

A quarterly newsletter, whose purpose is helping members of The Third Order of the Society of St. Francis share a common journey through news from fellowships and individuals, reviews of books and tapes, poetry, and whatever the Holy Spirit might blow our way.

ADVENT, 1991

THIRD ORDER COMMUNICATION: AN EDITORIAL

Greetings to my sisters and brothers who share these words as a common thread within our individual Franciscan journeys.

As this Autumn/Advent issue is readied for publication, I rejoice and give thanks for many blessings:

- for your many positive comments and responses to the first issue under the co-editorship of Rik Fitch and myself.
- for your marvelous contributions, making it easy to offer an interesting and challenging variety of content.
- for the potential which lies ahead of us . . . those words yet to be written and read, individual expressions yet to be realized, the Franciscan adventures yet to be shared, the excitement and inspiration yet to be generated from reading about a tertiary brother or sister on a path which may be totally unfamiliar or shockingly similar.

While thinking about the Third Order and The Franciscan Times, in preparation for this issue, my mind focused on the importance of the written word in our Franciscan way of life. From the time we aspire to be a tertiary, through the formation process, and into a professed pattern of reporting to one's area chaplain, we communicate by using the written word. What a wonderful gift God has given us to use in this way!

And what wonderful talents each of us has in an individual and God-given way to communicate . . . some with a terse news story, some with a personal account, some with a poem, some with a sketch, some with an academic article, some with a piece borrowed from another source.

As a former area chaplain and a five-year formation counselor, I can witness to the unique style of communication which belongs to each and every one of us. The Franciscan path which each of us follows can only be narrated and described by that person who is taking the steps.

And yet, we are drawn into one far-reaching family by our blessed Father Francis. We are networked through our affiliation in the Anglican or Episcopalian Church. We are all asked to follow a similar path of formation.

Some of us are fortunate to have a monthly fellowship or an annual convocation where we can bring our stories and joys and sorrows and prayers to share with one another. But many of us are isolated and have no other opportunities to meet with other tertiaries.

It's my hope and prayer that The Franciscan Times will provide a common ground for sharing, for giving and receiving, for teaching and learning, and for hearing again, in new ways, the message of St. Francis. And I ask your prayers that your editors may be instruments of that communication.

Pax et Bonum . . . and Aloha!

Robert Durand TSSF

THE CHAPLAIN'S JOURNAL

The colors are changing!

You who live in northern places have long ago seen leaves, before they fell to the ground, changed to red, yellow, and brown. But here in Tucson, Arizona, the colors are changing now. In the glossy green of citrus trees, I catch glimpses of orange and yellow that promise ripened lemons, oranges, and grapefruit. Colors are changing, just in time for Christmas! Before the Feast of the Nativity, the trees will be hung with golden balls.

A friend of mine who grew up during the dust-bowl years in Texas remembers Christmas as the time when her family indulged in the rare luxury of sweet and refreshing oranges. The pungent whiff of orange propels her back in time to childhood's Christmas, a season of joy and wonder.

What of the rest of us, who routinely swill our orange juice with our morning toast? Have we managed to hang onto our sense of wonder and gratitude? Do we appreciate the munificence of our Creator God, who not only supplies us with the fruit of the earth, but gladdens our hearts with changing colors?

The color wheel of the Church accelerates its spin in Advent. Swiftly we move from purple to white through the whole spectrum of the liturgical year. The Church presents to us the gift of God Made Flesh, Love Incarnate, wrapped in glistening white and gold that we may better grasp the Glory.

But the Church in her wisdom also sprinkles the Christmas season with the scarlet blood of martyrs that we may also understand the price of Glory.

With our Father Francis, we kneel in awe before the Crib of Christ. With Francis, we rejoice in the changing seasons and colors of God's earth and God's Church. Let us remember not to leave joy and wonder behind when we move into Lent's penitential purple. The kaleidoscope of life is multi-colored to our human hearts and senses, but tears and joy are one brilliance in the eternity of God's Love.



Marie L. Webner, TSSF

Deacon Marie L. Webner
Chaplain, American Province

Dee Dobson Receives Honor: 1991 Minister General's Award

by Aiden Whitney TSSF

Dee Dobson TSSF was one of four persons receiving the Society of St. Francis (SSF) Minister General's Award for 1991 on Sunday, Oct. 13, during Evensong at Incarnation Cathedral in Garden City, Long Island.

The ceremony climaxed the annual gathering of Chapter for the American Province of The Third Order at Little Portion Friary in Mt. Sinai.

Dee was Minister Provincial of The Third Order for nine years, during which time she was cited by Br. Dominic SSF for "her enormous support and concern for the First Order brothers for many years." He also said that Dee has "in fact been the 'mother' of the brothers."

Also receiving the award were Peggy Capon, long-time parishioner at Little Portion; Brooklyn Archdeacon Michael Harris, and Sister Mary Philomena PCR. All four were presented with handsome crystal bowls.

Following the service, a wonderfully joyous reception was held in the Cathedral undercroft, where the Brothers and the recipients took the opportunity to reminisce about long associations at Little Portion and Saint Elizabeth's Friary in particular.

Just about all of the Dobson family came north to New York to be part of the celebration, so that those of us who have heard so many good stories from Dee about the Dobson children and significant others had a lot of fun meeting Bill and "the kids."



OUR THIRD ORDER BROTHERS AND SISTERS DOWN UNDER

John Brockmann (Br. Juniper Fellowship, New England)

I have taught writing courses in Australia for the last seven years and have stayed with families doing Bed-and-Breakfast in each of the cities where I have taught. But in all my Australian travels I rarely found a sense of the spiritual in Australia. Church attendance had decreased so much in the 60s and 70s that a number of mainline protestant churches had had to join together in what is called The Uniting Church. The Anglican Church seems terribly divided between high and low church dioceses. And although labor unions in Australia are most vehement about preventing any shop from opening on a Sunday...most often it appeared the unions were only safeguarding their ability to attend the football matches. The only authentic sense of the spiritual in Australia seemed either to remain with the aborigines and their Dream Time [see Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines* (NY: Viking, 1987)], or with nondenominational evangelical storefront churches—the largest of which in Sydney is led by an American from Louisiana.

Is the missing sense of the spiritual the legacy of a convict heritage (see *The Fatal Shore*); the overplayed hand of organized religion in the politics following World War II; the fallout from a dis-established Anglican church?

Thus the image I carried for many years of the state of the spiritual heartbeat of the Anglican church in Australia was of the inside of a church I attended two different years in an inner-Sydney suburb. The church was cold with little of the winter daylight breaking into the sanctuary. And most of the pews had been deeply scarred with graffiti carvings.

As a new novice, I decided that this year's teaching visit would be my last, and that this time it would be different. I felt I need to move onto other areas of endeavor, but I first wanted to pass on my writing course to an Australian friend, and find a Franciscan spiritual heartbeat before I left Australia for the last time. I knew it had to be there! We are asked in our Province's Prayer Cycle to raise up prayers for our Brothers in the Newcastle Custody (Brisbane, Stroud, and Windale) and for our sisters in the Second Order in Stroud. I had recently seen a picture of a famous Australian writer, Patrick White, wearing a large cross, and the picture's caption noted that this cross came from the Second Order sisters who had lived for 30 years in mud huts at Stroud. The cross, the caption noted, was one of White's prize possessions.

But the two letters I sent to Australian province contacts remained unanswered after three months, and inquiries to parish priests in a number of Australian cities failed to reveal any information as to whereabouts of the brothers and sisters of the Third Order.

Sydney was the last city I was to teach in this year, and I had one free weekend to write all the overdue postcards, and find all the souvenirs for family and friends. But I took time out that Friday to find Christ Church St. Laurence near the railroad station. Following the priest into the sacristy after morning Eucharist, I once again asked for information, and this time I received an answer. In fact, he immediately introduced me to the parish secretary in the adjoining room, Chris Transfield, who not only was a fellow Third Order novice, but was making her final profession that very Friday at a meeting of the Sydney Third Order Fellowship.

That evening I was welcomed by about two dozen Third Order Australians when we celebrated the Eucharist and received Chris's and another woman's final vows. Like most Fellowships I had attended here in the US, the majority present were women. They were astonished to hear that there were several hundred members in the American Province explaining that there were only about a hundred in the Australian Province—in fact, a large number of names in their province's prayer cycle were from the Solomon Islands or New Guinea. At the potluck meal afterwards a few traded addresses with me and promised to look me up on their trips to the East Coast.

The person who gave the sermon on my last Sunday in Australia at Christ Church St. Laurence was a young First Order Anglican Franciscan. He together with five other men is in the process of developing a monastery "out in the bush," and he supports the building of his monastery by being an Environmental Reclamation Engineer at the local mine. My young Franciscan's sermon topic on that last Sunday in Australia was "The Franciscan Spiritual Journey."

Today the image I carry of the Anglican Franciscan spiritual heartbeat in Australia is composed of

- a joyous potluck supper with newly Professed tertiaries;
- a young Franciscan mining engineer with the fire of Francis in his eye, and
- women living in mud huts whose simple praise of God touched even the most sophisticated of modern Australian writers.

Peace, my Aussie brothers and sisters.

An Epistle from Terry Rogers TSSF

Dear Friends,

I have had the chance to tell many of you that I will be leaving this country in mid-October to spend a year living in Jerusalem, the West Bank, or Gaza as a long-term volunteer with Middle East Witness. I am enclosing a brochure from this organization to give you an idea of its operation and objectives. Sponsored by Muslims, Jews, and Christians, and committed to nonviolence, Middle East Witness draws on the experience of organizations here and in Israel/Palestine that are seeking a just and peaceful solution to the suffering and fear that the Israeli occupation brings to Palestinians and Israelis.

I travelled to Jerusalem in early March of this year, just after the Gulf War cease-fire, as part of a delegation whose purpose was to investigate the impact of the war on civilians in Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Our ten day visit was coordinated by Middle East Witness, so I had the chance to meet its staff and see its program in operation. As one of several long-term volunteers, I will have two responsibilities: to do ongoing human rights/humanitarian work within the Palestinian community in the occupied territories and to coordinate and accompany short-term delegations that come from the United States. I will also be working closely with Israelis in various sectors of the peace movement. In preparation, I have been studying conversational Arabic this summer, and hope that my past study of Biblical Hebrew will be a foundation for learning to speak modern Hebrew.

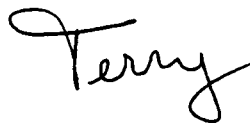
Middle East Witness is a new organization, still in the process of building a base of support here in the U.S., and needs assistance in funding the day-to-day expenses of its long-term volunteers. Middle East Witness has recently increased its number of long-term volunteers from 2 to 6, and its success in recruitment has outstripped its ability to financially support its long-term team. Thus my ability to serve depends on helping Middle East Witness raise support money. I ask you to consider making a tax-deductible contribution to Middle East Witness to help offset the cost of my part in the long-term team. I myself am contributing the cost of my travel to and from Israel and my health insurance during this year. Middle East Witness spends approximately \$500 per month per volunteer, so I am pledged to raise a minimum of half of that, or \$3,000, either in monthly pledges or one-time gifts. Contributions of all sizes are needed and welcome-- and as supporters of my service with Middle East Witness I'll be sending you regular reports on the situation there and my reflections on my experience.

My two trips to Israel/Palestine, in 1989 and 1991, have had a profound effect on me. I do not have words to express what an honor it has been for me to meet those Palestinians and Israelis who, sometimes at the cost of great personal suffering, are working for an end to the occupation through dialogue and nonviolent resistance. Again and again they asked us for our support, asked us to be a bridge between our community and theirs, asked us to let their sense of urgency find a place in our lives. I believe that Middle East Witness is one important way that we as U.S. citizens can respond, and I am so grateful that I will have the chance to work with and learn from many of these same people.

After October 15, you can
write to me at:

Peace,

Terry Rogers
P.O. Box 20961
Jerusalem, Israel



(EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone wishing to help sponsor Terry Rogers in her service with this important mission may send contributions to Middle East Witness, c/o Resource Center for Nonviolence, 515 Broadway, Santa Cruz, CA 95060)

(EDITOR'S NOTE -- This issue of The Franciscan Times contains information gleaned from the latest newsletters and other communications received since the last issue. The 1991 Directory lists 43 active fellowships, and we have news from only eight here. If you are a Convenor of a Third Order Fellowship which has significant news items or stories to share with your brothers and sisters, please send it along to: Robert Durand, 2124 Awihi Place #215, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii 96753. Thank you!)

LONG ISLAND FELLOWSHIP

From the "L.I.F. Line" of October, 1991: Convenor ALISON TRENHOLME writes that, after a year of correspondence and planning, the November meeting will be a covered dish supper and Eucharist with Bishop Walker. "Some of the suggestions that came out of our September meeting were that we have more quiet time together . . . it was suggested that we get brochures about the Third Order in more churches . . . We all felt we were growing together in community, and also in numbers -- with six people in the formation process."

EAST TENNESSEE FELLOWSHIP

From "The Portiuncula Messenger" of October 1991: The October meeting was held at St. Timothy's in Kingsport, with a program on Creation Spirituality from the perspective of the Native American. "The discussion centered around a circle and the four directions of the compass. East represents water, Spring, and birth (Baptism); South represents air, Summer, and youth; West represents fire, Fall, and middle age; North represents earth, Winter, and death. The program also led to a discussion of the role (or lack) of Native Americans and women in the Church."

LILIES OF THE FIELD FELLOWSHIP (Colorado)

From the newsletter of September, 1991: convenor MARY ALICE WHITE reports that the fellowship held a fall retreat in the mountains at Evergreen, with the theme, "Knowing Yourself Better So You May Better Know God." Members were to renew vows on October 25 and continue a discussion of Formation Letters 21 and 22. Area Chaplain, Fr. BILL GRAHAM TSSF was in Denver to represent Nebraska at the regional Monopoly championships. . . . !

HAWAII FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship took an active role in Diocesan Convention, with members participating in liturgy and hosting a Third Order booth in the exhibit hall. The dates of the 1992 Easter retreat have been set for April 23, 24, and 25 at St. Anthony's Retreat House in scenic Kalihi Valley. Monthly meetings are the first Friday evening of each month, and tertiaries visiting the Islands are welcome! Call convenor BARBARA HUNT for information and directions.

ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS -- ARIZONA FELLOWSHIP

From the Kalendar of convenor MARNEE SELL comes word of the death of professed member MARY JANE DUNCAN whose Franciscan journey was celebrated and Rite of Passage was observed on August 10 at St. Mary's in Phoenix. Advent Quiet Day will be on Saturday, Dec. 7, at All Saints in Sun City, led by Deacon MARIE WEBNER TSSF.

F E L L O W S H I P N E W S

(continued)

LAND OF THE SKY FELLOWSHIP (North Carolina)

From "Fruits of the Loom" newsletters, September and October, 1991: The 1992 Spring Retreat has been confirmed for April at The Snail's Pace. At the August meeting, a program on Native American creation myths presented the idea that "no matter the myth, all resulted in a full sense of inter-relatedness of the whole of creation and a kinship among all. There is no sense of human beings having been that special or particularly created in the image of God in a different way than the rest of created species." The Fellowship celebrated the Transitus on the Eve of St. Francis Day with Br. Justus SSF and gathered at The Morgan School for monthly Fellowship and Formation Class on Saturday, Oct. 5. Members were asked to join the Secular Franciscans for an Ecumenical Day of Prayer for Ecology on October 27.

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C O N V O C A T I O N N O T E S

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Regional Third Order Convocations are fertile ground for meetings and exchange of information among tertiaries, especially those who may be isolated all or much of the year. Advance information about them can be most helpful, as can news and stories from them. Convocation convenors can facilitate this information by sending articles or registration flyers to The Franciscan Times (address above). The following information was gleaned from fellowship newsletters.)

* * *

Taken from "The Portiuncula Messenger" of East Tennessee: "The 1991 Southeastern Convocation was held at Ignatius House, Atlanta, in September. . . . Chaplain Marie Webner gave the meditations and spoke to us about anger, giving illustrations from her own life. . . . DAVIS HORNER reported that there are enough involved in upper South Carolina that they feel they can proceed with the transition to form a separate Fellowship there. There is also interest in trying to form a fellowship in eastern North Carolina."



Who would have thought?

By Nan Ross

Ever ask yourself, perhaps while shaking your head, "Who would have thought?"

Who would have thought that this Diocese of Arizona, a mere babe when compared with some centuries-old dioceses of the church, could pull off so successfully the incredibly huge task of hosting a General Convention?

Who would have thought that our neighbors in Navajoland would have their own Navajo bishop to represent them as co-hosts of this event?

Who would have thought that a record number of local volunteers could show up day after day, foregoing vacations, spending their own money to park and to eat and then labor or sit patiently until they were needed?

Who would have thought that a state that had been targeted by many as racist could so graciously welcome and host every visitor?

Who would have thought that the Presiding Bishop would be able to say it was definitely the best decision to keep the General Convention in Phoenix?

Who would have thought that a simple Dolan Ellis tribute to our beautiful state on Arizona Night could generate a standing ovation from the 800 people who attended, including some who had lobbied vociferously against coming here?

Who would have thought our team of deputies would be deluged with expressions of apology for hard feelings about Arizona?

Who would have thought the Phoenix Civic Plaza and surrounding downtown could provide an ideal environment for a convention of this size?

Who would have thought that the

outdoor temperature would never even near 110—which it usually does with frequency in July?

Who would have thought our Diocese's General Convention Worship Committee and faithful Altar Guild could plan and then carry out daily Eucharists for thousands instead of the normal hundreds?

Who would have thought a former Archbishop of Canterbury would baptize a baby at a Hispanic mission in south Phoenix?

Who would have thought that the open hearing on human sexuality, attended by more than 3,000 people, could be conducted civilly without a single speaker becoming agitated?

Who would have thought that the fledgling Arizona Diocesan Chorale, at the absolutely flawless Service of Thanksgiving and Reconciliation on July 18, could amass 260 voices and sound like the heavenly host of angels?

Who would have thought that bagpipers playing would bring tears to the eyes Lord Runcie, a man who has probably seen it all?

Who would have thought that a sensitive and articulate Gov. Fife Symington could rouse loud applause and cheers from the House of Bishops with his "De Colores!" greeting?

Who would have thought that the news media, particularly *The Arizona Republic*, could provide as much coverage—with care and concern for accuracy—as they did?

Who would have thought that the Episcopal News Service, headed by two General Convention novices, could produce a first-rate news operation and host the national Religious News Writers Association at the same time?

Who would have thought once-beleaguered Trinity Cathedral would be beautified (green grass and all!) and ready to offer its own hospitality, including 32 services of Holy Eucharist in 11 days?

Who would have thought that Bishop Heistand still would be smiling ear to ear on the final days of Convention?

Who would have thought that the fear and trepidation borne by many to this convention could have dissipated as feelings were addressed and compromises were forged?

Who would have thought so many prayers could be focused on a single event?

Who would have thought I would be fortunate enough to have played a small part in it?

Who would have thought...? If you think about it, these four words usually underscore things in life for which there are no clear explanations. They just happen. Things for which there is no hard and true formula. Things that we've tried to control perhaps, but then they just work out a certain way, and, eventually, we know it's for the best.

For example: Who would have thought God would fulfill his promise to come to us by being born a baby in a stable? Or who would have thought that same God would have to die a criminal's death on a cross in order to give you and me eternal life?

Whether trying to make sense of the incredible experience in which many of us just took part in Phoenix or another matter, next time you catch yourself asking "Who would have thought," perhaps the only possible answer is this: God's Holy Spirit would have thought.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was printed in the September, 1991, issue of *The Arizona Episcopalian*. It was sent to us by Andrew Wilkes TSSF of Phoenix.)

Video Review:

"QUIET REFLECTIONS"

by John Michael Talbot

(Santa Fe Communications and Sparrow Home Video, 1989)

Have you checked out John Michael Talbot's video?

Hey, it's . . . well, it's *awesome!*

Especially, if you are a fan of this former rock star, turned Franciscan sacred music composer and prolific Christian singer.

Especially, if you would appreciate 50 minutes of breathtaking visual images which tastefully complement John's music and inspirational readings.

Especially, if you are one who leads retreats or quiet days or study groups and can use audio-visual aids.

Especially, if you have an audio-visual library, Franciscan or otherwise, for use in your own, your parish, or your community devotions.

QUIET REFLECTIONS is a series of 12 meditations, ranging from creation, praise, prayer, and healing to The Annunciation, The Mass, and The Crucifixion. Each contains its own unique and appropriate images, along with John Michael's gentle guitar playing and soothing songs. Some feature angelic liturgical dance as well.

Many of the well-produced visuals could be termed "a travelogue for God's creation." Others reflect a rare Sacramental passion and intensity. Still others reflect the different faces of Christ in male and female, young and old.


John Michael himself, of course, is featured prominently as he sings or reflects in pastoral or liturgical settings. His supporting cast are his community, the Brothers and Sisters of Charity, located at Little Portion Hermitage in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas.

If there is any criticism to be noted, it would be that each of the meditations follow closely upon one another, hardly leaving time for the viewer/listener to reflect or catch one's breath. To stay with the video from beginning to end almost becomes an overwhelming experience. A recommendation would be to have your VCR "pause" and "start" remote control buttons handy.

In a written tract accompanying the video, John Michael concludes, ". . . now we offer this work to you. It is our hope that you will also experience the anointing of the Spirit that we felt was with us throughout this whole process. . . If we have been instruments unto this end, then the struggles we encountered while working on this project were more than worth it."

Pax et Bonum,

Robert Durand

 **EDITOR'S NOTE: Reviews of books, publications, videos, and tapes are always welcome. Please send to editorial address. -RD**



RIK

Waiting for the Messiah in Silence

A Third Order Advent Program
Corpus Christi, TX, December 8, 1990

WHEN we have said all we can, when we have done all we can,
we wait for you, O Messiah . . . for Your action, our God . . .
in silence.

• WHAT is my condition as I wait for You? Am I in a painful
or needy place, waiting for You to help me? Am I in a good
place, waiting for You to bring something new to me? Am I in a
dry place, waiting for You to reappear? (KEEP SILENCE)

• WHAT are my expectations of You? What do I think You will
be like when You come to me? What do I hope You will do for me
. . . or with me? What does my past experience of You say?
(KEEP SILENCE)

• WHAT are You doing in my life now? Where do I see signs
of Your coming? How are You preparing me for something more? Are
You what I expected, or do You surprise me? (KEEP SILENCE)

• WHAT good news can I share with others at this point?
What hope can I offer them from my experience of waiting for You?
And where are You calling me to go from here?
(KEEP SILENCE . . . THEN, IF WITH OTHERS, SHARE)

• LAYING aside now my own agenda, I wait for you. I am
present to You in the silence. I will speak only if Your Holy
Spirit moves me. I will not comment on what others say, but will
keep listening for You. (KEEP SILENCE)

• HELP ME TO CREATE something which expresses what WAITING .
. . . or SILENCE . . . or YOU . . . mean to me. Using those
materials available to me, I pray that You be glorified in my
creating, O Messiah, My God and My All.

(KEEP SILENCE, WHILE DRAWING, COLORING, CRAFTING, OR WRITING)

Conclude by praying The General Thanksgiving.

(submitted by Kirby D. Lewis TSSF)

Remembering 50 Years Ago

...
(EDITOR'S NOTE: This Advent poem was printed in the The Evangel, newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana, in December of 1990. The author, JOANNE MAYNARD TSSF, is the former editor of The Franciscan Times)

Advent

I don't remember the Christmas of 1941.
It is mixed with the memories of other
Christmases of my childhood.
But I do remember that Advent Sunday, when,
lying on the floor, reading the funnies,
I heard the news of War on the radio.
What was Coming that Advent was
not only The Savior -- but The Enemy,
and learning to hate.
And after the War was over, I found out
that the "enemy" was girls like me.
So they didn't fool me the next time,
when I was told to hate the "Enemy" --
the North Koreans, the Chinese,
the Russians, the Vietnamese,
the Nicaraguans. I knew that they
were people like me.
And now, another Advent.
Another coming of the Savior.
Another "Enemy." People like me.
Middle-aged women like me.
Young mothers as I once was.
Small children like my grandchildren.
And young men like my grandson
in his Navy uniform.
I've learned this:
The "Enemy" is hate, greed,
selfishness, lust for gain,
implacability.
Not people.

-Joanne Maynard



EDITOR'S NOTE
Please send material for the next
issue (DEADLINE: MARCH 1) to:
Robert Durand TSSF
2124 Awihi Place, #215
Kihei, Maui, HI 96753

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST'S HUMILITY

Humility, the guardian and ornament of all the virtues, had superabundantly filled Francis, the man of God. He thought of himself as nothing but a sinner, when in truth he was a mirror shining with all the reflections of holiness. Like the wise builder he had learned about from Christ, he wanted to build his own edifice on the foundation of humility.

The Son of God, he used to say, left the womb of the Father and descended from heaven's heights into our misery to teach us by word and example, even he the Lord and Master, what humility is. Therefore he strove, as Christ's disciple, to humble himself in his own eyes and those of others, recalling what his supreme Teacher had said: "What is highly esteemed in human eyes is loathsome in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

St. Bonaventure, *Major Life*, 6:1