

A BOOK FOR ST FRANCIS

"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



WHAT IS 'A BOOK FOR ST FRANCIS'?

A Book for St Francis is the annual newsletter of the Franciscans of Halifax which we distribute every August 2nd on the Franciscan celebration of the Forgiveness of Assisi. It has the two-fold purpose of:

1. keeping our wider community of friends and benefactors connected to our daily missions, and
2. raising needed financial support for the varied educational paths our community members are taking.



**WE APPRECIATE YOUR
GENEROUS SUPPORT!**

Dear brothers and sisters,

As we mark the passing of another year with the celebration of the Forgiveness of Assisi, I am grateful for the support that this small community receives from so many friends both near and far. We thank you for your continual prayers, which ensure our ongoing presence and ability to minister to the people who we encounter. I was elected Moderator of the Franciscans of Halifax this past Spring and I ask for your prayers as I step into this new role of service that the Lord calls me to. I am certain that this year, like the past eighteen years since the founding of our community, will bring both challenges and beautiful opportunities, and we will embrace these as God gives us the grace to do so. One hope for this year is to expand the fields of study that our brothers and sisters are engaged in, to continue growing our capacity to meet the needs of the people entrusted to us. I appreciate your support and presence with us in this journey and look forward to the many interactions and collaborations we will have in the coming year. Peace to you and to your loved ones,

- Fr Peter

Studies: Through your support over the years, the Franciscans of Halifax have had many opportunities to further our education in various areas of study. Adding up the studies over the years, our members have had the chance to plunge into Biblical studies, theology, philosophy, patristics, classics, languages, musicology, iconography, dogmatics, Franciscan studies, spirituality, psychology, clinical pastoral studies, herbal medicine, and catechetical studies, just to name a few. This year, Br Francesco has been in Rome studying at the Gregorian University; he completed his Bachelor in Theology and has begun working on his License in Dogmatic Theology. Here in Halifax, Br Christopher has been working on his PhD in Biblical Studies, with a focus on the Tribe of Ephraim and Br Paul has continued his studies in Clinical Pastoral Education. Sr Gemma finished her practicum and graduated with a Master of Education in Counselling, and Sr Angela graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Classics and Philosophy.

We cannot emphasize enough how great an honor and gift all of our studies over the years have been: first, for the intellectual development of the brother or sister studying, and then as a means of serving the faithful who are desiring to grow in their faith and understanding. This passion of ours for education has been with us from the beginning, through our founder, Fr Roberto, who taught the value of education and who, himself, continued studying until the last days of his life. In his memory, we are delighted to announce the launching of our community's new initiative to foster learning and education in deserving candidates from our broader community. Keep an ear out in the coming months for further details on this initiative, as we hope to offer the **Father Roberto Donato Memorial Scholarship**.

Formation for Children & Families: This year, we have continued working in many areas of catechesis and formation for youth and families. Br Grant and Sr Lucia have supported and formed homeschooling families through the Bl. Carlo Acutis Homeschool Coop. Br Grant also serves in religious education at Divine Mercy Parish, and Sr Lucia continues ministering as the Director of Religious Education at St Theresa's Church. She and Sr Angela also helped with the first ever parish-wide youth group and Confirmation class in St Francis and St Clare parish.

Adult Faith Formation: Also in St Francis and St Clare Parish, this year Br Grant led a parish program in evangelization. Sr Rita faithfully continues facilitating the formation of new converts in RCIA and also provides Marriage Preparation. There have been several opportunities the brothers and sisters have had to be involved with the formation of young adults in their faith, whether through spiritual direction, assistance in vocational discernment, giving talks or facilitating formation and prayer groups. Speaking and formation engagements have become a wonderful place of sharing and encounter with different parishioners across the Archdiocese. Sr Bernadette and Br Christopher have travelled to speak at missions or talks, and Sr Gemma has started to be involved in the formation of candidates for the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese. Sr Patricia has participated in an important work along with some community members and friends to transcribe and disseminate some of the formations of Fr Roberto.

Parish Ministry: This year, Br Nathanael was entrusted with the parish of St Francis and St Clare of Assisi as administrator. Sr Rita also serves there supporting families with funeral preparation. Br Peter has been assistant pastor of Divine Mercy parish in Dartmouth since 2018 and continues to serve there now in addition to accepting the office of General Moderator of the Franciscans of Halifax. Br Grant has served this year as a Deacon in both St Francis and St Clare Parish as well as Divine Mercy Parish. In Rome, Br Francesco serves through regular celebration of the

Mass in the parish and Franciscan convent where he has stayed while studying. Sr Bernadette serves at St Mary's Cathedral Basilica in a number of roles, assisting with parish life, organization and ministry, and seeking to grow engagement and evangelization.

Prayer & Community: We were thrilled to celebrate Sr Rose's First Profession of Vows this Spring. On May 13th, the remembrance of Our Lady of Fatima, Sr Rose joyfully vowed poverty, chastity, and obedience for one year. In our community and in the whole Church, we depend on the constant prayers of those in our contemplative convent. Sr Patricia offers her prayer each day in sacrifice for souls. We are grateful for the prayer and service of the active sisters who have served in San Damiano convent this year. The grounds of the convent have been prayerfully worked on and kept beautiful all year through Sr Lucia's consistent efforts. We rely too on the daily prayers to which many of our Associates dedicate themselves, personally, in community for the Church and the world. Many of the associates take shifts in Adoration, sacristan work, Communion ministry and making rosaries. One very spiritually fruitful ministry of our brother priests in Halifax has been consistent Adoration and offering of Confessions on Thursday nights at St Catherine's. The inestimable value of bringing people before the Blessed Sacrament for quiet prayer is central to this ministry.

Ministries of Care and Presence: Several of our Associates are involved in ministries of outreach, care for the disabled and home-visits to the elderly. In the first year of her simple vows, Sr Rose will also be beginning ministry to those in need through the Daily Bread Outreach. Br Paul is now serving as a hospital chaplain. Now that Sr Gemma has finished her Counselling degree, she has a ministry supporting children and youth as a counsellor.

The studies and ministries of this community would not be possible without your financial and spiritual support. Thank you for your generosity!