



# Monthly Newsletter



## EVERYDAY IS EARTH DAY

by Pat Waters

Every year on April 22<sup>nd</sup> we celebrate Earth Day, a day on which more than a billion people take part in activities, like picking

up litter or planting trees, to make our world a happier, healthy place in which to live. The first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970, when a senator from Wisconsin organized a national demonstration to raise awareness about environmental issues. By 1990, Earth Day was an event celebrated by more than 140 countries around the globe.

In 1997 Pope John Paul II, while speaking to an International Rotary Club group at the Vatican said that care for the environment constitutes one of the “new forms of solidarity” across the generations. By careful stewardship of our natural resources, he explained, we can help “those who are neediest and those of future generations”.

In May 2015 Pope Francis published his encyclical **Laudato Si'**, focused on care for the natural environment and all people, as well as the broader questions of the relationship between God, humans and the Earth. The subtitle of the encyclical “Care for the Common Home” reinforces these themes. An encyclical is a public letter from the Pope developing Catholic teaching on a topic often as the result of current events. The encyclical was addressed to “every living person on this planet” (LS.3) and hence it is offered as an ongoing dialogue within the Catholic Church and between Catholics and the wider world.

An encyclical receives its name from the opening words of the document. The Italian words **Laudato Si'**, which begin the Pope’s writing, mean “praise be to you” and are part of a quotation from St. Francis of Assisi’s, “**Canticle of the Creatures**”. The choice

of this passage to begin *Laudato Si'* is a reminder of how people of faith should not only respect the Earth but also praise and honour God through their engagement with creation. The encyclical is divided into six chapters dealing with all aspects of creation as it relates to the environment. It begins with a chapter entitled: “What is happening to our Common Home” and ending with a chapter entitled “Ecological Education and Spirituality” suggesting recommendations focused on a lifestyle of ecological conversion. Each chapter takes 20/30 minutes to read and is well worth the time.

The National Catholic Women’s League of Canada (CWL) used the theme of this encyclical “Care for our Common Home” as its focus from 2019-2021. Due to COVID the CWL carried this theme on into 2022.

Never has the problem of climate change become more urgent. Never have we so mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. We must all change our day-to-day actions to live more sustainably. The problems are big and urgent but hope remains if we act with honesty and love.

### **Earth Day Prayer:**

*Creator God, we thank You for all of creation.*

*We ask forgiveness where we have failed to be just stewards.*

*We ask for Your guidance in restoring the face of the earth.*

*May we learn to live in harmony, safety, and the just sharing of resources among all.*

*Amen.*

*(Sisters of Mercy)*



## Saint Marie of the Incarnation — a Canadian Saint

(1599—1672)

**Feast Day: April 30**

Patron Saint of: Educators in Canada

*By Angela Van Kralingen*

Marie Guyart was born on October 28, 1599 in Tours, France. At a young age she consecrated her life to Our Lord and hoped to enter a cloistered monastery. In obedience to her parents' wishes, she married Claude Martin when she was 17 and gave birth to a son also named Claude. Unfortunately, she was widowed two years later at which time she discovered that her husband's business (he was a silk-worker) was bankrupt. Now penniless with an infant son, she went to live with her parents.



Marie's call to a consecrated life did not leave her. When her son, Claude, was 12 she decided to leave him in the care of her sister and enter the cloistered Order of the Ursulines, taking the name Marie de l'Incarnation. Marie then felt that God was calling her to missionary work, primarily to New France, later to be called Canada.

Although it pained her to leave behind her son, she arrived in Quebec City in 1639 along with two other Ursuline nuns. She quickly set about building a monastery and a boarding school for French and Indigenous girls. This was the first and is the oldest institution for women in North America. The school started with 20 students but quickly grew. Being cloistered meant that the sisters did not leave the monastery but visitors were allowed to enter. Any adults who knocked on their doors were welcomed, fed and catechized.

Marie learned several Indigenous languages and

wrote dictionaries, prayer books and a catechism in their native language. In addition to these, she penned numerous letters to her son who would later become a Benedictine along with letters to relatives, friends and benefactors. She would recount tales with affection of her girls, describing both their struggles and their pranks in the woods. Many of these letters have been

preserved to this day.

As she was dying, she sent a note to her son letting him know that she was carrying him with her in her heart. She then said goodbye to her students and died on April 30, 1672. Marie was beatified in 1980 by Pope St John Paul II and canonized in 2014 by Pope Francis. Her tomb rests at the Monastery in Old-Quebec (Quebec City).

It is worth noting that the Ursulines were first founded in Italy by St Angela Merici in 1535 but were not initially cloistered. The cloistered Order of St Ursula was established in Paris in 1612. As of 1967, the Ursulines are no longer cloistered, allowing the sisters to move out of their monasteries.

***Loving God, You led St Marie of the Incarnation to follow the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to spread the Gospel. May we be inspired to follow in her spirit to serve others and be messengers of Your love and mercy. This we ask through Our Lord Jesus Christ Your Son. Amen.***



### Dear Pastor Letters From Children:

Dear Pastor,  
I know God loves everybody but He never met my sister.

Dear Pastor,  
Please pray for all the airline pilots. I am flying to Vancouver tomorrow.

Dear Pastor,  
Please say a prayer for our Hockey Team. We need God's help or a new goalie. Thank you.

**The Pope's Prayer**  
**Intention for April**

**For priests in crisis:**

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

To read more of the Pope's Prayer Intentions, visit

<https://www.popesprayer.va/>



**PRAYER for APRIL**

**Calm The Storm Within Me**

Lord Jesus, when the storms of life rise up around me and I feel afraid and overwhelmed, help me to remember that You are in the boat with me.

Speak Your peace into my heart, calm my fears, and increase my faith.

Just as You calmed the storm for Your disciples, calm the storm within me.

I trust in You, Lord — my refuge and my strength.

And thank You, Lord Jesus, for loving me so deeply — even unto death.

Amen.

**Interested in a  
Retreat?**



Then check out  
**Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre  
Retreats**

7020 Stanley Avenue, Niagara Falls

For more information follow the link:

<https://www.carmelniagara.com/programs>



We welcome the newest member of our parish family who was baptized in March:

**Harper Fair**

**Prayer for Child's Baptism:**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of this child.

Bless her with peace and joy and protect her all the days of her life.

We pray for the Holy Spirit to be with her as she grows in Your tender love.

This we ask through our Lord, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

**Our newsletter is also available online!**

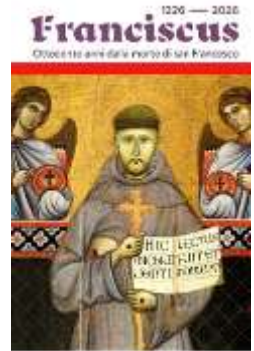
For current or past issues, go to the church's website:

<https://www.staroftheseachurch.ca>

## Deacon's Franciscan Bench - MERCY then PRAYER then FRATERNITY

In January 2026, all branches of the Franciscan family came together in Assisi to celebrate the beginning of a year long celebration of the **800th anniversary of His death**. The assembly celebrated six "Stages in St. Francis' Legacy:" **Mercy, Prayer, Fraternity, Work, Peace, Blessing**; and provided resources and reflections on each of the six stages. These six are **stages** - not six separate elements. They're linked; they occur in sequence. Fraternity\* **follows directly after** Mercy and Prayer.

\* Franciscans call it 'fraternity' only because Francis **began** with group of men who formed around him. Fraternity includes sorority, and completely transcends gender. We are sisters and brothers because we have one Father: Our Father Who is in heaven.



### #3 FRATERNITY

#### From the Testament of St Francis (#14)

*And after the Lord gave me brothers, no one showed me what I should do, but the Most High himself revealed to me that I should **live according to the form of the holy Gospel**.*

Franciscan life **requires** fraternity. "*Living according to the form of the Holy Gospel*" cannot be solitary and isolated, because the Gospel is love, and, just as God is Trinity because God is Love, so life according to the form of the Holy Gospel requires loving your neighbour as yourself in community. Human wisdom does not reveal to us how to live in community - "*the Most High Himself reveals to [us how we] should live*"

The 800th Anniversary reflection on Fraternity also includes the **Gospel text** that St. Francis chose to be read at the time of his death, "*If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, **you must wash each other's feet**. I have given you an example so that you may **copy what I have done to you**" ... "*you must love one another just as I have loved you.*" <sup>John 13.13-15, 34</sup> Fraternity is more than **living** with others, Fraternity is **serving** the other - washing her or his feet.*

Finally, a Franciscan sister reflects on the richness of the **unique gifts** that God has entrusted to each of us **in our sisters and brothers**.

#### Intervention by Sr. Daisy Kalamparamban, CFI-TOR Third Order Regular.

*For Francis, the friars are **a gift from the Lord**, who reveal to him his own path in life ... He said that a good Friar Minor would be one who **united in himself**: the **life and faith** of Bernard, who perfected this together with love of **poverty and simplicity**; the **purity** of Leo; the **courtesy** of Angelo, which he adorned with every **kindness and goodness**; the **attractive appearance and common sense** of Masseo, with his **beautiful and devout speech**; the **contemplation** of Giles; the **virtuous and incessant prayer** of Rufino [...]; the **patience** of Juniper, through the **renunciation of his own will** and with the **ardent desire to imitate Christ by following the way of the cross**...*

*St. Francis invites us to let ourselves be overwhelmed ... [by **the**] **true richness** [that] **is found** ... **in receiving the ... gift of fraternal life**... recognizing in every creature the reflection of a greater love, and **rediscovering universal brotherhood and living in harmony with all**.*

Fraternity means being enriched by the gifts of your fellow pilgrims, knowing that they play a part in the Lord's **revealing to you your path of life**. Francis named the gifts he received in his brothers, what **specific gifts in your individual sisters and brothers** enhance your path in life?

pax et bonum - deacon maurice o.f.s

**“As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace”**

1Peter 4:10

## Synod Report-Women's Participation in the Life and Leadership of the Church

Shared by Wilma Vanderzwaag

“When speaking about the role of women in the life of the Church, we must be aware that it is first and foremost a matter of cultural order,” states **Cardinal Mario Grech**, Secretary General of the Synod. He continues: “In many parts of the world, there are in fact deep cultural challenges that must be acknowledged and addressed. Too often, the way faith is lived is determined by certain cultural aspects rather than by Gospel values. Our renewed mission is to make the Church a force that embodies the Gospel within cultures, promoting respect for the rights of all and co-responsibility according to each person’s vocation. This requires courage, accompaniment, and patience in introducing gradual changes in order to preserve ecclesial communion, eliminate discrimination, and build communities in which the gifts and charisms of every person, men and women alike, are valued.”

### The Report

The Final Report is composed of three parts. The first offers a brief reconstruction of the history of Study Group No. 5 and its working method.

The second part presents a reasoned synthesis of the themes that emerged from the synodal study. This section is the fruit of listening to the women consultors of the

Dicastery, of the work carried out by its various bodies (Doctrinal Office, Congress, Feria IV), of the reading of the contributions received, and of numerous testimonies solicited by the Dicastery itself.

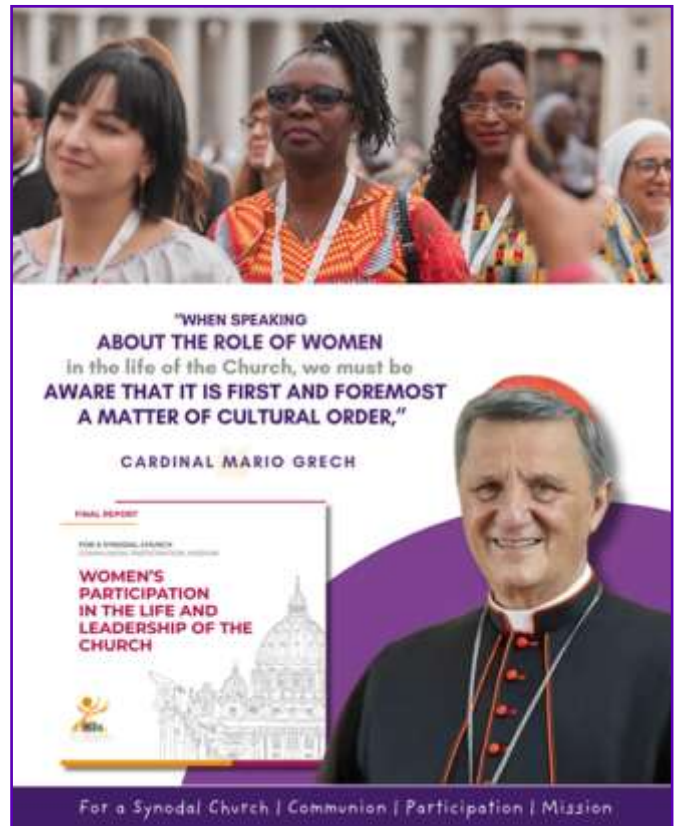
This section presents a reflection that begins “from below,” listening to the experiences and contributions of women who hold positions of responsibility in the Church, in order to discern what the Holy Spirit is accomplishing and inspiring. Among the key themes are: the recognition that the “question of women” constitutes a genuine sign of the times, through which the Holy Spirit himself is addressing the Church; a synodal attentiveness to the local Churches, with their cultures and their diverse and concrete contexts; a relational approach that highlights the charismatic dimension of women’s presence in ecclesial life; and an analysis of the concrete decisions made by Popes Francis and Leo XIV, whose choice to entrust women with positions of governance in the Roman Curia represents a model on which the entire Church is called to reflect.

Finally, the third part consists of an extensive appendix cataloguing the considerable body of material received and collected by the Dicastery, organized into six sections: 1) Female figures in the Old and New Testament; 2) Significant female figures in the history of the Church; 3) Contemporary testimonies of women participating in the leadership of the Church; 4) The Marian Principle and the Petrine Principle: a critical perspective; 5) Ecclesial *potestas*; (refers to the ecclesiastical authority or power given to the Church by Jesus Christ to be exercised in his name, particularly in governing, teaching, and sanctifying. It is often referred to as *potestas sacra* (sacred power) in Catholic theology, which is exercised by ordained ministers, primarily bishops and priests, for the spiritual welfare of the faithful.); 6) The contribution of Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV on the role of women in the life and leadership of the Church.

The Final Report in Italian and English, together with a brief summary in five languages, is available on the website of the General Secretariat of the Synod: [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va)

Visit the official website of the General Secretariat of the Synod ([synod.va](http://synod.va)) which now features a dedicated section on the implementation phase.

Explore [synodresources.org](http://synodresources.org) – a space to share initiatives, resources, and best practices from synodal teams around the world.





Led by Linda Dirks, CWL Faith Chair



**40 DAYS FOR LIFE**  
THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF ABORTION

**Adoration—Thursday, March 12, 2026**  
8 a.m.—8 p.m.



While some parishioners participated in the peaceful **40 Days For Life** walk at the NF Hospital, others offered an hour of adoration at our church. Many thanks and blessings to all!

**Future Event:**

**Star of the Sea Photo Directory 2026**



It has been 9 years since the last Parish Photo Directory.

- ◆ Sign-up after Sunday Mass (except Easter weekend) until April 11/12

**Our dates for the photo sittings are:**  
**Tues., April 28 1:30 PM-8:30 PM**  
**Wed., April 29 1:30 PM-8:30 PM**  
**Thurs., April 30 1:30 PM-8:30 PM**  
**Fri., May 1 1:30 PM-8:30 PM**  
**Sat., May 2 9:30 AM-4:00 PM**  
**Thurs., May 28 1:30-8:30 PM**  
**Fri., May 29 1:30-8:30 PM**  
**Sat., May 30 9:30 AM- 4:00 PM**

◆Or sign-up online at <https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/d7b3y55k/>

**Each Photographed Family Receives a FREE DIRECTORY.**

**All Photography & Viewing Is Done In One Convenient Appointment At Our Church**

**Families may choose to purchase their portraits.**