

...A Book for St Francis

SUMMER 2018 UPDATE

"We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way"

- St Francis of Assisi



**Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart,
and give me right faith,
certain hope,
and perfect charity,
wisdom and understanding,
Lord, that I may carry out
your holy and true command.
Amen.**

My dear friends,

I am honoured by the trust that my brothers and sisters have shown towards me in electing me as the new Moderator of the Franciscans of Halifax, but I am also aware that every form of community life: Christian, parish, religious and family, is founded upon the faith of the individual members, on the desire to give oneself, and on mutual forgiveness (that today we celebrate with great solemnity). Fr Christopher shared a reflection soon after his ordination to the priesthood that has always stayed with me, he said that a priest rises or falls on the prayers of the people. I believe this to be equally true for our Franciscan family. We were born out of a desire to see the Church in Halifax-Yarmouth be a light for the world and we continue working for the glory of His name thanks to your prayers.

Now, as we take this next step in our journey we look for your support, trusting that you will walk with us as together we follow our Lord in the spirit of St Francis and St Clare. These two and countless others have shown us how to walk humbly, carrying God's people toward heaven on our shoulders, unconcerned by the burden and rejoicing to share in the sufferings of Christ. So let us lift up our eyes to Him who has called us by name and heed His call to "love one another just as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34) and in this way we will "make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19).

May the Lord bless you and keep you always,

Fr Pio Libby

Below is a short update about some of the many things our brothers and sisters have been involved in over the past year. We thank you for your support and participation in our many activities around the diocese.

Pastoral Ministry

The majority of our brothers and sisters are involved in pastoral ministry in parishes in some form or another. Fr Francesco became the administrator of St Theresa's and St Catherine of Siena parishes this year, and he is assisted by Sr Rita as a pastoral associate, along with Sr Teresa, Sr Gemma and Sr Angela, who help with the catechism program. Br Nathanael is the administrator of St Anthony's in Dartmouth, and was assisted this year by Sr Edith Marie. Fr Paul joins him there on weekends to celebrate the Mass for the community. Fr Peter was ordained to the priesthood this year, and has been assigned to the parishes of St Clement's and St Andrew's, where he also completed his pastoral year as a deacon. Br Augustine is assisting Fr Roberto with his new parish, St Marguerite Bourgeoys, in Tantallon.

Studies

Many of the brothers who were in Rome have completed their studies and returned to Halifax, much to our delight! Fr Pio has finished the coursework for his Masters in Patristics, and will complete his thesis this year. Fr Christopher is returning to Rome to finish his Masters and begin his PhD in Biblical Studies, and Br Grant will be joining him there to study Spirituality.

Several sisters are studying here in Halifax. This year Sr Angela completed her Diploma in the New Evangelization at the Atlantic School of Theology, and is studying at Saint Mary's University. Sr Gemma is continuing her studies in Psychology at Dalhousie, where Sr Ilaria will begin her Masters degree in Musicology in September. Sr Bernadette completed some studies in History this year, and is taking a class in Herbal Medicines.

Veritas

One of our main pastoral ministries continues to be Veritas Catholic Books and Gifts. Br Grant has devoted himself faithfully to this ministry for the past several years. Sr Elizabeth continues to be part of the Veritas mission, and made her perpetual vows on the feast of St Francis in October! This year Sr Ilaria also dedicated time to helping run the store, and the other brothers and sisters help out here as much as we are able.

Ministry with the elderly

One of our key ministries of late has been working with the elderly in nursing homes around the city. Fr Paul

celebrates Mass every week at Northwood and at Parkstone. Sr Lucia and Sr Ilaria join him at Northwood weekly to help porter the residents, contribute to the music ministry and visit with the residents. Sr Angela has been making weekly visits to a few women in nursing homes around the city.

Ministry with youth

Sr Teresa is working with the chaplaincy program at Saint Mary's University, and is helping this program to grow, along with the rest of the team there. Several of the Franciscan priests have also helped out by celebrating Mass there for the students on a regular basis. This year we were also privileged to celebrate Mass every day for the Steubenville LEAD students for the week they were in town learning about their faith. Sr Angela and Sr Gemma have begun a young women's group which meets weekly at the sisters' convent to receive formation and experience moments of prayer and community. This fall Br Nathanael hopes to launch a new group which will meet each month for Theology on Tap.

Associates

Our associates continue to be faithful to their quiet and necessary ministries within and around our community. They bring communion to the sick, help organize initiatives and formation opportunities in our parishes, volunteer with refugees, organize our coffee socials on the weekends, and generally help out in innumerable ways.

Ministry of prayer

Praying for our brothers and sisters, for the local Church and for the whole world is the most important ministry which each of us undertakes. Although we are all called to pray for each other in the community, we are especially grateful for the prayers of Sr Patricia and the contemplatives at San Damiano convent, who are the driving force behind all the work that we do. This year we gained a new advocate in heaven, as Sr Therese passed away in November, after a few months of illness. Her presence among us is missed, but we are grateful for the witness she gave to us in her dying months, and for her prayers for our community now.

