

...A Book for St Francis

SUMMER 2019 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 brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are living in the midst of a lot of changes, not just in the Archdiocese as we journey through this process of re-organization, but in the world at large that continues to abandon Him who is Truth and judge for itself what is good and evil. In times such as these we can find ourselves disoriented and grasping for some sort of stability. Now more than ever, we must turn our eyes to Christ who is *"the same yesterday, today and forever"* (Heb 13:8) and build our house upon this rock. Our house is built upon the rock of Christ only when we remain faithful to Him in prayer and look to Him as our source of strength; if not, when the storms of change and difficulty come we may find the sand beneath our feet washed away (cf. Matt 7:24-27).

So together let us take this opportunity to root ourselves more firmly in Jesus Christ by deepening our prayer life. The fruit of prayer is a peaceful heart that is convinced nothing can *"separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom 8:39) and is therefore ready to endure all things in order to reconcile the world to Him (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-21). The Forgiveness of Assisi is always about being reconciled to the Lord and His Church and thus become instruments of the same forgiveness and love. We need to support each other more than ever! When we are separated from one another we are easy prey of that *"roaring lion looking for someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8) but when we are united together in Him we form the Body, the Church and *"the gates of hell shall not prevail against"* us! (Matt 16:18) Let us pray for each other and together let us follow Him who called us.

Studies

It was a great joy this year to celebrate as Fr Pio finished his Licentiate in Patristics and completed his thesis, which analyzes the works of Ambrose of Milan on the Incarnation. Sr Ilaria also continues to work on her Masters and thesis at Dalhousie in Musicology, while Sr Gemma and Sr Angela are working on their degrees from Dalhousie and St Mary's. This year, Sr Bernadette completed her Diploma and is now a Chartered Herbalist. Br Grant and Fr Christopher continue in their studies in Rome in Spirituality and Scripture, and are ministering in various ways there. We are proud of the hard work and accomplishments of all our students.

Pastoral Ministry

Parishes: Ministry to the faithful of our parishes is always an important part of our community's mission in the local Church. This year with the Archdiocesan parish restructuring, some of our brothers have new appointments and have had the blessing of encountering the faithful people in neighbouring churches. Fr Francesco is entrusted with the new North-West End Parish Grouping, called St Francis and St Clare! It brings into one parish St Catherine's, St Theresa's, St Mother Theresa's and St Patrick's. Sr Rita is pastoral associate at St Theresa's and serves with dedication in the areas of RCIA, funeral pastoral care, spiritual direction and facilitating courses on the faith. Fr Roberto is entrusted with the care of Holy Apostles parish. In June we had the joy of celebrating the priestly ordination of Fr Nathanael, which was a beautiful occasion for all. He has been named assistant to Fr Jim Richards in Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, and continues to have a particular responsibility for St Anthony's church. Fr Paul served St Anthony's this past year by celebrating mass for them on the weekends. Also in Dartmouth, Fr Peter serves the faithful at St Clement's and St Andrew's Churches.

Prayer: The contemplative aspect of our vocation is an essential part of all of our vocations. The active brothers and sisters are each responsible for nurturing this part of life, but we rely heavily on the constant prayers of those in our contemplative convent, San Damiano. Sr Patricia offers her daily intercession and sacrifice for the whole church. We are also grateful for the prayer and service of those with her in San Damiano: Fr Roberto, Br Augustine and Fr Livio. Also at this convent, Sr Bernadette has been working on a vegetable and herb garden for the community, putting her diploma to good use and offering the work (and harvest) as a prayer.

Outreach: This year, Fr Nathanael and Fr Peter started a new ministry, a furniture bank, in order to make items available for those in need. It is based out of St Anthony's parish, where there is a weekly outreach Fr Nathanael assists with. Sr Ilaria also brings her service and joy to the Daily Bread Outreach downtown.

Youth & Elderly: Many of the brothers and sisters are blessed to work with the youth of our parishes and our wider community. In the winter/spring of this year, Sr Lucia took a course in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a hands-on program for forming children in the faith. We also rejoiced on the Feast of St Francis last year with Sr Lucia as she professed her first vows! She, along with Sr Teresa and Sr Angela, teach weekly children's catechism. Sr Teresa continues her work in the SMU Chaplaincy, accompanying students in their faith journey. Fr Nathanael launched a monthly Theology on Tap this year, where young adults met in a pub for a talk, food and drinks and fellowship. St Agnes young women's formation group meets weekly at St Agnes Convent with Sr Angela and Sr Gemma for prayer, learning and community.

The elderly members of our parish and wider community form another important group for outreach. Fr Paul faithfully celebrates Mass at Northwood nursing home, where Sr Lucia also volunteers, visiting and assisting the residents to Mass. The faithful in several local nursing homes reach out to Fr Paul for prayers, comfort and last rites. Sr Angela also regularly visits several elderly women for companionship.

Veritas: Sr Elizabeth and Sr Lucia have volunteered at Veritas this year assisting and accompanying customers from many churches, locally and beyond. Sr Elizabeth has dedicated herself faithfully to this ministry for five years and finished her time there this summer. The people at Veritas will miss her presence and hard work, but we thank her for her committed time of service in this apostolate.

Associates

Our associates are faithful and dedicated to serving in so many ways in parishes and beyond. This year, we had the joy of witnessing Myra Donnelly and Marian Bulley profess their final promises of simplicity, chastity and obedience. We also lost one of our beautiful members in January, Carlotta Spino. Being ill for some time, she passed in the dedicated care of her sister associates. We miss her, but are assured of her prayers and rely on her intercession now from Heaven.

