



Secular Franciscan

National Bulletin January 2026
of the Secular Franciscan Order in Canada

800th Anniversary
of the Easter
of St. Francis of Assisi
1226-2026



National Minister and International Councillor, Jewel Jasmins, ofs

May the Lord give you Peace!

As this year comes to a close it is good to reflect on the road we have travelled as a national fraternity. There have been significant changes and milestones made in 2025.

Some highlights include the fraternal and pastoral visitation from our Minister General, Tibor Kauser, ofs, and General Assistant, Fr. Tomàs Ginga Panzo Suva, OFM Cap. They were delighted to meet members from across Canada at our National Elective Chapter in June at Loretteville, QC. From the Chapter, new ideas were generated to foster growth and regeneration of our communities, which has materialized into future orientations for our Secular Franciscan Order.

Reorganization of our national fraternity is in process, to better utilize our leadership resources. The National Formation Commission has broadened the bandwidth of reaching out to larger numbers of our members in providing virtual retreats, workshops and continuing formation in English, French and more recently in Korean languages simultaneously. There are several National Teams dedicated to working on key priorities identified at our National Chapter. These teams are diverse and enriched through the participation of many members from different local fraternities within our national fraternity. We thank our Good Lord for the many gifts and blessings he has bestowed on us, firstly with the support of our Friars who accompany our communities, and for the brothers and sisters we journey with.

In this season of Advent, let us prepare a room in our heart for God to write his story. The spirit of Christmas never dulls in the heart of those who understand the gift of God's unfathomable love for all humanity, in the gift of His only Son, Jesus, for our redemption. Christ's birth brought hope to the world. May that hope illuminate our path this Christmas and continue to guide us throughout the new year.

All -powerful, most holy,
most high, and supreme God:
All good, supreme good, totally good,
You who alone are good:
May we give you all praise, all glory, all thanks,
all honour, all blessing, and all good things.
So be it. So be it.
Amen.
~ St. Francis of Assisi ~

**Wishing you a joyful Christmas
and a New Year filled with His blessings**





National Spiritual Assistant Fr. Peter Knaapen, OFM Conventual

The Gospel for the Christmas Day Mass is the Prologue to John’s Gospel (1:1-18) that starts “In the beginning was the Word,” and contains the familiar phrase “And the Word became flesh.” It is a Gospel we don’t often hear or reflect on but is a rich text to reflect on. It begins with the pre-existent Word dwelling with God from all eternity. There are four stanzas with distinct themes: The Word with God; the Word in Creation; The Word in the World and the Word present in the community of believers. Each of these themes sheds light on our Christian and Franciscan understanding of the Incarnation.

The Word
with God
the Word
in Creation

The first stanza recalls the first verse of the book of Genesis: “In the beginning, when God created the heaven and the earth.” This parallel suggests that God is bring about a new creation. The birth of Jesus brings a fresh start for the human family, a new opportunity to fulfill its true destiny.

In the second stanza we read: “All things came to be through him.” Once again, the text recalls the account of creation in the book of Genesis where God speaks a word and creation springs into existence: light, the earth, the sun and moon, plants and animals, and finally humans made in God’s divine image. The Prologue attributes this creative activity to the Word, who not only created the world in the beginning, but continues to sustain it as its everlasting source of life.

The third stanza deals with the Word in the World: “He was in the world, ... yet the world did not recognize him. To his own he came; yet his own people did not accept him. But all those who did accept him he empowered to become God’s children.” Yes, people still do not recognize or accept Jesus. Yes, his house, which is still falling down needs to be rebuilt. As Franciscans we are challenged to help people know who Jesus is and empower them to become God’s children

And the
Word became
flesh
and made his
dwelling
among us.

The final stanza contains our central belief: “And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.” Here we have the scriptural basis for our doctrine of the Incarnation, that the second person of the Trinity, the Word, became man by assuming human nature. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh “made his dwelling among us.” The Greek word could be translated as “pitched his tent” among us. The book of Exodus instructs the Israelites to make a Tent or Tabernacle where God can dwell among the people. The Prologue suggests

that Jesus, who pitched his tent among us, has replaced the old Tabernacle, and remains the primary means for humans to encounter God and to experience divine glory.

Viewed from the perspective of John’s Prologue, Christmas is the celebration of the divine presence intimately woven into human existence. God is not a mere observer of the human scene, but an active participant in the human drama. The Word has become human flesh, walked our earth, and shared our joys and sorrows. Jesus, who is brother to all of us, encourages us to be brothers and sisters to one another.



Regional Fraternity Council of St. Francis of Assisi (the newly forming regional fraternity in Québec)

L-R: Richard Chamberland, ofs; Micheline Chamberland, ofs; Martin Deschênes, ofs; Christine Deschênes, ofs; Françoise Malboeuf, ofs; Laurette Thibodeau, ofs; Jocelyn Leblanc, ofs.

**From Darkness to Light:
Our 2026 Annual Retreat**
Maryann Mueller, CSSF

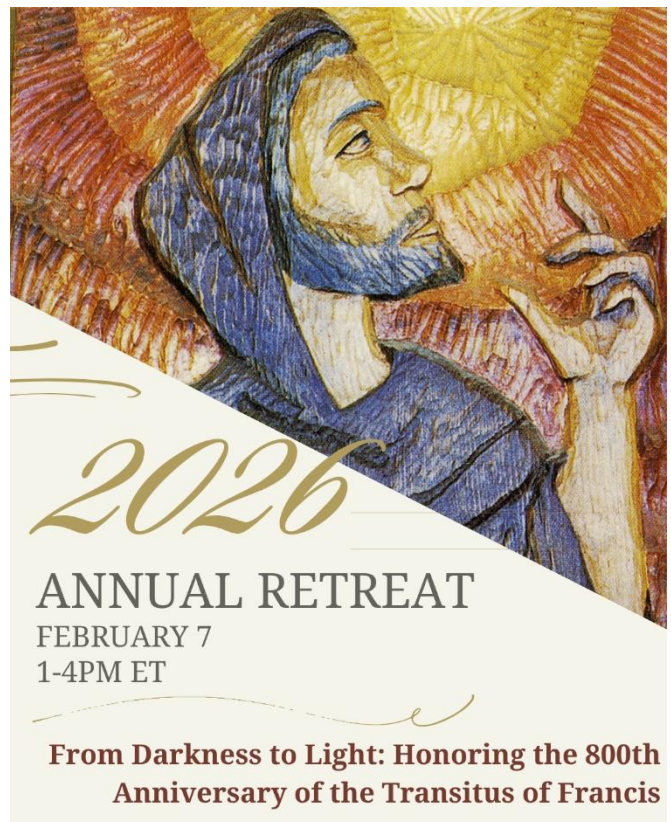
From Darkness to Light: Honoring the 800th Anniversary of the Transitus of Francis is the theme of the Commission on Member Engagement's 3rd annual virtual retreat, commemorating the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi.

This virtual retreat will take place on **Saturday, February 7, 2026, from 1-4 p.m. Eastern Time (10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Pacific Time)**...

This retreat, which welcomes all who wish to participate, invites us to engage in profound personal and communal reflection on the enduring witness of St. Francis and the illuminating light he continues to kindle in our shared mission of love, service, and outreach.

To register, click on the link:

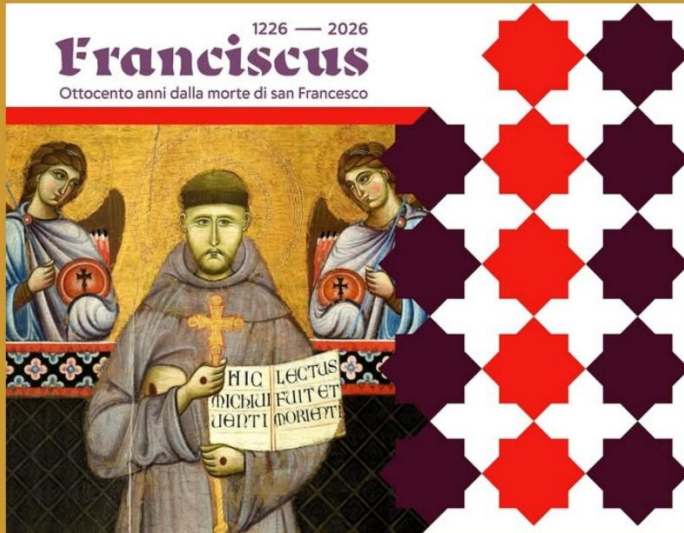
[From Darkness to Light: Our 2026 Annual Retreat - Franciscan Federation](#)



We are honored to have the Most Reverend John Eric Stowe as our featured speaker. A Conventual Franciscan friar and the Bishop of the Diocese of Lexington in Kentucky since 2015, Bishop Stowe was appointed by Pope Francis and has become a prominent voice in advocating for social justice and upholding a consistent ethic of life.

CENTENARY 2026 OPENING CELEBRATION

The Year of the Transitus opens with live broadcast Jan. 10!



The 800th Anniversary of The Transitus begins January 10, 2026 at 10 AM European Time (1 am PST, 2 am MST, 3 am CST) at the Porziuncola Chapel Assisi, Italy in the Basilica of St Mary of the Angels

www.facebook.com/fratiminoriassisi

and the Franciscan Centenaries website (www.centenarifrancescani.org).

The Easter of St. Francis of Assisi: Ongoing Conversion and the Spirituality of Presence

In 2026, we commemorate the 800th anniversary of the passing of St. Francis. In this first presentation of our four-part series, facilitated by Darleen Pryds, we will look at the final years of Francis' life, when his spiritual conversion reached completion.

From the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition:

<https://www.franciscantradition.org/event/the-easter-of-st-francis-of-assisi-ongoing-conversion-and-the-spirituality-of-presence/>

Formation

~International~

On-going formation: exploring our Rule of Life (module 1 and module 2)

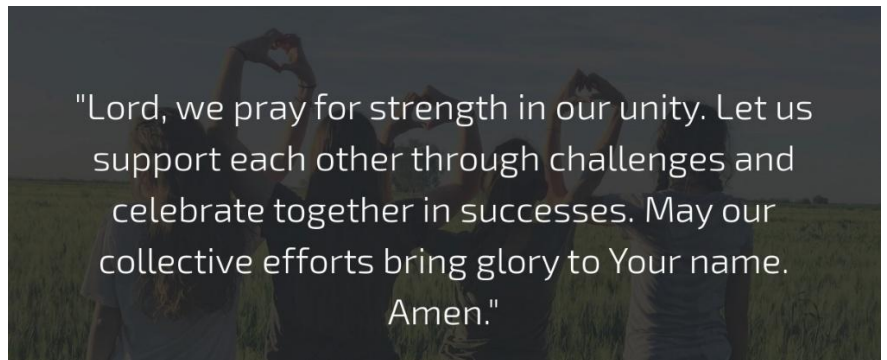
Secretariat for Formation presents the first and second modules on deepening our understanding of our way of life by examining articles of our Rule, with Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the General Constitutions.

On-going formation: exploring our Rule of Life (module 1) Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis On-going formation: exploring our Rule of Life (module 2) - Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis

~National~



Servant Leadership Virtual Workshop Saturday, January 31, 2026



A two part, two hour workshop for all those who serve or are interested in serving on a fraternity council, whether local, regional or national. Animation of the first part will be by **Marion Clorey, ofs**, former National Vice Minister. There will be an opportunity for small group sharing. In the second part, break-out rooms will be designated to the various roles of council, each with its own animator on that particular role: Minister-lead by **Jewel Jasmins**, Vice Minister-TBA, Secretary-lead by **Heather Thompson**, Treasurer-TBA, Formation Director-lead by **Catherine Payne**. Translation will be made available by Sr. Claire-Monique Lerman, fmm. To register, please contact Debbie at deborah Tessier57@gmail.com

Fr. Georges Morin, OFM, passed away, November 16, 2025



It is with great regret that I inform you of the death of brother Georges Morin, OFM, which occurred in the morning, Sunday, November 16, 2025. He was 88 years old and had 69 years of religious life and 61 years of ministry. May he rest in peace!

The funeral of brother Georges Morin was held on Friday, December 5 at 1:30 p.m. in the chapel of the Maison-Mère des Soeurs de la Providence (5655 rue de Salaberry), in Montreal.



Check out the latest issue of Vox Franciscana on the CIOFS website ([Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis – Consilium Internationale OFS \(CIOFS\) | Secular Franciscan Order](#)): **VOX FRANCISCANA – Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis**.

This latest issue of 2025 puts the spotlight on:

- the European Congress.
- The OFM Chapter of Mats.
- The Icon pilgrimage across Europe.
- Building bridges with non-Christians.
- The Poor Clares of Cortona.
- And much more.

Franciscanism

“Keys to Mysticism ...

Prayer

Spiritual Brotherhood / Sisterhood / Humbleness
Spiritual Friendship

“In knowing God through Love rather than perfectibility”

Spiritual Maturity Piety Studying Sacred Scripture Poverty of Spirit

“To live from the Gospel to life and life to the Gospel”

“Love of God” **Joy** “Love of Christ”

Right Relationship Hospitality Belonging Good Attitude Positive

Daily Conversion “Love of neighbour” Self-Emptying

Meekness Solidarity with the Poor Gentleness

Simplicity Penance Fasting

Courteous Kind

Sharing

... and to be an instrument of Peace”

*Respectfully Submitted,
- by Marilyn Deery ofS*

