

The Franciscan Times

Lord, Make Me an Instrument of thy Peace



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

Advent, 1994

from the editor:

Hopefully, dear reader, this issue will be in your hands before Advent 1994 is too far gone. One reason for delay is waiting for the "green light," indicating that sufficient funds were available for printing and mailing.

With credit to the newsletter from Land of the Sky Fellowship in North Carolina, and because I could not come up with a better way of verbalizing the situation, I offer this explanation about the TSSF Chaplaincy:

"Amory King reports that Chapter was faced with a terribly difficult decision with regard to the Chaplain's office. The Minister Provincial chooses a person to be Provincial Chaplain, and Chapter is asked to ratify that choice.

At the October Chapter meeting, Chapter did not ratify the re-appointment of the Rev. Marie Webner as Chaplain. However, a new Chaplain was not chosen to take her place.

The Rev. Kale King has been appointed interim chaplain until such time as a new chaplain is appointed and ratified.

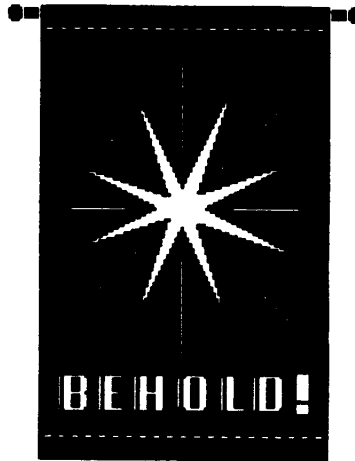
As indicated, this was a very difficult decision, and Marie, Chapter, and the whole Third Order need our prayers as they work through this situation."

Inside this issue, which was a real challenge to squeeze into the "budgeted" 16 pages, please set aside some meditative time to read and absorb the "Notes from A Quiet Day" led by European Provincial Minister Stephen Platten.

Proposed themes for upcoming issues will be "Obedience" (Lent) and "Community" (Easter-Trinity). Your contributions and suggestions will be gratefully received. Deadline for the Lenten issue will be Feb. 1.

May this season of our Lord's Nativity, bring you and your families blessed joy, renewal, and new beginnings.

Pax et Bonum ... and Aloha,
Robert Durand TSSF



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THE CHAPLAIN'S JOURNAL

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus and Francis,

Why would a retired old fool, still serving as a parish interim supply priest, want to tackle the Third Order's interim chaplaincy? The truth is that I did not desire to; I am willing because I was asked by the Minister Provincial to serve until he is able to appoint another, and Chapter affirms his choice.

I believe in obedience to the Order and its leadership. I am only a "temporary."

The Minister Provincial has asked me to carry out the Chaplain's normal routine and to respond to the needs of the Assistant Chaplain, the Area Chaplains, and the professed may have. In due course, there will be a new appointment and confirmation,

To introduce myself, I began my Third Order trek by corresponding with two English friars, Br. Charles and Br. David. My inquiry was referred to a Canadian friar, Br. Alan, who approved my rule in 1956. I lived by that rule for eight years, until I was professed in our American Order, under Fr. Joseph.

In 1969, Br. Paul asked me to represent the vast Great Plains and Rocky Mountain area as area chaplain. In 1970, I was a member of Chapter when the English and American Third Orders merged into one world-wide society.

Later, the Order elected me Guardian, but I served only 18 months before resigning because of stress after a difficult and large mission field and the resulting depression. I simply could not provide the leadership the Order needed and expected.

After serving 10 years on Chapter, I stepped aside in 1980. Since then, it has been enough to walk in the way of Francis as a professed, most recently in the newest Fellowship (the Servants of San Damiano, based in Greensboro, N.C.).

I hope that you all express your appreciation to our former Chaplain, the Rev. Marie Webner TSSF, for her service and ministry in and to the Order. She has experienced much more of the life and history of the Order than I. Her fine work on the Devotional Companion required a great deal of her time over and above her normal duties. We will all use and appreciate it for a very long time.

Please let me know how I can be of value to you. Thank you for any prayers you offer on my behalf!

Faithfully and sincerely yours,

Kale Francis King, Priest, TSSF
Interim Provincial Chaplain



T S S F B A S I C S

available from JOHN DOTSON, Secretary
4036 Lakota Place. Kingsport, TN 37664

suggested prices are:

Directory (\$3)

Devotional Companion (\$4.50)

Statutes (\$1)

Way of St. Francis (\$2.50)

The Rule of the Third Order
for Daily Reading (\$2.50)

Source Book (\$2.50)

Order of Admission (\$1)

Minister Provincial's Report

by Alden Whitney TSSF

For the year from Chapter 1993 to Chapter 1994, there were good happenings to remember, gifts that were given, and some gratifying accomplishments to report.

1. The American Province hosted IPTOC at Little Portion. We made new and close friends in the Third Order, living, worshipping, working, and playing together for almost a week. We set up a special fund for African ministers to travel about their own province, and hopefully their Chapter will be able to meet more often.

Improvements were made to the Constitution, and we all agreed on wording for the Principles and a common Form of Profession. We decided upon a larger electorate for the office Minister General. Finally, the Minister Provincial for the American Province was elected Minister General.

2. The Standing Committee disbursed funds from the reserve account and a loan we held. The Community of St. Francis (CSF) loan in excess of \$6,000 was canceled, and \$5,000 was given to the Society of St. Francis (SSF) on the occasion of their 75th anniversary. We planned to give \$2,500 to the African Travel Fund.

3. The Standing Committee attended the Chapter meeting of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF) in St. Louis. Stronger ties were forged with OEF as they helped their founding parent, Dale Carmen, to step down and installed Jimmie Reese as their second Minister Provincial. We offered the use of our library to all OEF members and affirmed the possibility that the OEF Chapter could meet jointly with a TSSF convocation in the future.

4. I made a number of visits around the American and European provinces. The itineraries included four American Province regional convocations, SSF and CSF chapters, standing committee at the OEF Chapter, and the Ministers' Provincial General Meeting in London.

5. The Third Order American Province was granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. As a "church," we have no need to file an annual return, but all contributions over \$250 must be acknowledged with a contemporaneous acknowledgement.

6. Under the overall direction of Chaplain Marie Webner, a new and wonderful Devotional Companion was published and sent by the Secretary to all on the Third Order mailing list.

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HELP WANTED!

VIDEOTAPES NEEDED

*Showing American Province
Franciscan Gatherings of
Convocations, Fellowships.
Raw Footage preferred!*

VIDEO PROJECT DIRECTOR

*Tertiary with experience
in planning, shooting, editing
videotape projects.*

The Third Order, American Province, has been asked to put together a videotape reflecting tertiary life for sharing with the other world-wide provinces. We also would like to make a documentary of the 1997 Provincial Convocation. Can You Help?

**Please send particulars to:
Robert Durand TSSF, P.O. Box 157,
Kula, Hawaii 96790-0157.**

NOTES FROM A QUIET DAY:**FRANCIS IN NEW ENGLAND**

(EDITOR'S NOTE: For the third straight year, The Franciscan Times is fortunate to share excerpts from the meditations of the annual TSSF Chapter Quiet Day. This year's presenter, the Rev. Canon Stephen Platten, is Minister Provincial of the Third Order European Province, Society of St. Francis. He is also on the Archbishop of Canterbury's staff at Lambeth Palace as Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs.)

Two of the themes which color our perception of St. Francis are those of the natural world and those of the inner world. Of course, these do not exhaust what we learn from our founder and mentor. They do, however, identify something of his particular gifts to Franciscans down the ages.

Francis' love of the natural world is easily sentimentalised or "sloganised." It is translated as a sugary love of the animal kingdom or as an obsession with environmental issues, an obsession quite often divorced from any theological roots.

Similarly, Francis' attitude to spirituality and contemplation is easily perceived as a misplaced discipline and mortification which finally tortured his poor body to death. We forget Francis' own warnings to Clare of treating her body with an undue and ungracious severity.

Understood with due subtlety, however, both these strands in Francis' expression of Christian discipleship can enrich our own Christian lives. They do so most effectively within our own specific context. We can only live as Christians in the place we find ourselves and with the personality we are given. For that reason, I have chosen two American poets to illustrate these themes.

Robert Frost remains quintessentially American in his feeling for the countryside of New England. We do not need to identify with his somewhat conservative political attitudes to appreciate his sensitivity to the landscape of these six states.

Emily Dickinson, also a New Englander, is equally remarkable for her "new world" approach to the inner life. Her insights are often illuminating and sometimes terrifying. Again, we do not have to identify with her most extreme introspection to benefit from her poetry.

In these two meditations, we focus not on Francis in his lifetime, but on two themes which we inherit from him and wrap in the garments of American literature.

I. CHRIST IN THE NATURAL WORLD

Listen to these words from my first poet, Robert Frost:

***I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.***



Frost's affinity for the natural world and his embrace of the New England landscape is classically captured in those lines from his poem, "Birches." It concludes:

***I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, 'till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.***



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FRANCIS IN NEW ENGLAND (CONTINUED)

Frost's love of the earth and the fruits which it brings forth are shared in the reflections and in events of Francis' life. It is a theme which also runs deeply within the Christian gospel.

So much of the ministry of Jesus himself took place in the rich countryside of Galilee. His parables, of sowers of seeds, of grain and of weeds, of mustard trees, of vineyards and cornfields, all bear the marks of the places where He trod. The culture into which Jesus was born was itself Agrarian and rooted in the passing of the seasons and in a reliance upon a fruitful earth. The Jewish festivals, upon which He was nurtured, are feasts born into the countryside of Palestine.

It is part of the genius of the Christian gospel that it begins by offering both the earth and the humanity created by God. Even in its most monastic forms, Christianity has never been escapist nor world-denying. God so loved the world; God sustains the world; God redeems the world: it is all of a piece.

To use the words of the General Thanksgiving from our own Anglican tradition, "We thank God for our creation, preservation, and for all the blessings of this life."

Francis' own life and his writings were woven into this same carpet of existence upon which each human being walks and for the right enjoyment of which we are created.

His Canticle of the Creation celebrates this in unforgettable resonant images: "Dear Mother Earth who day by day, unfoldest blessings on our way." Or "Thou rising morn in praise rejoice, ye lights of evening find a voice."

Line upon line, it is the structure and fabric of God's earth which calls forth our praise. Indeed, it is the entire universe too: the vaulted heavens and the stars of the firmament, brother sun and sister moon. Each of us, within our Franciscan way, is called to embrace this element in our own spirit and from our own context.

Frost engages with the natural world time and again, often reflecting a similar connection to those picked up in the gospels and in Francis, in terms of human relationships. Probably some of his best known words appear in his poem, "Mending Wall."

***Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen groundswell under it
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.***



Within his familiar country landscape, the wall is a sign of separation. Reflecting on this work with his neighbor, as they maintain their shared boundary, he muses upon its constant demise and upon the cause of its collapse:

***Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down. I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself.***

The liberals among us will recognize this fear of walls, for walls divide, and division too often means misunderstanding. Our deepest instincts want the walls down, but, as with so much poetry, there is the twist of irony:

***But at spring mending-time, we find the gaps there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again . . .
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,***



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FRANCIS IN NEW ENGLAND (CONTINUED)

**One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall.
He is all pine, and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."**



We remain suspicious of the cliché, but still we are convicted of something deeper. A world without walls, without boundaries, without conventions, and without rules would be unliveable and unthinkable.

At the heart of our gospel lies a profound search for true liberty, a theme that Francis' life echoed. And yet, within such a freedom and liberty, it is limits and boundaries and conventions that protect us, one from the other, the earth from our greed, and our animal neighbors from human cruelty and callous destructiveness.

The natural world, given by God and sustained by His love, must be protected by limits and boundaries from human rapacity. "Good fences make good neighbors." Just ask the panda, the Indian tiger, or the African buffalo. Once all the walls to human indulgence are gone, what can be certain to survive?

Frost's exploration of human evil drives us back to the other pole of the Christian gospel. Redemption in Christ implies first of all a profound flaw in humanity. Here is the source of our terror.

Even the beauty of the earth, that is of the natural world, can be used for killing and destruction. From narcotics to the nuclear nightmare, it is the natural world which humanity distorts and defiles.

But here too lie the seeds of the *O felix culpa*, the happy fault that wrought so great a redemption. Here lies crucifixion and its sequel; here lies Francis with the stigmata of Christ's suffering; here lies the beautiful and yet terrible landscape of Gethsemane.

Christ's call of dereliction upon the cross immediately enters one's consciousness. The reality is an ambiguous world, a world sometimes of tragic irony, called to be redeemed by God in Christ.

Frost wrote, "Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another."

Life has an inner depth or hinterland which can be captured only by poetry. Such was the poetic truth in the tragedy and in the hope of Jesus. His servant Francis lived a life to a similar rhythm and meter, and again, the passion is there, but so is the glory and the hope.

2. CHRIST WITHIN OUR HEARTS

Our second poet, Emily Dickenson, was in some sense an alarming person. Someone of extreme intelligence and sensitivity, she seems to have started life as outgoing and vivacious.

As she grew older, and as she became ever more deeply enmeshed in her own poetic world, so she became more reclusive and introspective. Even so, she retained a mystic apprehension of the natural world, and the two were never divorced.

Reflection upon creation and an inner reflective world are part of one integrity. Francis, too, never allowed these two elements to drift apart.

For that reason, he is often, for many people, a surprise: a surprise to those who come to him through the exuberance of some forms of Franciscan life and a surprise to

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FRANCIS IN NEW ENGLAND (CONTINUED)

come to him through the exuberance of some forms of Franciscan life and a surprise to those who discover him through contemplation and prayer. To these, he fractures their stereotypes. He is neither a recluse nor a creature lost to a wild flamboyance.

The truth of it is that both the inner and outer aspects of experience were integral to Francis' love for God. The natural world is always there, hymning its way through. In that sense, Francis is the troubadour of the natural creation; his whole life was a song.

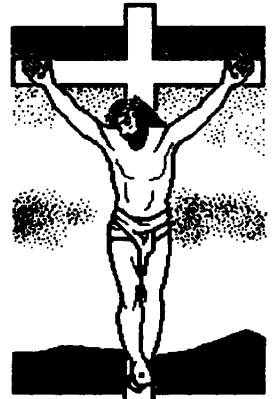
Immersed in the tradition of Isaac Watts and the Wesleys, Emily Dickenson forged her poetry upon that same anvil. It lent to her a rare poetic discipline which is clearly part of that same mainstream Christian tradition and is powerfully expressed in the hymnic rhythms of much of her verse:

***There came a day at Summer's full,
Entirely for me.
I thought that such were for the Saints,
Where resurrection be.***

***The Sun, as common, went abroad,
The flowers, accustomed, blew,
As if no soul the solstice passed
That maketh all things new.
The time was scarce preferred, by speech;
The symbol of a word
Was needless, as at Sacrament,
The Wardrobe of our Lord.***

***And so when all the time had leaked,
Without external sound
Each bound the Other's Crucifix.
We gave no other Bond.***

***Sufficient troth, that we shall rise,
Deposed — at length, the Grave —
To that new Marriage,
Justified, through Calvaries of Love.***



It is in the depth of contemplative love that Francis receives the wounds of Christ. It is in meditation upon the natural world that Emily Dickenson's heart moves to Calvary and to resurrection. It is in the beauty of Gethsemane that Jesus finally becomes aware of the necessity of passion and of death.

The context of our experience shapes our response. It was from within the landscape of New England that Emily Dickinson was taken into seclusion and yet in which she felt an assurance of God's grace.

There is a feeling of our life being refracted through countless metaphors, opening up for us glimpses of God's eternal promise. The whole creation plays patterns upon the canvas of our experience.

***Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear...
Thou fire, so masterful and bright,
That givest man both warmth and light.***



The inner and the natural each pour forth their own colors and patterns of light. It is in the converging patterns which are woven together that we see the shadow of our Creator who calls us to contemplate His glory. Amen.



FELLOWSHIP

NEWS

ATTENTION CONVENERERS:

If news about your Fellowship — be it something to share from a past or current gathering, or information about an upcoming meeting, retreat, or quiet day — should be on these pages, please send it to: Robert Durand TSSF, PO. Box 157, Kula, Maui, Hawaii 96790-0157.
Deadline for the Lenten issue is February 1, 1994.

BROTHER JUNIPER FELLOWSHIP (Boston and New England)

At the Francistide gathering of the community on Oct. 1, NANCY KANGAS was named the new convener for the coming year. The Fellowship has agreed to plan and host an open Franciscan conference at the Adelynrood Retreat Center in Byfield, Massachusetts. The dates will be June 2-4, 1995.

The next meetings are scheduled for Dec. 3, 1994, and Feb. 4, 1995, both at the home of Margaret Motley in Concord, MA, and on April 1 in Rockport, MA. For more information about fellowship activities, please contact Nancy at 508-632-2435.

LONG ISLAND FELLOWSHIP

The L.I.F. Line newsletter reports that new co-conveners are MARIE McSHEA and ELIZABETH SCALERO, and a fellowship retreat is being planned for May 19-20-21 at Little Portion Friary.

Programs for the next year will be based upon Brother Ramon's book, *Franciscan Spirituality*. For more information about any activities of the Fellowship, please contact co-conveners Marie at (516) 379-7529 or Elizabeth at (516) 887-4199.

NEW YORK CITY FELLOWSHIP

In a meeting at St. Phillip's Church in Brooklyn, VIVIAN MORREL was elected convener for the 1994-1995 year. Vows were renewed at a Eucharist celebrated by the Rev. Canon Alonzo Pruitt TSSF, Rector of St. Phillips.

For more information about fellowship activities, please contact Vivian at (212) 928-2305.

PHILADELPHIA, NEW JERSEY, & DELAWARE FELLOWSHIP

The fellowship will be teaming up with the Washington D.C. fellowship to organize and host next year's Northeast Convocation at Graymoor. For more information about this and about upcoming gatherings, please contact convener JOAN BEDELL at 562 N. Judson St., Philadelphia, PA 19130-3123.

LAND OF THE SKY FELLOWSHIP (Western North Carolina)

According to "Fruits of the Loom" newsletters, regular fellowship meetings are regularly held on the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. The location will be at All Souls' Church, Biltmore Village, in Ashville.

An exception will be the February meeting when the meeting will be on Sunday, Feb. 26, to accomodate Br. Robert Hugh SSF, who will be doing an all-day workshop on Feb. 25 at Grace Cathedral in Ashville.

For more information about fellowship activities, please call Convener ALICE WRIGHT at (704) 689-9768.

THE SERVANTS OF SAN DAMIANO (North Carolina Piedmont)

Regular monthly meetings are scheduled for the fourth Saturday of each month from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the Episcopal Servant Center in Greensboro. For more information about fellowship gatherings and activities, please contact convener JOAN FOUTS at (919) 929-6101.

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FELLOWSHIP NEWS

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EAST TENNESSEE FELLOWSHIP

According to "The Portiuncula Messenger," the fellowship was to have met on Nov. 19 to elect a new convener for the coming year and to discuss a possible name change to reflect the geographical expansion of the group.

At fellowship meetings, which are normally on the third Saturday of each month, members have been viewing and discussing the "St. John in Exile" video. For more information about any of the activities, please contact JOHN TOLBERT at (615) 288-2631.

PLAINS, MOUNTAINS, & SEA FELLOWSHIP (Georgia and Alabama)

The Fellowship was scheduled to hold an "in situ" Quiet Day on Dec. 3 with meditations by Yvonne Willie, Dorothy Adams, and Betty McKnight mailed out in advance.

At the meeting on Sept. 24, Alabama members of the Fellowship voted to remain a part of "PMS," but will plan to meet together quarterly.

Convener JACQUI BELCHER notes that the Eastertide Retreat has been scheduled at The Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, GA from May 12-14. For more information about fellowship activities, please contact Jacqui at (912) 233-2105.

TOBAGO FELLOWSHIP

Convener PETER PATRICK reports that the goal for the coming year is to "strengthen ties, encourage others to be a part of our corporate life, plan more quiet days and retreats, and make ourselves more available when programmes are put on."

The Fellowship currently numbers 12 members. For more information about activities, please contact Peter at St. Andrew's Rectory in Scarborough, telephone (809) 639-2485.

SOUTH TRINIDAD FELLOWSHIP

Convener PAMELA REDHEAD-MONGROO reports that the Fellowship recently gathered with the Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago at his home for Mass and an informal breakfast meeting.

Regular meetings are scheduled for the fourth Saturday of each month at 3 p.m. in private homes. For information about gatherings and activities, please contact Pamela at 26 Buen Intento Road, Princes Town, telephone (809) 655-5286.

LA VERNA FELLOWSHIP (Cincinnati)

At the September meeting of the Fellowship, MARY LOUISE REED was elected convener, replacing Hawley Todd after many years of service. On the Feast of St. Francis, members gathered to renew vows and to witness the profession of Molly Dutina. The Fellowship has started a prayer/thanksgiving chain which offers an opportunity to share prayer needs with one another more often than once a month.

A Quiet Day was planned for December 3, and the next gathering will be Tuesday, Jan. 17. The annual retreat has been scheduled for March 31 to April 2 at the Convent of the Transfiguration. For more information about fellowship meetings and activities, please contact Mary Louise at (513) 724-3363.

CHI RHO FELLOWSHIP (Chicago)

Regular Chi Rho meetings take place on the third Saturday at the Church of the Ascension. For more information about fellowship activities, please contact LINDA J. KING at (312) 665-1482 or convener MARK DRISH at (312) 539-3057.

LILIES OF THE FIELD FELLOWSHIP (Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska)

Convener BETTY WOOD reports that the Fellowship gathered on Oct. 1 in Cheyenne for Eucharist, renewal of vows, and a meditation on "Pray Without Ceasing" led by Bill Graham TSSF. The next meeting will be Saturday, Jan. 7, 1995, in Kimball, Nebraska.

For information about Fellowship gatherings, please contact Betty at 1406 East 19th St., Cheyenne, WY 82001, telephone (307) 632-1517.

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FELLOWSHIP NEWS

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SACRAMENTO-DAVIS FELLOWSHIP (California)

Convener HILARY BURWELL reports that the fellowship will be planning the program for the 1995 West Coast Convocation, with a theme, "To Spread the Spirit of Love and Unity within the Family of God."

The next gatherings will be on Sunday, Dec. 18, at the home of Ann Harris in Davis, and on Jan. 15 at Barb Chandler's in Sacramento, and on Feb. 19 at Liz Armstrong's in Sacramento. A Quiet Day, led by Sr. Elizabeth Ann CSF, is scheduled for April 1.

For more information about fellowship activities, please call Hilary at (916) 966-8164.

NEW UMBRIAN FELLOWSHIP (San Francisco Bay Area)

At the Francistide meeting, held at San Damiano Friary in San Francisco on Oct. 8, BOB KRAMISH and ELIZABETH GREINER were elected new co-conveners.

Two weeks later, 10 members went on retreat at St. Michael's Wagon Tree Ranch in Cazadero, with the highlight being a three-hour hymn sing.

Formation classes are happening on the first Saturday of each month, under the leadership of Anne Vellom and Joan Kidd. Fellowship meetings take place on the second Sunday of each Month at 4 p.m. in rotating locations.

For information about classes and fellowship gatherings, please contact Bob at (415) 552-8916.

HAWAII FELLOWSHIP

Members gathered on Oct. 8 at St. Clement's Church in Honolulu for a Francistide Quiet Day and on Nov. 12 at St. Mark's Church for renewal of vows followed by a festive luncheon. The next meeting is Friday, Jan. 13, 1995, at the home of Bob Moore TSSF in Honolulu.

Any tertiaries visiting the Islands and interested in meeting with the fellowship should contact convener EDEAN IWANAGA at 3348 Campbell Ave., Honolulu, HI 96815, telephone (808) 735-4044.

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Third Order, Society of St. Francis American Province

➤ 1995 CONVOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

- January 20-21-22 — Trinidad and Tobago
- April 21-22-23 — South Central (Oklahoma City)
- August 4-5-6 — Western (Santa Rosa, CA)
- August 18-19-20 — Southwest (Albuquerque, NM)
- August 25-26-27 — Midwest (Techy, IL),
- August 25-26-27 — Northeast (Graymoor, NY)
- September 22-23-24 — Southeast (Honey Creek, GA)

Mark your calendars ... Begin to plan now ...

➤ **TSSF PROVINCIAL CONVOCATION — JUNE 24-29, 1997**

Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: THE RT. REV. DESMOND TUTU TSSF

CONVOCAATION NOTES

ATTENTION CONVENERERS:

The Franciscan Times will reach interested and/or isolated tertiaries in your region (and elsewhere) who might make plans to attend your gathering.

Advance notice and a name of a person to contact will be helpful to them.

Please send the details to:

Robert Durand TSSF, P.O. Box 157, Kula, Maui, HI 96790-0157.

Deadline for the Lenten issue is February 1, 1994.

NORTHEAST CONVOCAATION

➤ The 1995 Convocation will again take place on the beautiful grounds of Graymoor, north of New York City, on August 25-26-27. For more information or to register, please contact HELEN WEBB, Fairhaven C-092, 7200 Third Ave., Sykesville, MD 21784-5214, telephone (410) 549-6636.

SOUTHEAST CONVOCAATION

➤ The 1995 Convocation will be September 22-23-24 at Honey Creek Conference Center, located about halfway between Savannah, Georgia, and Jacksonville, Florida. The convening fellowship will be Central Florida.

To register or to obtain more information, please contact KENNETH WATTS, 1405 Gulfwood Court, Brandon, FL, telephone (813) 684-8487.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CONVOCAATION

➤ The 1995 Convocation will take place on January 20-21-22. For information about the location and to register, please contact PETER PATRICK at St. Andrew's Rectory, 12 Bacolt Street, Scarborough, telephone (809) 639-2485.

SOUTH CENTRAL CONVOCAATION

➤ The 1995 Convocation will be held at St. Crispin's Conference Center in Oklahoma City, OK, on April 21-22-23. For more information or to register, please contact CHERYL HOLMES, 1833 18TH ST., WOODWARD, OK 732801, telephone (405) 254-2347.

MIDWEST CONVOCAATION

➤ The 1995 Convocation will take place at the air-conditioned Techny Towers Conference Center in Techny, Illinois during August 25-26-27. Hosting fellowship will be Chi Rho from Chicago. Early reservations are requested. For more information and to register, please contact AL EASTERWOOD at 729 Riford Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137, telephone (708) 858-4147.

SOUTHWEST CONVOCAATION

➤ The 1995 Convocation will be held August 18-19-20 at the Madonna Retreat Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. For more information, please contact BECKY THOMSON at 3610 CALLE DEL SOL NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110, telephone (505) 266-2832.

WESTERN CONVOCAATION

➤ The 1995 Convocation is scheduled for the Angela Center in Santa Rosa, California, on August 4-5-6. For registration or more information, please contact convener BOB KRAMISH at 1240 Bush St., No. 5, San Francisco, CA 94109, telephone (415) 552-8916.

SSF: Celebrating 75 Years

The figure of the Crucified told Francis to rebuild his church. Grateful that the spirit of St. Francis continues to enrich the Church, we give thanks for the 75th anniversary of the Society of St. Francis, as we pray in the spirit of Francis: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. (from the Litany of Thanksgiving for the Society of Saint Francis.)

It was Christmas Day, 75 years ago, when the first three Franciscan Friars of the Episcopal Church were living in community at the Church of the Ascension in Merrill, Wisconsin.

On this very first occasion of being together for the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the three joyfully set out to preach and to celebrate mass at area churches, knowing that they had no food for themselves at the Rectory.

When they returned — cold, tired, and hungry — the three Friars were overwhelmed to find a bountiful supply of holiday foods covering the Rectory front porch. It was an outpouring of love and gratitude from the parish family.

The 1994 Friars of the Society of St. Francis, American Province, returned to the Church of the Ascension this past September 17 to celebrate 75 years of service to the Episcopal Church.

"Overwhelming" was the term used by Br. Justus Richard, Minister General of the American Province, to describe the reception by the parish, the setting, and the festive Eucharist.

Participants in the service included lectors Jane Zander and Frances Zeitelhack, both of whom had been prepared for confirmation by Fr. Joseph, founder of the Order of St. Francis and one of the first three Friars that Christmas Day.

Pontificating Bishop was the Rt. Rev. George Hunt, Bishop of Rhode Island and Bishop Protector of all three orders within the American Province, Society of St. Francis.

Celebrant was Br. Dunstan SSF, senior priest Friar, who is marking his 40th year of life profession in the first order. Psalmist was Br. Leo SSF, who was life professed in 1934 — 60 years ago.

In addition to all members of the American Province first order, representatives were present from the Community of Saint Francis (CSF), the Poor Clares, and the Third Order.

Fr. Joseph (1889-1979) also helped to found the Poor Clares in Merrill and was instrumental in starting the Third Order in Cincinnati during an unsuccessful attempt at Franciscan community there in 1917.

MINISTER GENERAL'S AWARDS

A highlight of the festivities was the annual presentation of six Minister General's Awards:

Three tertiaries were among the recipients:

- **Glen-Ann Jicha TSSF.** (For her "warm hospitality"... "staunchness of prayer support and warmth of spiritual insight.")

- **George and Mary Metcalf TSSF.** (For their "constancy of commitment." Received on their behalf by Julia Bergstrom TSSF, a member of Chapter.)

Other recipients were:

- **Church of the Ascension.** (For "loving support" in the early days.)

- **The Rt. Rev. George Hunt,** Bishop Protector of all three orders of the Society of St. Francis.

- **Seabury Western Theological Seminary.** (Received by The Rev. Mark Sisk TSSF, Dean of the Seminary.)

- **Society of St. John the Evangelist.** (For major assistance during the early days of the Order of St. Francis.)

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BOOK REVIEW:**Franciscan Spirituality: Following Saint Francis Today** by Brother Ramon SSF (London: SPCK, 1994), 215+viii pages

by Marie Webner TSSF

As I write this review of Brother Ramon's Book, I am thinking of all the people in the American Province who will read it.

Some of you, like me, are white-haired veterans who have been Franciscans for so long that you cannot imagine any other life.

Others among you, newly professed or in the final stages of the novitiate, are looking for signs that will validate your Franciscan calling.

Inquirers and postulants will be reading with eager curiosity about a way of life that is unfamiliar but somehow attractive.

I think that all of you will find what you are seeking in *Franciscan Spirituality*. Should it happen that you discover a way of life that is thoroughly unappealing, you will know with certainty that the Franciscan life is not for you.

We say in the Third Order that we follow Jesus in the way of St. Francis. Jesus the Christ left us no written documents, and St. Francis left us very few. What we have are stories, remnants of an oral tradition. It is on the basis of stories preserved about Francis of Assisi that we know his way of life.

It follows that stories are featured in *Franciscan Spirituality*. Each chapter begins with stories about Francis, and Brother Ramon often includes stories about himself and other followers of the Franciscan way. His stories offer us incarnations of the Franciscan life.

The way of life as described and depicted is often terribly demanding. That's when the reader will greet with eager joy the prayer which concludes each chapter. Only the grace of God can keep us faithful.

But love makes all things possible, and Brother Ramon tells us, "The typical Franciscan is a man or woman in love." When I read those words, my excitement was so great that I devoured the rest of the book at break-neck speed.

Nothing is more enthralling than a love story, and the Franciscan way makes sense only as a love story. The Poverello of Assisi who embraced lepers, Lady Poverty, Saracens, his brothers, and Sister Death with indiscriminate enthusiasm was a man in love. As love was his story, so it must be ours.

With his eyes steadfastly on the Christ, Francis lived and loved through conversion, community-building, preaching, missionary efforts, prayer, work, song, suffering, and death. The words of Brother Ramon paint the way of St. Francis with great clarity and compassion.

This book was commissioned by the Third Order of the European Province. In consideration of its origins, we probably have no right to complain that chapter 18 ("Francis and Franciscans") draws not at all on people and places familiar to us in the American Province.

The Franciscan Times gives us a medium in which we can explore our "American" experiences of the Franciscan way. We shall be able to do so with greater understanding and clarity for having read Brother Ramon's *Franciscan Spirituality*. We thank him for his gift to us all.

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: *Personal copies of Franciscan Spirituality, including an excellent Study Guide Notes pamphlet, can be obtained by writing Provincial Secretary John Dotson TSSF, 4036 Lakota Place, Kingsport, TN 37664. Please send a check or money order — \$15 for each copy — payable to the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis. It also may be borrowed from the Third Order Library.*)

Third Order Library News

Many new books, audio cassettes, and videotapes have been added to the Third Order Library recently and may be borrowed by writing to:

Rosemond McFerran
TSSF Library
1518 Tulane Drive
Davis, CA 95616.

A complete list of new titles will be published in the Lenten issue of *The Franciscan Times*.

"Sure Was the Right Thing To Do"

(A True Christmas Story by Jeanie Wigle TSSF)

There was a sense of both anticipation and seriousness in the air as my students from the Job Skills Class and I met in front of the high school that Thursday evening before Christmas vacation.

This first semester had been very satisfying because the students were great. But, it had also been a time of tragedy because one of them had been hit and killed by a car a couple of months earlier.

It was an alcohol-related accident, and my student was the one staggering on a deserted highway, dancing with death whenever an occasional car came flying by in the night. The woman who hit him never even saw him and didn't stop because she thought she had hit a deer.

Cody's death had shaken the whole school and my own students in particular. They had been wonderful and caring at the time of the accident, and we made sure that Cody's grandparents, with whom he lived, had received individual notes from the students. I had spent one whole week letting my class deal with the grief, because most of them were from Texas country families where sorrowful feelings from young boys weren't often accepted.

I had suggested that it was important for us to remember Cody's grandparents throughout the year. As a class, we all decided that they especially should be remembered at Christmas. What unfolded from this decision was one of the most moving experiences of human caring that I have ever witnessed.

The day after that discussion, Bobby had come to class with the news that he had dreamed about what we should do and that he had planned it out exactly and written it down. We would start by making a huge Christmas card out of poster board, decorate it with hand-drawn Christmas ornaments, and notes from everyone.

We followed Bobby's plan exactly, and now, my students and I formed a caravan of pickup trucks and headed for the country ranch where Cody's grandparents raised ostriches. When we got to the ranchhouse, we got out vanilla-scented candles and lit them. They smelled wonderful!

Cody's grandparents must have wondered what we were doing outside their door, but at just the right moment, they emerged, and we spontaneously made a circle with them underneath the cold night sky. It really was chilly, and we all huddled together.

One student put a tape of some country carols and the hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross," on his portable stereo.

Another young man stepped forward and solemnly handed the card to the grandparents. He said we were there in memory of Cody because we knew this would be a sad holiday for them. He added that we wanted them to know we cared about them and that we would never forget Cody. Yet another student presented the grandparents with a poinsettia plant.

Our little circle was illuminated by the candles. As I looked around, I suddenly became aware that my students looked like angels as they focused their attention and their hearts upon the elderly couple.

Cody's "Grama" and "Grandpa" accepted the gifts as tears poured down their cheeks. They shared their terrible sense of emptiness, and they accepted our love with great appreciation and tenderness.

My students all hugged them, and the guys shook hands with Grandpa. One offered to come over and mow their fields for them. Several promised to stop by after school or work. We told them that Cody's death had not been in vain because the rest of the students were going to be wise with their use of liquor.

Through his tears, Grandpa said that this was what Christmas was all about. Tears were evident in everyone's eyes, and the outpouring of love went on for a while. No one seemed to know how to end it, and it made us sense our vulnerability and human-ness.

As we finally headed home, everyone was very quiet. When we parted to go our separate ways from the school, somebody commented, solemnly and truthfully, "This sure was the right thing to do." We all agreed.

As I drove back to my home, I started thinking about the birth of Jesus in a stable. I imagined what it was like for the three kings, the shepherds, and the other country folk who came to visit the baby Jesus, laying in a manger. Somehow, I could just see them leaving together, looking at one another, and saying, "This sure was the right thing to do."

Just as they had been a witness to to God's gift in Bethlehem, I felt that my students and I had been witness to God's gift that Thursday evening at the ranch home of Cody's grandparents.

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Jeanie is a professed tertiary in Cedar Park, Texas.)

 r e a d e r ' s f o r u m

from Guyana ...

(Editor's Note: our tertiaries in Guyana are truly isolated and seem to appreciate all Franciscan reading material. Perhaps some U.S. fellowships could adopt them and put them on their prayer and mailing lists.)

Dear Friends,

I greet you in the wonderful Name of Jesus and our brother Francis. May I say it was a great joy to meet other tertiaries during Diocesan Synod and Retreat time to share fellowship. Canon John Dorman was with us only for Synod and has had to be flown to England due to his health. Please remember him in your prayers.

Our country is so small, yet we are so isolated. Sometimes when writing to one another within our country, it takes months to get through. So you can imagine the isolation. However, it is a good idea to keep in touch with one another, so that we can share our joys and sorrows and, most of all, pray for one another.

We are still fighting the battle (not with guns) to have land title for our villages. The area we have chosen to be settled is called Waramurepù. It is a beautiful site, far away from outside interference.

The old people know they belong in Waramurepù, with a strong feeling that they must live and die there. They remember their history and old stories and the places one knows are sacred. The creeks and nearby mountains around our new village are like that.

Our homelands are full of memories and friendly spirits, so it is a great pain and loss to leave them.

My wife Celian has been elected as the Village Captain, or Chief as they call it in your country. She has been given a great responsibility to lead our people, so do remember to pray for this new village.

It is now after midnight, and my candle is flickering away so I must stop for now before I leave in the dark. I close with God's richest blessing on your work.

Your brother in Christ and Francis,
 (the Rev.) Charles Roland TSSF
 Georgetown, Guyana

from our Bursar ...

Dear Tertiary Sisters and Brothers,

First, let me thank you for your excellent and immediate response to the "financial crisis" letter sent out by Chapter this past Fall. The fact that you are reading these words in this issue speaks for itself.

Secondly, may I ask everyone to be aware of the correct spellings in my name and street address when corresponding with me. My correct name and address are:

**Carole J. Watson TSSF
 962 W. Acadia Drive
 Tucson, AZ 85706**

Thirdly, I am a collector and recycler of cancelled postage stamps. Please save your stamps and periodically send them to me at the address above.

Thank you, and please have a blessed Christmas season. Pax et Bonum, Carole.

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The Franciscan Times

Lord, Make Me an Instrument of thy Peace

... blessed Francis had a deeper veneration for the Nativity of our Lord than for other festivals, and he said, "Since our Lord has been born for us, it is for us to accept salvation." He wanted every Christian to rejoice in the Lord on that day, and for love of Him who gave Himself for us, he wished everyone to provide generously not only for the poor, but for beasts and birds as well.



— from the words of Brother Leo in "Mirror of Perfection," Chapter 114 (St. Francis of Assisi Omnibus of Sources, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983)