to ask the question and to have the courage to do it.



After his eventual release from prison and long recuperation at home, Francis prayed to find what work Jesus had planned for him. Before the San Damiano Crucifix, he was told to go and rebuild the church for it was falling into ruin. And as he looked around, he could definitely see it was. So he began to gather stones to physically restore the church. And as he did so, people came to join him, and live his way of life. The grace of God’s life in his work drew others. With prayerful discernment and the gift of brothers to accompany him, Francis discovered the Lord was calling him to rebuild the spirit of the church. And that is what we as Secular Franciscans strive to do today.

As we work to bring synodality to life in our church...we need to appreciate the gifts of all. Everyone has a gift to bring for the work of the kingdom and no one will be left behind. I think of Francis gathering people to Christ as he worked with his fraternity of brothers. I remember reading where Francis named the gifts of the brothers: joy, strength, obedience...Francis recognized how they would need to use the gifts of all to rebuild and restore the Church. As I work in my church community the example of real fraternity living helps me in my parish community. I thank God for learning what it means to work together.

Jesus had a great love and respect for those living with challenges, and Francis demonstrated this as well; think of how he worked among the lepers for example. I try to live that approach in my work. The example my Dad showed me really cemented the importance of helping others know they have dignity, and are capable of doing things they never dreamed they could.

My mom's cousin Danny and his wife came to visit us for as long as they liked. Dad's big relaxation was going fishing, so he invited Danny (whose leg had been amputated for health reasons) to go. Danny's reaction: "How am I going to get down the bank and get in the boat? My Dad's reaction: "We can do it! I'll carry you if I have to!" It took a bit of convincing but I wouldn't trust that grin on my father's face either. When those boys came home, the fishing story and laughter was beyond all expectations! Then they needed to cut the grass. Danny asked, "How do you expect me to work brake and clutch with one leg?!" My Dad told him, "You know how to hold a stick, don't you?" The grass got cut! The next summer Danny died. I don't think anyone could feel more valued and treated with dignity than Danny! I was so proud of my Dad. I am hoping that deed is what got my Dad into heaven.



Image by Herbert Aust from Pixabay

Work formed my personality or maybe my personality formed my work. Regardless, as a teacher of young children, I always supported them at working on something that was a challenge for them. And then, it was so important to see the joy children experienced when they realized they could do it. Sometimes you don't know what you can do until you are asked. Neither age nor mental or physical health should be a barrier to contributing to the work at hand.

I would like to invite you to take time to reflect about what Francis taught you about work. Father Andre Comtois, a true Franciscan, always said: "In all you do (work), do it with JOY!" Even in my retirement years I try to make each day a 'Take Jesus to Work Day', especially as I work through family life. I think of St. Francis' words on his death bed, '... until now we have done nothing.' That is what saints are made of... so let's do it!

To do your own reflecting on Work as Gift and Grace, I suggest you check out chapters in: *To Live as Francis Lived* by Foley, Weigel, Normile; *Franciscan Virtues Through the Year* by Confraternity of Penitents; *Francis: Man of Peace, Brother of All, Opening Ceremony of the 8th Centenary of the Transit of St. Francis* (Jan. 10, 2026) (available online); *The Franciscan Journey* by Lester Bach, OFM Cap.

“May the Lord Give You Peace”

Carol David, Vice-Minister Eastern Ontario, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

In his *Testament*, Francis recalls the mission he received from the Lord:

“The Lord revealed to me that we should use this greeting: ‘May the Lord give you peace.’”

Jesus echoes this gift of peace in the Gospel of John:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you” (Jn 14:27).

Peace, then, is a gift from God. Yet it is not enough simply to pray for it; we must seek it and build it up every day. Francis understood this simple truth. As Secular Franciscans striving to live out our Franciscan vocation, we too are called to be bearers of peace in our world today. Opportunities to sow seeds of peace are never far from us.



Image by [Andrea Don](#) from [Pixabay](#)

First, it begins with each of us. I am reminded of the familiar song, *“Let There Be Peace on Earth, and Let It Begin with Me,”* written by Jill Jackson and Sy Miller in 1955. How can I witness true peace to others if I am not at peace myself? This is no easy task, nor is it something we can achieve on our own. It is here that the working of the Holy Spirit guides us.

Yet how do I truly experience this gift of peace when I am surrounded by conflict and crisis—whether in the inner dialogue that endlessly chatters in my head, in relentless judging and dualistic thinking that divides *you and me, us and them*? This inner unrest can quickly spill over into the dynamics of daily life: within our families, workplaces, parishes, neighbourhoods, cities, countries, and indeed the world at large.

So how do I turn this around? How do I begin to look upon the events of my life through the eyes of Christ and, in doing so, truly become brother and sister to all?

In her Second Letter to Agnes of Prague, St. Clare offers this counsel:

*Look upon Him who became contemptible for you,
and follow Him, making yourself contemptible in this world for Him.
Most noble Queen, gaze, consider, contemplate,
desiring to imitate your Spouse.*

Might I suggest, then, that we adopt this four-step approach of perceiving and interacting with the world around us: **gaze, consider, contemplate, and imitate**. It takes time, practice, patience and prayer—and often trial and error—but through perseverance and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we may gradually experience a transformation in our own lives and in the lives of our brothers and sisters whom we meet along the way.

Will we ever reach the perfect peace for which we long? I doubt it. Even Francis, up to his own death, felt he fell short of fully dying to self so that it was no longer he who lived, but Christ. The challenge, then, is to be proactive rather than reactive.

When I sense myself moving toward confrontation, instead of allowing a gut reaction to take over, I am invited to step back and become attentive to what is happening around me: the sounds, sights, words spoken, body language, and facial expressions. As I **gaze**, I then **consider** what I am perceiving—not only in the other, but also within myself. Silence can be a powerful practice, allowing space to take it all in. From there, I **contemplate** what the most loving response might be in that moment. In other words: *What would Jesus do?*

I wait for peace to descend, remaining receptive to the gentle nudges of the Holy Spirit. Then—and only then—do I act, or as Clare would say, I **imitate** Christ.

This approach to living more peacefully, both for ourselves and for those around us, takes time and persistence. Gradually, however, it can become a natural way of relating to others.

My mother used to say to me, “When you leave a room or walk away from another person, there should be a sense that the world is a little more ordered, or that a heart is a little lighter.”



Let there be peace on earth—and let it begin with me.
Peace and all good

Blessings Given/ Blessings Received

Martha Gabriel, Vice-Minister Atlantic, Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

Thinking about “blessing”, or “blessed”, or “bless” led me to think about the Beatitudes... that beautiful piece of Scripture in which Jesus lays out a program for His followers that will eventually lead them to follow His way. In that Scripture (Mt 5:3-10), each proposition suggested by Jesus begins with the word, blessed. But what does *blessed* mean? The original term refers to “a person who is in a condition of grace, who progresses in God’s grace and progresses on God’s path: patience, poverty, service to others, comfort..... Those who advance in these things are happy and shall be blessed” (Pope Francis, Jan. 29, 2020).



A member of the Community of the Beatitudes, Fr. Jacques Philippe, suggests that “This New Covenant Jesus promulgates ...is a path toward the happiness of the Kingdom, an itinerary for union with God and personal interior renewal. It proposes a way of identification with Christ, of discovery of the Father, of openness to the Holy Spirit” (Philippe, 2018, p.6).

What are the blessings we have received in our own lives? As Secular Franciscans, our Rule calls us to be poor in spirit, to be peacemakers, to be pure of heart. If we consider purity of heart in particular, Fr. Jacques Philippe suggests that “Nothing purifies the heart so much as praising and blessing God. A grateful heart is a pure heart.” (Philippe, 2018, p. 173)

“Blessed are the pure in heart...”
Jen Norton, Used with permission

St. Francis, in what he said and in what he did, shows his followers how to praise and bless God always. He shared his *Praises of God*: “You are holy, Lord, the only God. You do wonders, ...You are Three and One, Lord God of gods. You are good, all good, the highest good, You are our hope; You are our faith; You are our charity.... Great and wonderful Lord, God almighty, merciful Saviour!”

I have found that the call of St. Francis to praise and bless God speaks to me strongly. I do love praying with psalms that are particularly full of praise... I often find myself singing the psalms and canticles in my head:

“Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, praise Him, exalt Him forever!” (Daniel 3:57)

“May God be gracious to us and bless us; may God’s face shine upon us...May God bless us still; that the ends of the earth may revere our God”. (Psalm 67: 2, 8)

“...Sing to God, bless God’s name. Proclaim God’s salvation day after day.” (Psalm 96:2)

“I will bless the Lord at all times; praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will glory in the Lord, that the poor may hear and be glad.” (Psalm 34:2-3)

With the Canticle of the Creatures, St. Francis composed a canticle thanking and blessing the Creator for all of the creatures of earth. He sang about sun and moon; stars in the heavens; wind, air and every kind of weather; water, fire and Mother Earth. He even sang in gratitude for death. St. Francis felt such a close kinship with these creations of the Creator that he called all of them sisters and brothers... He invited all people of the earth to: “Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility”. St. Francis’ whole being was infused with love and thanks for all of creation!



Throughout 2025, Franciscans worldwide celebrated the 800th anniversary of St. Francis’ Canticle of the Creatures. Many took this opportunity to examine their own relationship with God’s creation, and enhance how they have adopted the relational idea of Franciscan kinship with all of God’s creatures (OFS Rule, Article 18). I found that focusing on praising, blessing, and thanking God has been a wonderful opportunity for me to express that positive Franciscan attitude toward life and all it brings.

We are called both to give a blessing to one another, and to receive a blessing:

“...All of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing” (1Peter 3:8-9).

What other blessings have I received from God through my vocation as a Secular Franciscan? I have been encouraged to make prayer an ever-more important part of my life... I now have a fraternity family, as well as being a member of my birth family. This fraternal family has been a blessing to me for over 30 years... I have also been offered many opportunities within the OFS to serve others... I believe I have been blessed with a rich life as a Secular Franciscan. And since my husband has shared my OFS journey with me... this has enriched our marriage with added blessings!

What is my hope for all of us as we celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St. Francis? That all of us who follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare may continue to enjoy the many blessings God has given us as we follow this vocation. And may we

also hear St. Francis' blessing as our "invitation to become a blessing for the world ourselves." (Br. Massimo Fusarelli ofm)

As St. Francis said as he blessed Brother Leo and all the members of the Franciscan family who came after him:

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He show His face to you and be merciful to you.

May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.

May the Lord bless you.



Let us strive to be aware every day of the blessings we have received from God, and consider how we may in turn become a blessing for others!

In Memoriam



Julita Parado

Julita Parado passed away on October 24, 2025, at the age of 86. She was born on June 16, 1939, in the Philippines. She resided in Saint-Laurent, Quebec.

She was a devoted member of the St. Anthony Fraternity, who faithfully lived her vocation as a professed member of the Secular Franciscan Order since May 6, 1990. We give thanks to God our Creator for the gift of our sister, Julita. May she rest in peace!



Gillian and her two sons celebrating her 90th birthday together on January 20, 2024.

Gillian Garson

Members of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Cornwall, PEI, were saddened to learn of the death of our Secular Franciscan sister, Gillian Garson, on November 13, 2025, at the age of 91. Music was a lifelong passion of Gillian's that she expressed through her work in directing many church and community choirs.

A Franciscan wake service was held for Gillian on November 27, and a funeral Mass on November 28. We entrust her now into the hands of our Saviour and give thanks to God our Creator for the gift of our sister, Gillian. May she rest in peace!

Masses will be offered for the repose of the souls of Julita and Gillian at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Prince Edward Island. (This church has been designated as a Franciscan church during the Jubilee Year celebrating the Transitus of St. Francis).