

Queen of Peace Region



Secular Franciscan Order

# Tracings

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

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# ***Theme of the Issue***

# ***Understanding***

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## ***Understanding***

by Kim Pappas

To understand as to be understood. How often we have said this as part of the Peace Prayer. How often have we been instruments of peace when it comes to understanding, especially when someone is in your face with an opposing view.

Listening, really listening to another individual is not always easy. How we treat the other with respect when you could just scream at them the “correct” position.

We are in love with our positions and often find it supported by scripture. Nothing is to be gained by hitting them over the head with a hammer as to the correctness of your position. Jesus encountered many sinners who knew the scriptures and still violated them.

When we are called to be instruments of peace, we need to be open as to why the other has taken their position and to act pastorally. We don't know their relationship with God, friends, co-workers etc. who may be influencing them. We can have a positive effect by being instruments of peace. Deep breath in, be peace.



## **UNDERSTANDING – Franciscan Style**

**By Kathy Taormina, OFS**

Understanding...

How do you define “understanding”?

Knowledge? Listening? Empathy?

I’m sure for all of us there are as many definitions of the word “understanding” than there are of us.

Do our definitions rely on how we are understood? Do we model others or do we strive to really use our senses to understand? No matter how we strive to understand others, this short acronym may help open your hearts and minds to one of our gifts of the Holy Spirit.

S.T.O.P.

**S – STOP.** Stop doing anything else but listening. Turn away from electronics, put your book down, employ eye contact. Focus on the person and what they are saying. Let their words sink into your consciousness and listen to the adjectives they use to describe the event or their feelings. Words matter. What words they choose matter. Also watch their body language and listen to the tones in their voice.

**T – TAKE YOURSELF OUT OF THE EQUATION.** When you first strive to understand anything, realize that it is not about you (unless of course it is!) What I mean is to remove your own preconceived notions, outdated understandings of a subject, and any prejudices or bias that you may have and listen to gain understand. This is the hardest for most of us. We need to try to understand how the other person understands, so that we may come to a place of even ground.

**O – ONLY AFTER.** Only after the person is finished are you to ask any questions to clarify what you heard, or to have them elaborate on certain points to be clearer. If the information is in a text or email. Be careful! A phone call or personal conversation may be needed to make sure what is being shared is coming across appropriately. Don’t be timid or lazy, talk to them.

**P – PRAYER.** – Pray to the Holy Spirit for enlightenment, understanding, empathy and compassion for what you are striving to understand. As Franciscans this always should be our “go to” step in any instance. How did Francis understand his brothers so well? Look it up and use a few of his techniques.

As you can see, the beginning of “understanding” is based on active listening. Are you an active listener who strives to understand others? Prove it!

### **A PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING**

Lord Jesus Christ, grant me the gift of understanding. Help me to understand the feelings of others, the desires of others, the goals of others. At the same time, help me to understand myself in my actions and reactions. Widen my vision beyond my own small world to embrace with knowledge and love the worlds of others. Help me, Lord, to always see you at work in my own life and in the lives of others. Bless me with insight, acceptance and love that is tempered by you who are all things to all. Amen.

Mary Stronach, OFS ~ National Formation Workshop, August 22, 2020

## ***Understanding - The Second Gift of the Holy Spirit***

By Mona Wolney

Happy the one who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding! Her profit is better than profit in silver, and better than gold is her revenue. Proverbs 3:13-14

Jesus answered, "Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been granted to you; but to the rest, they are made known through parables so that 'they may look but not see, and hear but not understand.' Luke 8:10

The understanding Jesus offers his followers is not the understanding of this world; which Jesus calls a hearer of parables but he offers us knowledge and understanding of His very heart; Jesus, Our Savior and Lord. This understanding is offered as a gift when we become his friend and disciple, by spending time listening to his words and laws and following them in our lives. With grace and the Holy Spirit, when we enter into this relationship, Jesus reveals himself with an understanding; which "profits better than silver and gold." Our Father Francis prayed before the San Damiano Crucifix:

"Fill me with understanding and knowledge that I may fulfill your command."

There is no better example for us than St Francis, who desired to know and understand with all his being the heart of Jesus and exactly what it felt like for Jesus to suffer the pain of crucifixion for the salvation of the world. God saw in the little humble man of Assisi a true friend, a heart and a life that was worthy to share this gift of understanding Francis longed for. The gift Francis received was the stigmata, the very wounds from the cross of Christ became part of his body; his hands, his feet his side. By sharing in Christ's crucifixion Francis entered into the open heart of Jesus and received an understanding no one had ever been given before in history. When people saw that Francis was a new person by following Christ, they desired to understand the source of his transformation and to follow him.

So, let's ask ourselves are we people that only seek out the parables; where we look but do not see, hear but do not understand or do we seek to know the heart and love of God and serve Him with every fiber of our being that is reflected in our lives; of knowing and understanding what God desires of us.

For the LORD gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 2:6





## ***Fraternity Projects***

St. John XXIII, OFS fraternity made and delivered Easter Baskets to the fraternity's shut-ins.





Kay Pelletier, OFS enjoys her delivery!



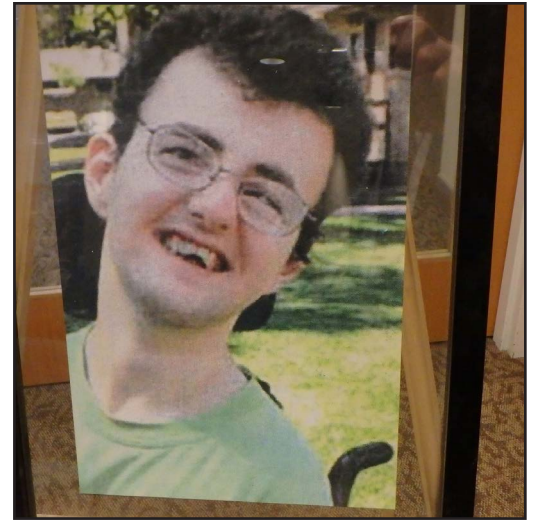


## ***Benjamin Larson***

by, Linda Loes, OSF

Benji Larson IS my Secular Franciscan Vocation story.

In Sept. 1988, Ben was born with severe congenital hydrocephalus (water on the brain). He was never destined to meet the regular benchmarks of childhood. He never walked, talked, sat up alone, fed himself, got himself dressed or went to the bathroom on his own. He was profoundly blind and nearly deaf. He suffered frequent, violent seizures. He had his first brain shunt placed when he was 3-days old . . . the doctors had told his mother he would not live beyond the age of 5.



I first met Ben and his family in 2000, 3 days after his father had left them for Las Vegas Permanently. They were in crisis mode, and I was minding my own “secular” business. Ben had just turned 12 years old. The “new millennium” had something very special in store for me.

When Ben’s Mom found out I had a medical background, I couldn’t shake her off. She pestered me until I finally agreed to provide monthly medical respite foster care for her. I was terrified and revolted, but when I assessed her situation, I really couldn’t refuse. I was just like St. Francis when he first encountered the lepers near Assisi. Ben drooled and coughed because he literally could not swallow his own secretions. He chewed on his hands until they bled. He shrieked out loud to whatever thoughts were going on in his head. He grunted and groaned. I could barely touch him for fear of getting full of saliva. I thought he was disgusting in the most profound way.

BUT~~

The Holy Spirit went to work on me and over the 18-years I was intimately involved in his care I came to love Ben as one of my own children. I came to kiss him on the lips, even when he was full of saliva. I came to dress his hands with salve where he had chewed them raw. I changed his diapers without hesitation. I had come to LOVE Ben Larson in the most profound, intimate way. When ignorant people stared at us I often drove Ben’s wheelchair right up to them and introduced him as “my beautiful Ben”. I truly began to look forward to my time with Ben and ultimately cared for him more frequently than the monthly weekend I had agreed to in the beginning.

Sadly, Ben died in April 2018 as a result of acute heart failure from an intractable seizure. He was just shy of 30-years old. The void he has left in my heart is profound. I do realize he is in a better place with Our Lord, Jesus Christ and Our Seraphic Father, St. Francis, but I miss him every day. I miss his boundless love, his gratitude at the smallest things (like chocolate pudding), his laughter, his shrieking . . . his drooling. I know our Holy Mother, Mary herself, is loving him in Heaven.

Ben Larson, through the Holy Spirit, changed my heart and my mind and ultimately led me to my Secular Franciscan vocation. Godspeed, Benji. I love you forever and I’ll see you again someday.



## **BE POOR**

Will Moore OFS ,member Mary, Queen of Peace fraternity,  
Spiritual Assistant to St. Anthony of Padua fraternity

“The brothers must live without anything of their own.” So says St. Francis in his Earlier Rule. He quotes the gospel which says: “Follow the teaching and footprints of Jesus who says if you want to become holy sell all you have, give it to the poor, deny yourself, take up your cross, hate your father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, your life, and come be my disciples. Jesus says if you do this for me, you will receive eternal life.

Where does our SFO Rule say to live without anything of our own? Article 4 says: “We are to make Jesus the inspiration and center of our life with God and people”. If we are trying our best to follow this article, we are gradually moving closer to Jesus. Our prayer life and our relationship with God revolves around our encounters with Jesus. All of our relationships with any other people begin and end through our relationship with Jesus and ideally express his love for his children.

So, all of the things which pass through our hands in life belong to Jesus. They are not our own. They belong to those who are in need of them for their good.

Denying myself means that any bodily gifts I show are given by Jesus in order to express his love to his children. Jesus is entirely free to use my body for this good, to show his love. All I need do is be open to letting him in to act through me.

My crosses are all of my pains, sufferings, sorrows, losses, and griefs which are ever present in my life. I am to make Jesus the center of all of these difficulties all for the love of him and earnestly pray that these may help redeem others as Jesus does with us. Jesus is not telling us to express malice toward our families but first to love them for and through the love of Jesus.

Denying my life is living it primarily as a humble servant of Jesus for the sake of others. This is the way Secular Franciscans may become disciples of Jesus. This is our way of life toward union with the Father. This glory is our eternal life. Centering his life in Jesus was full exuberant joy for Francis. May we closely follow the Poverello and know this fullness of happiness.



## ***Professions***

Holy Mass at the profession of Linda Loes, OFS, of Saint Alphonsa Fraternity. The profession was held at the church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Minnetonka, Minnesota on April 25th 2021



left to right – Linda Loes, OFS; Teresa Walker OFS, Minister of St Alphonsa Fraternity and Fr John Bauer, OFS, St Alphonsa Fraternity Spiritual Assistant and Celebrant.



Linda and her husband John with the entire fraternity at the profession celebration.



## Past Events



Queen of Peace Regional Formation Workshop, February 27, 021

Sunday, May 16, Susan May of St. Mary's Fraternity of Waterloo, IA, made her Profession. It was the first time in over a year that the fraternity met face to face.

## Coming Events.

### June

The Annual Regional Meeting will begin on the evening of June 4, and conclude on Sunday morning June 6.

### July

There is a profession (St. Pio) on July 18, 8 candidates professing with Archbishop Hebda.

## REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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If you have anything to put in the Tracings. Please send it to Alan at **TracingsEditor@gmail.com** Thank you.

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