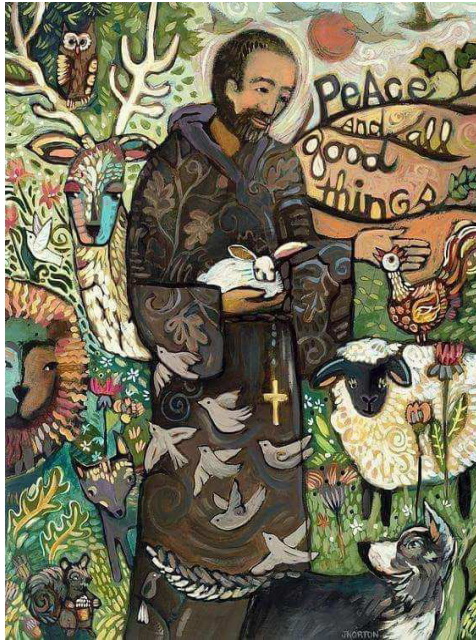


FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 126

Lent/Easter 2018



Words from The Council

Lenten Greetings, siblings and friends,

As I turn the page of my calendar,
I see the first day of spring arrives one week hence.
As I step outside my door,
a foot of freshly fallen snow greets my feet.

Which speaks to me of contrasts.

Winter and spring, freezing and thawing, wind and warmth,
snow and sun.

I am reading with interest a book by Herbert Robinson Marbury:
"Pillars of Cloud and Fire -- the Politics of Exodus in African
American Biblical Interpretation."

From the cover: "...from the antebellum period through the
Obama era,
... the exodus story became the language-world through which
freedom, both in its sacred resonance and its civil formation,
found expression.
...For African American biblical interpreters, to be American and
to be Christian was always to be open and oriented toward
freedom."

A pillar of cloud by day... A pillar of fire by night...

How little I know. How little I have seen. How stark the
contrasts...

Day/Night. Cloud/Fire. Slavery/Freedom.
Oppression/Liberation. Discrimination/Understanding.
Exclusion/Welcome.

I watch the news. We all see it. Contrasts.
Among everyone everywhere every day. Contrasts...

I pass by the movie theater.
This week: "Red Sparrow", "Black Panther", "Peter Rabbit".
Contrasts...

(Continued on page 2)

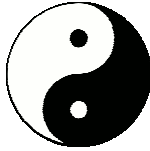
Inside this Issue:

- Words From The Council
- A Road Trip with Jesus
- Invitation to
Chapter/Convocation 2018
- Fellowship News
- Order of Ecumenical Sinners,
Debtors, and Trespassers
- Canticle to Creation
- What Have Our Siblings Been Up
To?
- OEF Represented at the Funeral
Service of Br. Tom Johnson, TSSF
- Rest in Peace, Br. Rene,' OEF
- A Poem to Read Forward, Then
Backwards

From the Council, continued....

In the nursing home:

I am working alongside a 17-year-old girl who has never left Willimantic, caring for a 103-year-old woman, born in Mexico and raised in Texas. We three each call the same Willimantic "home". Contrasts...



This past weekend, Bruce James and I traveled by bus from small town Willimantic to Big City New York. For an hour or more, we sat on a cold bench in a hotel parking area with our daughter Emma and our Franciscan Brother Barnabas (Luis Antonio), listening to stories of hope.

Hope found in AA and Al Anon, hope granted "one day at a time." And of hope being given by a church to homeless southern transgender youth, fleeing north in search of the safety and acceptance denied in their homes.

Listening also to experiences, over the years, of exclusion and inclusion, in this place and that place, here in our United States. Contrasts...

Monday evenings, we meet as your Council:
Louis in Florida:
Ministering through music locally within a Roman Catholic parish and traveling widely to share an interfaith concert of peace.

Markie in Indiana:
Working locally to address food insecurity issues and connecting with local college students, creatively and with great heart.

John Son-of-Syvert in Iowa:
Ministering among the elderly (now as a newly certified chaplain!).

Elijah in Oregon:
Studying and teaching young deaf students.

Shoshanah in Connecticut:
Mostly just trying to be kind and helpful in the most simple and basic of ways.

We, as you, offer our gifts in support of one another, in support of our little order, for the

unity of the church, for the life of the world, to the glory of God.

Contrasts...

Planning for Chapter/Convocation is our front and center task these days.

We have chosen as our theme: Listening Deep
Rising Up
Embracing Hope

We ask you to consider this. We ask you to pray with this.

Listening. Rising. Hoping.
Contrasts working together, complementing.
Contrasts working together toward healing.
Toward wholeness. Toward reconciliation.
Toward restoration.

In this season of Lent, as the northern hemisphere winter gives way to spring, as desert gives way to depth, as death gives way to life, crucifixion to resurrection, and Good Friday to Easter Sunday,

God of all hopefulness and Christ in all contrasts, draw us into your mercy and lead us in your light. Amen.

In Christ's Love for Each and All, ~ Shoshanah, on behalf of your Council:
(Markie, Louis, Elijah, John Son-of-Syvert, Shoshanah)





A Road Trip with Jesus

By John Michael Longworth, OEF (Reprinted from Medium.com)



As I meander along this most improbable road trip, I say, "At best I am a high functioning hot mess." Jesus looks at me from the other seat and shouts "Woo-hoo, we are fully alive!" I look back, consternation wrinkling up my face, and opine, "I am pretty sure we are lost." He smiles and observes "The reign is in us, among us and with us, we can't get lost," as he gestures in a grand sweeping motion from the center of his chest outward, "and you worry too much, we're almost there."

"Almost where?" I wonder aloud. He points to the unremarkable rural landscape with an air of mischief, "You'll see." This seems to be one of his favorite phrases, as if he can hear the music of a far off carnival that lies beyond the horizon that no one else is privy to. His face lights up and his smile creases his rough brown skin in well worn lines. Even so, when I look closer, I notice how his hazel eyes carry a certain sadness, as if he is also carrying a weight that no one else can bear.

I keep trying to remember how exactly it was that I agreed to drive him to the hermitage in the first place. We met face-to-face across one of those impossibly heavy pressboard folding tables with the laminate top. The tiny bubbles and folds in the surface undid any mistaken impression of a real wood surface. It was an ordinary day as far as I could tell. I had spent the morning wandering the streets, alleys and sidetracks looking for people that we pretend not to see. I had spent the afternoon reading. I offered to clear his plate, a courtesy we always offered to the dinner guests. Since I was going to have a cup of coffee and a dessert, I offered to get him one, too. He jubilantly gave me a double thumbs up, a big smile, and a half-wink. It

felt at the time like an over-wrought gesture, an impossible combination of a psychological tic,

gratitude and friendly flirtation. At the same time, it was a homemade pumpkin pie with fresh whipped cream, so a hearty reaction didn't seem completely wrong.

"Oh, oh, a taco trailer! Pull over here!" he was insistent, and this wasn't the first time our trip had been extended and detoured by such an outburst. The little collection of camping trailers seemed to be a combination of storage, residence, and a do-it-yourself food-truck. The sandwich board promised homemade tortillas, a nacho plate special and an overstuffed burrito for "big hombres". I wanted to know why we were stopping again, so soon, and not at a meal time. "So you want to get tacos now?"

He quickly placed his finger on his lips to shush me and then whispered, "you wait here, I'll be right back." He exited the vehicle, went up to the order window and spoke briefly to the proprietor just out of earshot. The woman in the dark green apron seemed to recognize him. In fact, a great many people along the way did, in spite of the fact that he had been very clear at the community dinner that he "wasn't exactly local". My curiosity was piqued when she invited him to come around back and into the food truck. I tried my best to see them and read lips, but I wasn't well practiced with such things. He seemed to be inquiring about someone, "Kayla" or "Kaya" or something similar. She reached out of sight and produced a small framed photograph that he studied intently. Then he nodded and I could make out "she's ok." The woman in the green apron threw her arms around him. I think she was crying, but not entirely out of sadness.

"I'm headed North, on a special retreat, Do you think you could give me a ride?" It was an awfully big request for a stranger, and I wondered if he even had papers for crossing the border. "I don't even know who you are. All I know is that you like pie." He seemed deeply disappointed, as if somehow in this mix of church folks, street people, lonely singles and people struggling with hunger that his unremarkable countenance didn't immediately spark recognition.

(Continued on page 4)



A Road Trip with Jesus, continued...

He looked at me intently and said “you know.” I looked at his weathered hands resting on the table and the one slightly crooked finger pointing across the welcome space to a tacky old portrait of a stoic European Jesus from the 1950’s. When he noted that I had made the connection he repeated, “see, you know.”

At that moment I was thinking “Oh good, a crazy one.” Even so, I managed to mumble, “oh so you’re back now?” Quite plainly he replied, “only Papa knows when that happens.”



Jesus comes back to the car with a small veggie nacho bowl. He notes quite plainly, “we can share, compliments of the chef.” Slightly annoyed that he has offered no explanation for this latest

sidetrack, I ask with a bit of an edge in my voice, “can we get going now? What was that all about?” He looks lovingly over at the food truck and says, but not really to me in particular, “sometimes they need signs to keep hoping.” Knowing that this far away look means that I’m not getting any real answers, I pull away from the dirt lot and back on to the main road. A few minutes down the road my curiosity gets the better of me and I ask, “why doesn’t everyone get signs?” He replies, still looking out the window at the landscape as the farms and trees roll by, “they do, but a lot of the time they don’t notice.” Intrigued by this new premise I press, “well, what’s the deal with that? What good are signs that aren’t noticed?” I get the now familiar twinkle as he gives his favorite non-answer, “that’s a question for Papa.”

“This is going to be wonderful!” He clutched my hand with both of his and gave it a vigorous shake. I rationalized the little road trip as a chance to drop in on some friends and family on the way home and I had the time off to use. I also had a suspicion that he would ultimately ask to be dropped off before reaching his intended destination. I drew a small sharp breath when I looked down at his wrists, now exposed as his sleeves were pulled back by his outstretched arms. The scars were painful to look at. I remember wondering if it was from a fight, self harm, even a suicide attempt? I hoped they weren’t self inflicted just to complete “the look”. We made plans to meet up by the public library downtown.

I can’t say exactly why, but in spite of the absurdity of the whole situation, I feel so comfortable just talking to him. I wonder aloud about my story up until now. I reflect on the people who have made my journey possible. I mourn the loss of people I have known. The only strained moments come when I press him on his identity, “who are you really?” His reply is always the same, “you know.” Occasionally as we banter about what Douglas Adams called “the meaning of life, the universe and everything,” he will circle back to “that’s a question for Papa”, or “only Papa knows that.” When I try a different angle and say, “Your papa must know everything.” He laughs and simply says “Amen!” with gusto.

When we stop at one end of the big bridge, he jumps out of the car and heads to an overlook. It is stunning; the deep glacial gash filled with water, the mountains that arise on either side, the mist hanging over the water and the sound of a loon echoing over the lake. He just stands there as if he is about to start doing jumping jacks, but he remains still. Unprovoked, he exclaims, “I love it! I love it all so much! The mountains are like a hug from the earth and I just want to hug it back.” With his arms outstretched I can see the scars more clearly. I nod to them and ask “what about those?” He looks at me quite seriously and then the seriousness melts into compassion as he replies, “oh the broken places are a reminder to be gentle, all the broken places; mine, yours, hers.” He gestures to the landscape. “How does that work?” I wonder out loud. “Really well,” He says, “if you can learn to feel the pain and not try to inflict it on others instead.” Getting a little emotional myself, “What if it’s too much to bear?” He gets a thoughtful look and says, “no pain lasts forever.” After a brief pause he continues, “and I didn’t say to carry it alone. Carrying it together and inflicting it aren’t the same thing.” We drive in silence for a good while after we get back underway.



We come to a moment of decision; interstate or secondary roads? I look over at him and he anticipates my query, “I am a backroads kind of guy.”

(Continued on page 6)

Order of Ecumenical Franciscans Chapter/Convocation 2018

Grace and Peace!

All OEF professed, novices, postulants, inquirers, and guests:

Your presence is requested!

You are warmly invited to our upcoming Chapter/Convocation,

June 28 - July 1.

Come be with us fully as time is short, and we gather as a whole body but once per year.

OEF Chapter/Convocation 2018

Pallottine Renewal Center

15270 Old Halls Ferry Rd

Florissant, MO 63034

(www.pallottinerenewal.org)

Thursday, June 28 (program beginning at 3PM; registration beginning at 1PM)

through **Sunday, July 1** (program ending at 1PM)

Registration open now at <http://www.oeffranciscans.org>

(Click on "Events" under the "Scriptorium" heading.)

Registration fee as of April 1, 2018: \$360/person

The flat fee includes registration and accommodations for one person
for four days / three nights, including meals.

**Those who need assistance registering online may contact any member of the Communication Committee: John Michael Longworth, Neal Dunnigan, Christine Petersen, or Kathleen Dlugosz, or a member of the Council.*

Early Arrival (arriving Wednesday at retreat center) is an additional \$100/person**

*All cancellations are subject to a \$25 nonrefundable deposit.

Late cancellations will receive a fair and equitable prorated refund.

**Participants arriving Wednesday for a day of prayer and personal retreat incur this
fee for an extra night of lodging. (Meals are not included.)

Single occupancy and double occupancy rooms are available.

Most rooms have a private bathroom with sink and shower.

Scholarships are available. Please help OEF offset the cost of chapter fees for
siblings who would otherwise be unable to attend. Your generous donations can be
made to our "Restricted for Chapter-Scholarship Fund" at www.oeffranciscans.org in the

A Road Trip with Jesus, continued...

The lake looks different from this side, the mountains near us are masked by the foothills that rise up beside us. Across the water, the other range seems to swell in the distance, giving their ancient embrace of the valley an extra squeeze.

As we near the imaginary line that purports to create two separate peoples, he gets excited about the dumpy greasy spoon diner across the street from a checkpoint. "More signs?" I playfully inquire. "No," he says, suddenly very solemn, "I don't know when I will get to break bread again." After we finish our meal, old fashioned chicken and biscuits, he puts the dinner roll he saved on a napkin and puts his untouched glass of cranberry juice next to it.

With great sincerity he breaks the roll in half and offers me one of them, "for you." When we finish working our way through the chewy bun, he offers me the cup again saying "for you." We sit in silence for a bit, pay the bill and get back in the car. Instead of pointing to the checkpoint that is literally across the street, he directs me to the bridge back over the lake.



When we arrive on the dirt road off of the main highway through the isles, I take note of the warning signs that an international border is just ahead. Before I trespass this boundary, he asks me to stop. I look at him in utter confusion and he looks directly into my eyes. He reaches across the car and places his hand on my chest, directly over my heart. "I will be with you always, as long as the struggle continues." I have no idea how to respond to this strange overture, and before I know it he has gotten out of the car and grabbed his small backpack from the back seat.

"Wait, you can't go that way!" I cry out, standing alongside the car. He ignores me and proceeds across the line that appears on maps, but not on the earth itself. Shortly thereafter, I can see the Royal Canadian Mounted Police SUV flashing its lights. He surrenders immediately. I want to scream. I want to fight. I want to run over there. Yet, I am frozen, I am afraid. I never saw him again, but he was right. I feel like he is still with me, reminding me that we are fully alive and helping me to carry my pain. I don't have any idea how this is possible. I guess I will have to ask Papa.

Fellowship News

The Kiwi Fellowship met at the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington on Friday 9th March. We enjoyed lunch in the cafe and then spent time on preparing the Kiwi fellowship's contribution to convocation, namely Friday Morning prayers.

We also continue to have fellowship with the Wellington Regional TSSF group as and when we can.



National Library of New Zealand



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
Nancy Menning, Treasurer
521 N Aurora St
Ithaca, NY 14850**



The Order of Ecumenical Sinners, Debtors, and Trespassers

When ecumenical Franciscans gather together to pray the Lord's Prayer, things start getting interesting about halfway through. In a cacophony of sound, it becomes clear that some of us are "sinners." Some of us are "debtors." And some of us are "trespassers." We come from different traditions. And we celebrate that.

Despite these variations, the Lord's Prayer unites us; it is shared by us with the entire Franciscan family. And we share it with Christians across the globe and throughout the centuries.

I learned this Lenten season that preacher William Sloane Coffin called this prayer our *cantus firmus*, meaning "fixed song" or "fixed chant." First century Christians prayed – or chanted – it three times a day. Christians have been praying this prayer (with variations) for two millennia.

During this Lenten season in my hometown church in Ithaca, New York, my pastor (Rev. David Kaden) preached a five-part sermon on the Lord's Prayer.* Each week he focused on a line of the prayer, selecting scriptural passages to accompany the sermon that enriched the meaning of this common prayer that most of us can recite without thinking.

It was good to slow down and reflect on this traditional text.

I share here the scriptures Rev. Kaden selected to accompany each line of the prayer. I invite you to move slowly and prayerfully through these selections in the weeks ahead.

There is surely much diversity in our individual experiences of this prayer throughout our lifetimes. And yet this prayer unites us.

Peace and All Good,

Nancy Menning, oef

* For those with an interest, Rev. Kaden's sermons are available online (as text or audio) at <https://bit.ly/2GgpAhv>

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

- Deuteronomy 6:4-5
- Exodus 3:13-15
- Psalm 135:13
- Romans 10:13
- Matthew 6:9

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

- Zephaniah 3:14-17
- Revelation 11:15
- Luke 13:18-19; 17:20-21
- Matthew 6:10

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

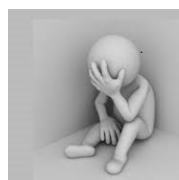
- Exodus 16:13-18
- Leviticus 25:1, 8-12, 25-28, 39-41
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- Matthew 6:11-12

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

- Psalm 121
- James 1:12-14, 22-25, 27
- Matthew 6:13

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

- Exodus 33:12-14, 18-23
- Lamentations 3:26
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Matthew 6:13b (King James Version)





Canticle to Creation*

An expanded version submitted by Obadiah Green, OEF



1. The lonely Lover before time,
Sought to create what is sublime.
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Out of dark chaos came the light,
God's universe was born that
night.
Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



2. Great galaxies with awesome power,
Moving through space in sparkling shower,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
O brother sun with golden beam,
O sister moon with softer gleam,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



3. Our family planets far and near,
Circling heavens year by year,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Dear mother earth who day by day,
Unfoldest blessings on our Way,
Sings Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



4. O brother wind, air, clouds and rain,
By which all creatures You sustain,
Sings Your praises, alleluia!
O sister water crystal clear,
Make music for our God to hear,
Sings Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



5. Oceans and seas, life's first supply,
Volcanic mountains rising high,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Rocks, minerals building good earth soil,
A firm foundation where we toil,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



6. The great, green forests of the earth,
Grass, grains all freely give their worth,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
As savory fruit and fragrant flower
Show forth Your glory, Your loving power,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



7. Your fire so bountiful and bright,
Sharing Your warmth and gift of light,
Sings Your praises, alleluia!
To You, O God, day after day,
This ark, our world in every way,
Sings Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



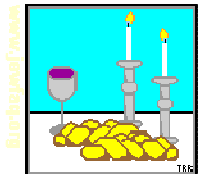
8. And humankind from dust of earth,
God's holy breath did give us birth.
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Know we as stewards of this Way,
In little ones the future lay.
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



9. To You, O God, all creatures sing,
And all creation, everything,
Sings Your praises, alleluia!
The gift in birthing of new life,
Reasons for peace that ends the strife,
Singing praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



10. Thou Great Creator thought it best,
To take a sacred Sabbath rest,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
In contemplation and in praise,
We celebrate Your loving ways,
Sing these praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



11. Now we who are of tender heart,
Make peace with others, take your part
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
To You we lift our pain and care,
Receive the burdens that we bear,
Singing praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



12. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow,
Creator, Savior Spirit know,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
For thou who heeds the Lover's call,
Work, teach and heal each one and all.
Singing praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



Canticle to Creation, continued...

13. In resurrection, things that last:
Compost, love given, stories past,
Sing Your praises, alleluia!
God gives to all the victory,
These gifts of life for you and me.
Hear our praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



14. So You, a kind and gentle death,
Prepares to hush our final breath,
Singing praises, alleluia!
Christ goes before us to renew,
The Way that leads us home to You,
Hear our praises, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



**This Canticle by Francis of Assisi is one of the oldest hymns to be sung in the vernacular of the people. The tune is "Lasst uns Erfreuen" from the "Geistliche Kirchensang, Colonge" in 1623 and was harmonized by Ralph Vaughn Williams in 1906. Sister Miriam Therese Winter of the Medical Mission Sisters adapted the words writing, "As I entered into communion with the word and spirit of the hymn, I felt called to enable that unknown-to-me poet's wisdom to live on into the future, a moving commission, and also felt a bond with the one who had gone before." The additions to these sources and the progression of stanzas following the creation message was worked out by Obadiah Greene, OEF. An effort has been made to express praise in our chronos time--such as the use of the word "compost" as an aspect of the resurrection of life--and God's season or kyros which is so important in the creation story.*

The intention of this expanded version of Brother Francis' Canticle is to appreciate, encourage and incorporate creative activity (dance, drama, etc. to carry the message through artistic forms) interspersed with the opportunities for worship (song, meditation, message). The canticle might be divided: Verses 1-3 Cosmos Creation, Verses 4-7 A call to stewardship, Verses 8-11 Sacred Life, Verses 12-14 Resurrection Praise in Coming Home. Opportunity is here for innovation in creativity by whatever group would wish to celebrate Francistide or at other times.

What Have Our Siblings Been Up To?

**News bits from the OEF E-mail List*

Our dear brother Gary Nabhan (Brother Coyote) is featured on this podcast about the seed vault in Svalbard, Norway:

<http://www.wbur.org/endlessthread/2018/01/26/the-vault>

You can, of course, just read the story online at the URL above. But it is MUCH, much better to hear Brother Coyote's sweet voice on the audio of the podcast. So, go ahead and click on the "play" button...

It is so WONDERFUL to see our own Neal Dunnigan as the author of the lead article in this newsletter from one of our ecumenical partners! *From the SFO newsletter, Winter 2018:*

Ecumenical Franciscans and Secular Franciscans Working together in Oklahoma (an excerpt)

By Neal Dunnigan OEF

800 Years Later, an Inter-Faith Dialog Continues In 1219, during the worst days of the Fifth Crusade, across a grim battlefield groaning with death and horror, Malek Al-Kamil, nephew of Saladin and Sultan of Egypt, welcomed an odd looking Christian into his well-appointed tent. A humble friar, from a small mendicant religious order, pledged to poverty and nonviolence, dressed in rough woolen robes and bare feet. At great personal risk, the friar had chanced everything to cross the battle lines. That friar, was named Francis of Assisi. He had modeled his life in the imitation of Jesus, and was seeking to bring an end to the decades-long war between Christians and Muslims.

The story of Francis of Assisi and Al-Kamil reinforces how true dialogue requires courage, humility, and faith. Paul Moses' forensic scholarship brought the story of Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malek Al-Kamil out of the old hagiography and makes it accessible to a contemporary book audience. Unity Productions Foundation (UPF), with cooperation from the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) produced a vivid rendition of the story in the form of The Sultan and the Saint docudrama. Additional follow-up content was developed by George Dardness, Marvin Krier, and Kathleen Warren. All-in-all, a wealth of information.

Yet, as beautiful and as inspirational as the story of Francis and Malek Al-Kamil is, it is just history depicted in a movie, played by actors. The real story is our contemporary witness and the way in which we reach across the climate of hate and fear in our own search for love, peace, and reconciliation. Certainly there are many different ways of engaging a discussion around the events of the Francis/Al-Kamil story and its many parallels to today.

OEF Represented at the Funeral Service of Br. Tom Johnson, TSSF

Our shared reverence to the family of Brother Tom Johnson/TSSF --January 2018

We are the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans which, with the assistance of Brothers of the SSF and Brothers and Sisters of TSSF in the early 1980's, opened an alternative Franciscan path for those of a Franciscan spirit who are not members of the Episcopal/Anglican or Roman Catholic Church. Working with our Founder, Dale Car-men, and other early journeyers, that assistance included helping us frame our statutes, file incorporation papers so to become an explicitly ecumenical Order in close relationship to SSF and TSSF and OFS. Part of our linkage has been attendance at each other's annual Chapter gatherings, and Brother Tom attended a number of our Chapter Meetings representing TSSF. You loaned him to us, and we enjoyed, and gained from his wisdom and his presence.

Now, with you, we mark and honor the completion of his life and ministry, his witness to the Good News of Kindom-Living, and his joy in following Jesus in the way of Francis and Clare. God bless you in remembering "life with Tom" and touch you with grace as you live the mix of sorrow and gratitude.

Peace be with you. God's peace be deep within you.

Brother Michael Vosler representing the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans...

Council Servants: Louis Canter, Shoshanah Kay, Elijah LeFevre, Markie Oliver, and John Son-of-Syvert



1/26/18 - Such was the message that was included in a very Franciscan (stigmata themed) card addressed to "Susan and all the Family of Brother Tom Johnson, TSSF." I attended the service in Folsom, CA, about 2.5 hours east of here — an old mining town looking quite

prosperous based on a tourist economy methinks.

The church was full, the service very high-Anglican, the gathered quite diverse though primarily white. The speakers included his sons, two of the "Block Group" — those now-adults who grew up with his boys and for whom Tom had long been a Mentor — and Susan Pitchford/TSSF, a soul-mate with Tom. I did get to speak with Tom's wife, Susan, who was very appreciative of the OEF's being present for "the Burial Office" — which concluded with Tom's ashes being buried just outside the side door of the church. Susan has known Kathy and Karen Lawler and their being members of the OEF.

So we were not strangers. I also got to speak with Susan Pitchford to exchange greetings. I believe she now lives in Texas.

Tom's death in mid-December at the age of 77 years came quickly after a cancer diagnosis, and was a bit of a shock to all who knew him — a strong, spirited, helpful and grace-filled presence in their lives and in the life of the Church and of the Order; then suddenly Sister Death leads him from us and into the trusted Mystery of the Eternal.

He grew up in Bolivia and China as a son of missionaries. He attended Fuller Seminary, then at some point found discomfort with that conservative spirituality and became a Presbyterian as a stepping stone to the Episcopal Church. A profound spiritual experience with Francis led him to the TSSF for which he was the Provincial Minister at the time of his death. He attended at least two OEF Chapter Gatherings as the TSSF representative.

I was delighted to be present representing the OEF.

Peace to each of you and all of us!

- michael vosler, oef



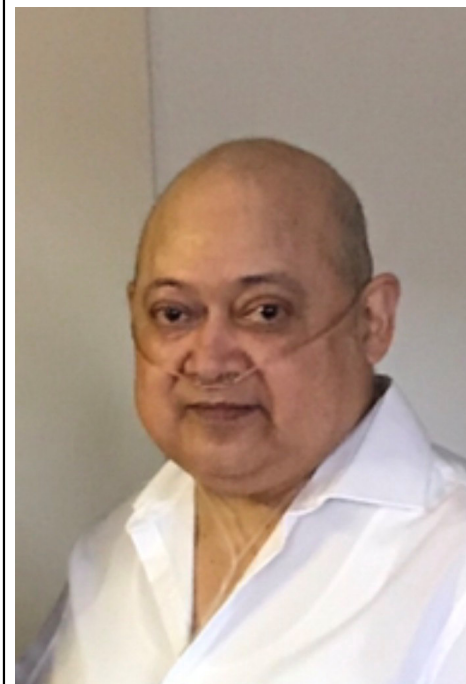


Rest in Peace, Br. Rene, OEF



I met Br. Rene` in 1989, while he volunteered at Our Lady of Victory Church in the South Bronx. He had come from Nicaragua due to the political problems of the country. He came with a religious visa in order to work as a Pastoral Associate. Rene` had been a Seminarian and wanted to increase his ministering for the needs of the church. He also wanted the opportunity to live a consecrated lifestyle as a religious. To this purpose, he left New York briefly to join the "Lumen Dei Congregation." He soon found out that it was not his calling. We worked together for six years. We kept in touch through the years and both transitioned to the Episcopal Church without being aware of each other's route. We met again as I was professing OEF, and he showed a firm interest and expressed a hint of vocation. After meeting again, Br. Rene` decided to continue formation and become a professed member of OEF. He did his formation in Spanish. After profession, he reported to the late Br. Leo. A good match since both could share their experience with COPD. Shortly after Br. Leo's "journey" from this life, Rene` was diagnosed with a most serious condition and in need of a pulmonary transplant, for which he was "reluctantly" preparing. He was very much aware of the implications. He developed a ministry to pray for others and gained an exceptional peace in the process; embracing his condition, knowing that his time to be with his maker was getting closer. His last month was spent getting ready for the transition, very much aware of sister death's presence. He never stopped praying for the OEF and continued his sharing with me almost every Wednesday in a relationship coined as "Anam-Cara" (an old Gaelic term meaning soul-friend). Br. Rene` died on March 7th, 2018, entirely trusting the Lord, happy for the embrace of Sister Death. May his soul Rest In Peace.

Br. Barnabas (Luis), OEF



Br. Rene` Medrano, OEF



Rest In Peace

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Submissions for the Post-Chapter 2018 issue of "Fiddlesticks" will be accepted immediately after Chapter concludes.

Deadline for submissions is July 15, 2018.

Send submissions to Sister Chris at
capoef@solarus.biz

or snail-mail to:

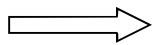
Christine Petersen, OEF
853 Norwich Ct.
Nekoosa, WI 54457

Thank you!



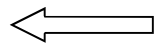


Fiddlesticks
c/o Christine Petersen, OEF
853 Norwich Ct.
Nekoosa, WI 54457
U.S.A.



A Poem to Read Forward and Then Backwards

by Brian Bilston



They have no need of our help
 So do not tell me
 These haggard faces could belong
 to you or me
 Should life have dealt a different hand
 We need to see them for who they really are
 Chancers and scroungers
 Layabouts and loungers
 With bombs up their
 sleeves
 Cut-throats and thieves
 They are not
 Welcome here
 We should make them
 Go back to where they came from
 They cannot
 Share our food
 Share our homes
 Share our countries



Instead let us
 Build a wall to keep them out
 It is not okay to say
 These are people just like us
 A place should only belong to those who are
 born there
 Do not be so stupid to think that
 The world can be looked at another way

(Now read from bottom to top, line by line)

- Submitted by David Rensberger,
 Associate of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans

