

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.

Pentecost, 1994

from the editor:

The opportunity to transcribe, edit, and produce the study papers presented by each of our five Third Order provinces at the 1993 Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC) has been an awesome responsibility, an honor, and a privilege.

It is my prayer that each reader of *The Franciscan Times* will share in the enlightenment, education, and joy of knowing more intimately the mind of the world-wide Third Order community through these papers.

The material herein offers provocative challenges, affirmations, and guidelines for all tertiaries, no matter where they may be on their Franciscan journeys. Fellowships, as well as individuals, will discover a rich resource of ideas for study and meditation.

Current news of fellowships and convocations can be found on page 26, instead of the usual centerfold location.

The Advent 1994 issue, which will have a deadline of November 1, will address the theme of "Third Order Community."

The nature and essence of community in our Franciscan discipline will vary widely, ranging from the urban fellowship which meets often and regularly to the isolated tertiary who may feel fortunate to visit another tertiary once a year.

Your ideas and contributions - in the form of essays, stories, po-

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ems, artwork, and suggestions - are encouraged and welcome for this next issue.

Conveners and others who regularly submit material for *The Franciscan Times* should note the change of address. Please refer to the masthead on page 22.

Please keep the Third Order American Province Chapter in your prayers as they meet during Francistide in October at Little Portion Friary.

Blessings and aloha from Hawai'i to you and your families.

Pax et Bonum,
Robert Durand TSSF

THE CHAPLAIN'S JOURNAL

Long Island in late October is a fairyland. Throughout the Interprovincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC) of 1993, we sat in a room of Little Portion Friary which looked out on the woods.

The trees were arrayed in leaves of brown, crimson, and yellow, which stirred in the breeze from Long Island Sound and drifted down to the forest floor in a multihued rain that only God could have imagined or devised. Perhaps the autumnal backdrop of falling leaves has conditioned my memory of this international and intercultural Franciscan gathering.

We came from Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the Americas, some bringing Crisp Convictions, or Firm Opinions, or Flaming Passions.

As we talked together, the breeze of the Holy Spirit moved among us, detaching our convictions, opinions, and passions until they mixed and mingled in harmonious medley. We were satisfied at the end that any "achievements" were God's work.

We heard liturgies from each of the provinces and rejoiced in these particular expressions of our common faith. I was privileged (as the only Third Order Deacon present) to be asked to perform the diaconal tasks for the English liturgy. It was an opportunity to submerge the accidents of my origins and conditioning in a wondrous expressions of what we, as Franciscans, hold most dear.

Franciscan spirituality has a multitude of shapes and colors. At our 1993 Interprovincial Chapter, we rejoiced in our diversity and in our unity, as we worked to create new patterns of love.

Marie, TSSF

Deacon Marie L. Webner
Chaplain, American Province



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Following Jesus In the way of St. Francis

Seven Years from the 21st Century

INTRODUCTION — The idea for this provincial discussion was borrowed in its entirety from the Community of St. Francis, which underwent its own self-scrutiny using a chart that presented 1) points of view of St. Francis, 2) the 20th Century understanding of each position he took, and 3) questions for today's (Franciscan) community.

A Third Order version of this chart was printed twice in the "Information Sheet" of the American Province, with a request for responses from individuals and fellowships. All were encouraged to ponder and discuss the topics and to offer conclusions with various viewpoints.

The Provincial Minister, Alden Whitney, and the Chaplain of the Province, Marie Webner, synthesized and sometimes expanded the responses received. This paper is thus the result of many tertiaries.

LOVE FOR GOD, PEOPLE, AND CREATION

A passionate love for God, for all people (especially the marginalized and despised), and for all creation is the highest priority in the lives of tertiaries. We understand this love to be the origin of all good in the life of St. Francis.

In comparison with the burning love of St. Francis, we recognize the lukewarm quality of our own witness and ministry. We fail as individuals, but we nourish the hope that the whole Third Order Community, with its tremendous diversity of talents and ministries, represents the full spectrum of loving Franciscan witness.

In terms of prayer as an outpouring of our love, there is perennial discussion of our oddity as a Province in insisting on the Prayer Book office of Morning or Evening Prayer, instead of a shortened Third Order office.

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presented by Marie Webner

We believe that our practice binds us in loving prayer with the whole Church and keeps us mindful of our wider mission and obedience. It is clear that for some the office becomes a framework for a personal prayer life which includes self examination, intercession, and meditation. For others, the office is primarily a community obligation offered in ten or fifteen minutes daily which is separate and secondary to personal prayer. Especially for the over-worked and over-busy, the daily office becomes an anchor during times of aridity.

Nevertheless, it is not our experience that the office becomes a substitute for a living relationship with God.

All of us experience to some extent the tension between prayer and ministry which St. Francis felt. Sometimes we can rationalize our fears and failure by telling ourselves and the world that ours is a "hidden life."

Although the antidote for this subtle form of arrogance may be to undertake a conspicuous, risky, and perhaps unpopular social project, we normally give first place to prayer. Right prayer leads to right action.

The relationship between prayer and action is clearly demonstrated in the life

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to be members of the Body of Christ striving to become fully at one with the will of God as expressed by the Incarnate Son. As Franciscans, we must seek to grace of God in committing ourselves to growth, risk, and transformation.

LITERAL UNDERSTANDING
OF THE GOSPEL
(with special reference
to uncompromising poverty)

"Poverty is purity in our passion for God." This comment from one of our teretiaris is both prologue and summary.

St. Francis seems to have regarded possessions and worldly responsibilities as distractions from the life-giving and totally fulfilling presence of God.

We teretiaris who live in the world and who have possessions and responsibilities struggle to achieve a simplicity which reflects in some measure the poverty of Francis and our complete dependence upon God. We understand the need for detachment, but detachment alone is not an adequate prophetic sign.

In the American Province, we live in an affluent and materialistic society. We are, if you like, "enculturated" by our society, which sees bigger and better cars, houses, and machines as symbols of our worth. To achieve a simplicity that reflects poverty, we must learn to reject the values of our society.

Further, we need to replace our society's values with values which reflect our dependence upon God and our identification with Christ. We are called to become counter cultural.

To become counter cultural means to assume responsibility. We cannot wipe out entire species and deplete mineral or oil reserves while we raise our eyes heavenward and piously exclaim, "God will provide!"

As God's children and heirs, we have been given the responsibility to provide for future children and future heirs. Our dependence must be upon God's grace, which will empower us to be faithful stewards.

The task of making our lifestyle a prophetic witness of our dependence on God's grace begins with faithful prayer. It is not an easy transition to go from pride in possessions to an understanding that all we own is but a loan and a gift from God.

Perhaps most of us begin our spiritual journeys with Francis in the secret hope that "using our talents for God" will give us some sort of status and reward. Only gradually do we discover that our talents are on loan from God. It is not only our possessions, but also our abilities and our very lives, that we must come to recognize as belonging wholly to God.

To serve God in perfect freedom and perfect love, we must discard all possessiveness. We have not achieved this "perfect joy." We are trying, through prayer and in acts of generosity and love, to grow into fully human, fully loving people of God. We will not stop trying to make progress.

In Guyana, the richness of the tropical rain forest may make it easier for teretiaris to achieve a very "visible" dependence upon God. Even there, the introduction of alluvial sediment mining now offers temptations toward acquiring wealth, while the rejection of mining for subsistence farming may, in fact, be a choice for predictable security over the uncertainty of a payoff from mining.

It has been suggested by a Third Order member that those of us who live in the affluent parts of the United States and
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Canada begin a serious commitment to poverty with the discipline of fasting.

In the time of Francis and Clare, fasting was seen primarily as a way to forego pleasure. For us who live at the tag end of the 20th Century, fasting can also be a prophetic sign of faithfulness regarding our obligations to planet Earth to to the global economy.

Tertiary John Scott expresses this priority in verse:

**May Clare's freedom make us desire
that the beauty of the earth inspire
men, women all: first to preserve
"this our island home" — our reserve.**

In practical terms, our fasting will be part of our consciousness of the wider environmental good. We can be conscious of the need to avoid additives, pesticides, and polluted water.

We can cut down on our consumption of highly-processed foods. We can limit our consumption of meats dependent on grain-fattened cattle. We can avoid meats like veal that depend for their delicacy on cruelty to animals.

Beyond food, we can also fast from immoderate use of heating and air conditioning, both of which add pollutants to the atmosphere.

Tertiaries are being called to increased sensitivity in ways which their lifestyles may affect for good or ill the lives of people everywhere. Fasting can be a poverty embraced in the name of passionate love.

Let us remember, "Poverty is purity in our passion for God."

LOYALTY TO CHURCH

Loyalty to the Church is matter of trusting God, the source of all authority. We recognize, however, that "opposition in charity" is implicit in the concept of the primacy of the individual conscience.

We believe change to be necessary to growth, although each tertiary sees par-

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ticular changes through the filter of his or her own convictions. We have been promised that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, but each of us has the obligation to evaluate change carefully and prayerfully and to test convictions in community.

These are easy generalities. The reality is far more difficult. Views within the Franciscan community are diverse on many issues: women in the priesthood, rights of homosexuals, use of military force, and some Church-sponsored or state-sponsored social programs.

Feelings run so high concerning some topics that "discussion" is unprofitable and is usually avoided in some Franciscan fellowships in the Province. Chapter even considered passing a resolution suggesting that our need is to focus more on Franciscan spirituality instead of on controversies which divide the Church, especially in the United States and Canada.

We are called to be peacemakers. As responsible members of the Church, tertiaries will challenge but not destroy. As leaven in the living bread of the Church, we shall seek free expression for all, as we try to recapture the understanding of Church as the community of the faithful. We can be a presence which is not anxious in the midst of turmoil.

For most of us, the most effective witness will be our lives and ministries, rather than our words.

There are fellowships in the United States whose membership includes women priests as well as those vehemently opposed to women in the priesthood. Every

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meeting is a tremendous test of love for all parties.

The discipline of loyalty requires that love and humility overcome pride and need for approval. This kind of testing calls us to penitence as we witness to the love that makes us one in Christ Jesus.

May the world say, "See how they love one another."

OBEDIENCE WITHIN THE ORDER

In the far-flung community of the American Province, obedience is often viewed as a responsibility to "the invisible."

Publications sometimes help fill the gap, and distribution of "The Basics" and Formation Letters to the professed, as well as to the postulants and novices, has been appreciated. Nevertheless, we still have members who question the need for reporting regularly (if at all) and who seem to resent authority within the Third Order.

As Christians, we are, all of us, men and women, under authority. As Franciscans, we must also accept the authority of our community of profession as an authority delved from Christ.

Those in authority need to be sensitive to persons and situations before requiring obedience. Yet obedience for the common good and the preservation of Franciscan witness is of the essence in religious community. As one tertiary put it, "Obedience to community incarnates our obedience to God."

Obedience is perhaps most valued and understood by those who have accepted responsibility at local or provincial levels. Their understanding is not a prod-

uct of satisfied power drives. Rather, it seems to derive from the opportunity to appreciate the whole fabric of community life, in which each thread must be obedient to the design of the whole.

Those who serve as counselors, confessors, or area chaplains come to see their role as one of deploying each individual to the best advantage in that part of the body of Christ which we call "Third Order Community."

Our financial pledges to the Third Order are part of our obedience. The Chapter is charged with the responsibility of using these monies responsibly and creatively for the community good.

Appropriations are made for communication with and publications for all members, as well as for visiting the membership. We need also to create channels of communication which will alert us to needs. We made a beginning in 1993 by distributing a questionnaire to the professed, and this two-way communication must be kept alive. We need to reflect also on how regional convocations could be better used as avenues of expressed needs.

The Chapter, in short, bears the responsibility of being creative in its listening, in order to use authority appropriately.

HUMILITY

In a society in which assertiveness is sought, prized, and rewarded, tertiaries need to bear witness to the joy and freedom of humility.

St. Francis spent many hours in prayer and adoration. His steady gaze at the glory of God enabled Francis to see his own utter insignificance with great clarity.

There are not enough tertiaries who follow his example by making prayer a priority in their lives. We are not on the road to humility until we see all our insignificance and imperfections in the clear light of God's love.

Relationships within a fellowship are

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often uneasy and immature. We easily succumb to society's definition of mental health as "feeling good about ourselves all the time." Too many of us deceive ourselves and others; we never remove the masks which hide our real selves.

There are fellowships in the American Province which report that their members have no problem revealing themselves to each other. Self acceptance is understood to come first. When members accept and forgive themselves, they are able to risk the acceptance of others. One tertiary expressed it as absolution: "giving each other absolution in whatever ways we can."

One fellowship in the past year faced the truth of itself as dysfunctional and sponsored a workshop to stimulate better relationships. The yeast is still working in this group, but facing the truth has provided a beginning.

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Accepting the truth about God, ourselves, and each other is a lifetime job. We undertake the task of acceptance in prayer and in community, with a tender concern for each person's fragility. Only God's grace is sufficient to sustain us in relationships of humility and love.

St. Francis, pray for us.
St. Clare, pray for us.
... we adore you, O Christ,
and we bless you,
because by your Holy Cross,
you have redeemed the world.

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Where Is The Anglican Communion Going?

As I sat down to reflect on this title and to write something for this Chapter, the initial thoughts running through my mind were ... why this subject, and what has it to do with the Third Order?

After all, we are not the Anglican Communion, and I have no brief to speak on the Communion's behalf, any more than the rest of us has. What could have prompted others to give us such a title?

Further reflection suggested to me, however, that the intention might be to offer some observations on the Anglican Communion and to see how they relate to our own community life, as it is experienced at present and as it develops internationally. This then is what is intended in what follows:

Sociologists of religion would be spellbound by the glittering diversity of Anglicanism. In Papua New Guinea, we know that Anglican-Roman Catholic relationships are so close that union with the

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presented by Stephen Platten

Holy See is at least conceivable by the local church, if not in the immediate future; in the Southern Cone, however, it has been lay presidency of the eucharist that has occupied a dominant place on the agenda for some years.

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In Kenya and Malawi, relations with the state remain perilous; in England, the Church is still established. In the diocese of Perth, Melbourne, and elsewhere in Australia, there are already women priests; in Sydney, part of the same province, some would boast that women will never be so ordained.

In each case, the first and second examples hardly sit easily alongside each other. Many more apparent contradictions might be placed alongside these in comparing province with province throughout the world. Theologians would presumably respond to those sociologists who are still reeling from such variety and even contrariety by talking of dispersed or disseminated authority.

Anglicanism has, after all, never championed a centralised polity or a Papal model of authority. Our life and our doctrine have issued from our worship. Our ecclesiology has been rooted in a conscious pragmatism.

Despite the strengths captured in such an apologium, recent years have seen the very existence of the communion threatened. Relationships have undoubtedly come under strain. Within provinces, loyalties have been tested. Has diversity given way to fragmentation, and variety to anarchy?

Has the growth of the ecumenical movement caused many Anglicans to wonder whether their ecclesiological loyalties feel stronger outside their own Communion than within? Anglo-Catholics may look to Rome; confessionally-minded Protestant/Anglicans to Lutheranism or the Reformed Churches; and charismatics to a

non-confessional and international renewal movement.

"RECONCILED DIVERSITY"

As these strains have begun to make the system creak, so the ecumenical movement itself has offered some new pathways forward. "Reconciled diversity," a term favored even by a theologian as centralist as Joseph Ratzinger, offers more rigour to us as a Communion and to the universal Church of Christ than a term like disseminated authority.

Simply to use that latter phrase as descriptive provides no answers. Where and to whom is authority dispersed or disseminated? Can we identify localized magnetic forces, or does the authority simply escape one's grasp entirely, like quicksilver through a child's hands? Even if we can identify some pockets of magnetism, what is it that makes the unlike forces attract across the world, rather than pull further apart?

Reconciled diversity begins with the reality of different models, different spiritual and theological traditions, different cultural forces. It then seeks to find instruments of communion and common life across the different boundaries. It is only when patterns of common responsibility, authority and respect are established that diversity can truly be said to be reconciled.

Can tertiary Franciscans offer constructive models to the Communion of which we are part or are we also prey to the self-same divisions and exclusiveness?

Part of our reflection on this occasion will be to discern how the Principles, upon which our Order is based, engage with the individual rules of life to which we are committed. Those rules themselves are built up using the scaffolding offered by the Principles, the life of Francis himself, and the context set through our three keynotes of humility, love, and joy.

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The direct engagement — the intimate weaving of the individual with the corporate, the personal, and the community-based — lie at the very heart of our worship, our prayer, and our daily lives as tertiaries. Simplicity, self-discipline, the Eucharist, and personal prayer are part of that scaffolding within which we are bidden to fashion our rule of life. We are to grow up into the likeness of the fullness of of Christ's stature, as perceived through Francis.

In short, that which gives form, content, and direction to us as a community and as individual tertiaries is something which lives at the heart of our faith and of God's Church. So catholicism refers to universality and our profound need for one another as Christian people, as parishes, as dioceses, and as provinces.

Indeed, each Eucharistic community is a cell within the living organism which is the Church. Each man and each woman similarly is a vital cell within the local church. Allow these cells to die, and the body will perish. Similarly, if the structure of the body is destroyed, the cells equally will atrophy and waste away.

If our reflections on these matters ... are sufficiently profound, then we may well be able to remind our communion what is the essence of the creative tension which makes possible a reality of reconciled diversity.

But, if we are to offer such a model to others, we shall need to be sure that it is living healthily among ourselves first of all.

Rampant individualism, for example, has been the enemy to much of western and western-influenced society for the past four or five decades. It is a danger that the Christian Church has not escaped. Previously a Protestant disease, it has also hit the Catholic body politic.

But if Catholic Christianity, at present, has too easily opted for the

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atomised and the fragmenting within our culture, then in the past, it was the monolithic and corporatist which was the danger in that tradition. Leaks of the latest encyclical from Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, tend to suggest that this contrasting disease of authoritarian centralization is still far from a final cure within the Roman Church.

Such was the disease which finally strangled the collectivism of Eastern and Central Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union. The lesson for us as we set out on our discussion is too obvious to be spelled out further.

TOWARDS ENRICHMENT

Three words entered my mind as I thought of how we might enrich our Franciscan tradition during our reflection upon these things. They were: graciousness, generosity, and nourishment.

- Grace takes us to the heart of the Christian Gospel. It is elusive, but it is indispensable. It reminds us of both the priority and the givenness of God's love and of that which is given us through God's creation. Each of our provinces has experienced that givenness differently. God's grace has offered us different gifts.

- An appreciation of that fact moves us to reflect upon generosity. Generosity, also, lies at the heart of the self-offering of Jesus, a generosity so great that it could finally lead in one direction only, to the passion and the death of the Saviour. How can we receive the gracious gifts we have each been given as provinces and indeed

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of our Lord Jesus Christ and that of St. Francis. We try to maintain this balance in our own lives, with many failures and corrections.

The individualism of the society in which we live is a corrupting element in the lives of Third Order Franciscans. It is possible to use prayer, whether corporate or private, as a way to distance ourselves from the needs of marginalized and despised people — in other words, as a substitute for getting our hands dirty and our hearts broken.

Right prayer, in this case, would place our motives and our calling before God with complete openness to the will of God for our lives.

More and more of us are realizing our responsibility before God for passing a healthy world on to future generations. Our love for Creation therefore must include a love for those yet unborn of centuries to come, those who will one day assume the stewardship of the world.

We express our love and concern in such activities as recycling, support of ecologically sound practices, and the use of biodegradable products.

Perhaps the greatest failing for most of us is not allowing ourselves time to enjoy God's creation, whether it be in the appreciation of an individual blossom or snowflake, or participating in the glories of mountains, sea, forest, desert, and verdant fields.

We forget to replenish the wellsprings of our love. But some of us have found such wellsprings in Native American and Celtic spirituality. Both of these sources

speak to us of the love of God that permeates the created world.

Who are the "marginalized" whom we are asked especially to love? We find the answer in the persistent concern of St. Francis for lepers. We follow in his footsteps when we seek out the people in our communities who are excluded from full participation in the life of society or Church. These may include the aged, the person with AIDS, or minorities of various races and ethnic backgrounds.

In the United States, Franciscans will concern themselves with the availability of medical care for everyone, as well as the plight of children wounded by turmoil in their homes or in the streets.

We shall, of course, offer love to all our brothers and sisters and all those whose lives touch ours. But as Franciscans, we shall have a particular concern to love the unloved and the neglected.

Father John Dorman, an English priest and tertiary who has served the Church in Guyana for many years, reminds us of St. Francis' emphasis on penitence.

Greatly distressed by reaction in the Church of England to the ordination of women, he asks that Franciscans everywhere commit themselves to love in the form of acts of penitence for "the lack of faith, hope, and love" that threatens to divide the Church.

Penitence should not be neglected as a way of expressing our passionate love for God and all people.

JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Many American Province tertiaries question whether their lives incorporate enough joyful celebration. Perhaps we tend to be too "busy," too compulsive, and too guilt-ridden. Perhaps television has made

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us passive and less willing to respond to others.

Our concerns engendered by a world torn apart by famine, the pandemic AIDS and other illnesses — including drug addiction, starvation, violence, bigotry, unemployment, slavery, and other forms of oppression — often make us feel powerless on the one hand and prayerful on the other.

Yet our faith and penitence are often dampened; we lose sight of where we are going and who is ultimately leading us. Joy cannot thrive where faith is scant.

We have no hesitation, however, in identifying the Eucharist as central to our spiritual lives, and we recognize Eucharistic celebration in the community as the supremely joyful expression of our life together.

Community recalls us to joy. The fullness of community also needs to recall us more often to a celebration of each other.

COMPLETE IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS

For the most part, tertiaries in the American Province responded to the question of "complete identification with Jesus" using brief and tenuously stated answers.

Perhaps this identification comprises too big a mouthful, although we accept "complete identification with Jesus" as a goal, believing it to be a more encompassing concept than a limited identification with "the mission" of Jesus.

One optimistic response suggested that the challenge is to celebrate each day and all creation as well, even when we are faced with intolerable circumstances in our personal lives or in those of neighbors near and far.

A pessimistic response suggested that we are so busy identifying with society that we have failed utterly in identification either with Jesus or with his mission.

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Perhaps we need to remind ourselves of the prayer of St. Francis on Mt. La Verna. He sought identification with the pain and the love of Jesus. It is in passionate love for the poor and neglected that we are most likely to find identification with Jesus. Such a love will not flinch at sharing the pain of the beloved.

We need also to consider in our hearts the overriding characteristic of St. Francis (as described by Simon Tugwell O.P.) — radical unprotectedness. It is in his refusal to protect himself or his interests that Francis is most like Jesus.

A majority of us, on the contrary, spend many hours of our lives in schemes to protect ourselves, our interests, and our property. Many tertiaries, however, have responsibilities to spouses and dependents who require their very careful consideration.

As Third Order Franciscans, we cannot live with the abandon of the saint who was not willing to quarrel with the right of an ass to his domicile.

Perhaps, as tertiaries, we need to chip away at our habits of caution. We need to question our timidity about taking unpopular stands or espousing unpopular causes. We need first to seek out God's truth in prayer; then we can pray for the grace of courage to act upon our convictions.

We need to refresh our minds and our hearts with the Gospel picture of our Lord Jesus Christ as one of decisiveness, unafraid of risk and prepared for sacrifice.

Complete identification with Jesus eludes us, even though we know ourselves

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even as individuals and, moreover, generously offer them to each other?

Perhaps the answer to that question will lead us toward the significance of nourishment, The Eucharistic Sacrament, which sustains us weekly, and perhaps daily, in our faith is one of profound divine nourishment. Perhaps we are called to mirror the Eucharist as we learn to offer and receive gifts from each other.

We do, after all, offer each other cultural gifts, but at the same time cultural criticism. Our different traditions nurture each other not only by giving of themselves but also helping to criticize each other when we lose that balance which should be at the heart of our faith. Christianity is rooted in a "way of exchange" between

humanity and God and between us as fellow human beings.

On the little hill of Montauto in central Italy, just outside Arezzo, is a tiny chapel reaching back to the time of Francis and still extant now. The hosts who looked after him begged Francis for his old and torn habit. "But it is all I have," he answered.

Through the night, the women of the house made another, and the following morning offered it to Francis. Despite his attachment to the older, tatty robe, he loosed it at the waist and dropped it to the ground, donning the new one. He knew what it was receive and to give.

The old habit, which is preserved in a Franciscan Church in Florence, remains a potent symbol of what we are and what we may have to offer — still rooted in the spirit of he who first inspired us and set us on our way.

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Contemporary Movements in the Church

This paper attempts to briefly outline some of the current trends in the church, with particular reference to the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

TOWARDS INCLUSIVENESS OF WOMEN

Women have always formed a majority of the Church. It is only recently that women's concerns have begun to influence theology, worship, pastoral care, and decision-making in significant ways. This is seen in the ordination of women to the priesthood, which began in 1978.

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New Zealand Province
presented by Michael Watson

Women priests are widely accepted in the Church, provided they are not seen to be too radical or assertive. Some feel that the Church has exploited women to provide ministry on the cheap and that further changes in attitude are needed for women priests to have full-time ministry careers.

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The issues of power-sharing and styles of decision-making are on-going concerns. The general trend is towards sharing and accountability, towards consensus and team ministry, and women have made a major contribution in this shift.

Many women would perceive, however, a gap between words and ways of operating, and it has become a source of continuing frustration. There may also be a generational difference of approach between older and younger women in some cases.

Inclusive language for people, and increasingly for God, is another significant trend, but with wide variations across the Church. The New Zealand Prayer Book has been an important factor in this trend.

Alongside inclusive language, one finds more feminine imagery of God, greater use of women's stories from the Bible (including some which were passed over previously), and more emphasis upon birth, nurturing, and creation theology.

In worship, there may be a more instinctual, less cerebral approach, with more freedom in the use of color, dance, and movement in the liturgy, and a recognition of Christ as the incarnation not only of the Logos, but of Sophia, Holy Wisdom.

Sexual abuse by (male) clergy is another major issue to which the Church is slowly facing up. This area involves such matters as accountability, mis-use of power, the need for justice, reconciliation, and healing. Many women appreciate the possibility of choosing women or men priests for pastoral ministry.

TOWARDS INCLUSIVENESS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS

The issue of lesbians and gays has put some strain upon the traditional Anglican accommodation of differences of opinion. Some take a tolerant approach; some see it as a question of justice; and still others hold that homosexuality is unaccept-

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able on moral and/or Biblical grounds.

A more open and accepting approach to gays and lesbians is emerging in both the Church and wider society. Recent legislation outlawed discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Key questions for the Church are whether stable, committed gay and lesbian relationships are acceptable (with the trend being to say that they are) and whether these relationships are permissible for clergy.

In relation to clergy, the Church and the bishops take varying attitudes, with some adopting a pragmatic approach on pastoral grounds rather than one based upon defined principles.

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

The Anglican Church in New Zealand has recently undertaken an historic restructuring of its constitution, separating itself into three inter-acting and equal partnerships, a model called "Tikanga" meaning "ways of doing things."

The three partners are the European (Pakeha) Church, the Maori Church, and the Pacific Island Church, all under the General Synod as the Common Body. These three partners are equal, and no resolution can be passed at General Synod without the concurrence of all three partners.

Tikanga, the division into partnerships, is designed to give equality in every aspect of life to each of the three partners, so that no one racial group can predominate over the other.

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The New Zealand Church is thus very similar to the First, Second, and Third Orders of the Society of St. Francis, which has also made itself into three inter-dependent and equal partnerships. Each is able to live its life independently from the others, without exercising power over the others, but seeking also a mutuality and inter-dependence.

In both the Franciscan and the New Zealand Church models, the onus is on each of the partners to foster unity and to discourage any divisiveness.

It will be perceived immediately that there is risk in this course because of the possibility of a kind of racism, and there has been the accusation of reverse apartheid. However, the New Zealand Church feels that the risk is worth taking, and signs of new life and growth are already present in the Tikanga Maori Church.

Perhaps this "way of doing things" can be a model for other racial groupings within the church around the world.

TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

The radical equality of all souls before God is a basic impulse towards democracy, both in society and in the Church. This movement has been slower and more difficult in the Anglican tradition, with its bishops and hierarchy and its historic links with the political establishment and powerful land owners.

How do we achieve a balance between the older model of the Prince Bishop and the emerging idea of participatory democracy in the Church?

In Aotearoa, New Zealand, the Bishop is constrained by Synod and the

other councils of the Church. At the parish level, lay people have a much greater say in the choice of a parish priest. There also seems to be a trend away from larger, more formal structures and towards greater local autonomy.

An underlying question here is the problem of leadership. If a clear lead is given, it can cause resentment. If a consensus style of leadership is adopted (which seems is the emerging model), then there sometimes is a lack of clear direction.

Servant leadership, based upon the Gospel model, is held up as an example, but not always practiced. Older patterns of more directive leadership are still strong and are sometimes reinforced by relationships of co-dependency in the Church.

The trend is towards a more lay-centered Church, with clergy working to empower people, acting — as it were — as the team coach.

TOWARDS CREATION

The ecological imperatives recall us to be more in touch with Creation, living in a way that respects the earth and sees ourselves, others, and all living things as part of God's pattern.

Re-connecting with the earth is profoundly Franciscan and helps to keep us human in an increasingly materialist, commercial, and electronic society.

Re-discovering our common humanity helps break down barriers and makes us more aware of the claims of the poor and what they have to teach us.

Letting go and living simply in the "here-land-now" can be a source of joy and a witness to the Church and to the world.

It would have to be said that this is not a trend in the Church at present, but rather a call upon us, as Franciscans, to be positively counter-cultural.

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Franciscan Evangelism

MISSION AND EVANGELISM

We cannot speak of evangelism in isolation. We need to place it within the context of mission ... the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian life is a journey to God, with God in Christ. As we allow ourselves to be shaped and empowered, so we are called to share this experience of new possibility with others. In Franciscan terminology, we say this is "to make our Lord known and loved." As Franciscans, we share in this mission of Jesus Christ, along with all Christian people.

In recognizing that evangelism is located within the context of this mission, we are reminded of the statement on Evangelism by the Bishops of the Anglican Communion. We need to keep these in mind as we consider Franciscan evangelism:

"The nature of evangelism is to:

- proclaim the good news of the kingdom***
- teach, baptise, and nurture new believers***
- respond to human need by loving service***
- seek to transform unjust structures of society***
- strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth."***

ASSUMPTIONS

For the sake of this paper, there is the necessity of some assumptions — bearing in mind the difficulty of assumptions.

The first is that the thrust of this paper is to focus upon evangelism from the Third Order perspective, bearing in mind that we are called to live in community, albeit "community in dispersion."

The second is that tertiaries who are seeking "to make our Lord known and loved" have already been formed in the Franciscan way of life, through the process of enquiry and novitiate in the Third Order.

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presented by Stephen Williams,
Keith Slater, and David Overington

I recognize also in making this assumption that we are continually in the process of being formed ... of becoming. It has become fashionable to speak of "evangelizing moments," and yet as we journey through life, we become aware that the evangelizing of each of us is an on-going process.

THE "GIVEN"

Along with these assumptions, there is a "given" for the shaping and formation of the tertiary. This "given" is The Rule of the Third Order, that is, the Principles and Constitution of the Third Order.

The tertiary, throughout formation in the novitiate, has been confronted in The Rule with the aims of the Order:

- to make our Lord known and loved everywhere.***
- to spread the spirit of love and harmony.***
- to live simply.***

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Likewise, in the Rule, there has been confrontation with the ways of service:

- **prayer.**
- **study.**
- **work.**

And again, in the Rule, we are challenged by the notes of the Order (which help us to sing a particular tune!):

- **humility.**
- **love.**
- **joy.**

These aims, ways of service, and notes not only shape and form our approach to life but are also the basis and foundation upon which we learn and practice evangelism.

Our shaping and formation in the Third Order confront us with the marked emphasis upon servanthood, modelled on our Lord's example of being servant, of self-sacrifice, and of offering (John 13:1-20).

We also recognize the contrasting emphasis upon the spirit of love and joy, an exuberance and spontaneity which Francis exhibited in his living of the Christian way despite hardship, discipline, and deprivation.

The story of pure joy is apt at this point:

Francis is asked, "*Father Francis, what then is true and perfect joy?*"

He replies, "*Well, I am returning from Perugia, say, and I arrive at our Friary of the Portiuncula very late at night. It is wintertime, muddy, and so cold that icicles have gathered at the fringes of my habit and keep cutting into my legs until they bleed. But at last, cold and covered with mud, I make it to the entrance of the Portiuncula.*"

"I knock and knock and call out, and finally a brother comes and asks, 'Who are you?' When I answer, 'Brother Francis,' he says, 'Go away. This isn't the hour to be wandering about. How dare you want to come in!' And when I insist, he snaps back, 'Get out of here, you simpleton, you idiot! We have brothers enough here, and we don't need one more like you.'

"But I again move toward the door and say, 'For the love of God, please let me stay the night!' 'Absolutely not!' he says. 'Go to the Crosiers' hostel and ask them.'

"Now I tell you this: If I keep my patience through all this and do not get upset, then this is true joy and true virtue and salvation of soul."

(from *Through the Year with Francis of Assisi*, selected and translated by Murray Bodo, Fount Paperbacks, London, 1987, pp. 152-153).

Then there are some stories from today:

- An Australian Christian singer, Trish Watts, tells of meeting an American Franciscan sister. This woman had travelled all the way to Australia with almost no luggage. When queried about this, she replied that her approach to life was, "Live simply, and embrace life like a lover."

- From my own personal experience, I traveled to a Conference once with a woman who is now a tertiary. The Conference was for a week, and she had but one little basket with her, nothing else. I know her example has stuck in my mind, and that it was an "evangelizing moment" for me in relation to living simply.

It needs to be heard loudly and strongly that it is "The Given" — the Rule of the Third Order as spelled out in the formational material — which gives the Franciscan approach to evangelism its own particular ambience.

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FRANCIS

But let us begin at the beginning. It is Francis of Assisi who is the inspiration.

Francis lived life in the "extreme" lane. This was necessary in an age which had moved away from the message of the Gospel — an age of complacency and of war and of civil strife, not unlike the world of today. Francis was a direct challenge to the Church and the society of his time.

There are three particular points I want to draw out in this historical section of this paper:

Firstly, life was Francis' teacher. Francis was in many ways evangelized by the events of his life: his mother, his imprisonment, his illness, his experience of lepers (one in particular), and of his growing spiritual understanding.

We are reminded of Francis' profound prayer experience in which God communicated to him that his values and loves in the world needed overturning. This is the beginning of his pursuit of the life of poverty. Shortly after this prayer experience,

"...as he is riding near Assisi, he meets a leper and is filled with an overpowering horror as he always is when he meets of these sufferers; but this time he makes a great effort and overcomes his aversion. He dismounts, and kissing his hand, gives the leper a coin. The leper, somehow understanding, gives him the kiss of peace. Then Francis remounts his horse and rides away. From that day on he mortifies himself increasingly until, through God's grace, he wins a complete victory."

(from "Legend of the Three Companions," Chapter IV, no. 11).

Murray Bodo comments on this experience:

"Kissing the leper is the great moment of enlightenment for Francis, because it proves the truth of God's words to him. The poverty and deprivation Francis chooses to

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*suffer for the rest of his life is really a kissing of the leper's hand, a further putting on of the mind of Christ that enables Francis to become poor, to see the world as God sees it." (from *The Way of St. Francis* by Murray Bodo Doubleday, New York, 1984, p.13).*

So life was Francis' teacher.

Secondly, doing the simple everyday things was central to Francis, even to the point where he was misunderstood and ridiculed.

His initial ministry of love was focused in serving the lepers around Assisi: washing them and their plates. His actions came to be seen as signs of God's love.

His own conversion continued as Francis prayed before crucifix in the chapel of San Damiano. He hears God speaking to him, "*Francis, can't you see my house falling into ruin? Go, and repair it for me.*" —(from "Legend of the Three Companions," Chapter V, nos. 13, 14).

Francis heard this initially only in terms of physically reconstructing the ruined churches around Assisi, begging for stone, and being ragged as a fool by the townspeople. It was later as others began to come to him to live the life of the community that the deeper understanding of building the church was understood.

In the light of the society of his day, Francis was a prophetic challenge. He was seen initially as a fool, but he did not give up. He continued to speak and live the message of God in a way that evoked a spiritual response in his hearers.

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Francis taught his brothers through the everyday to share the Gospel.

"One day, he took one of the younger brothers and said, 'Come, let us go to the village and preach to the people.' When they reached the village square, Francis greeted the people. He spoke with them and joked with them, and after some time started to leave the village. 'But Father,' cried a brother, 'we haven't yet preached to the people!' 'Indeed we have, my son,' replied Francis. 'If they did not see our blessed Lord in our lives, then they will certainly not see him in our words.' (from *The Wisdom of St. Francis and his Companions* by Stephen Clissold, Sheldon Press, London, 1978, p.63).

People were attracted to him. Hearts were being changed. Evangelism was taking place.

This points up one of the major aspects of evangelism: that of being an authentic channel of God's grace and love. Franciscan evangelism presents an attractive and powerful expression of God which is cluttered neither by the trappings nor the complications of the world.

Lest we get things out of balance, we need to remember that Francis drew people to a way of life which was focused in relationship with Christ and not upon himself. Francis was an open channel of God's grace.

Thirdly, Francis' energy was directed beyond the "status quo" of society and church to the marginalized and those who did not know Christ. As already noted, his living out of the Gospel is exemplified

by his ministry of care to the marginalized lepers around Assisi.

Francis identified with the marginalized, with those forced to live on the edge of society. He was prepared to mix with them, not to shun them. He became one of them. His espousal of Lady Poverty became an authentic evangelistic tool, as amplified in this story:

"Francis made friends with a nobleman of Rome called Matteo de Rossi, who invited him to dinner. Whilst they were waiting for their master to arrive, the servants began to distribute the daily dole to the beggars who gathered at the palace gate. When he realized what was going on, Francis slipped away to join the crowd and was given his share.

"Matteo came home, and the servants started looking for Francis who was nowhere to be found. At last, Matteo caught sight of him squatting amongst the poor in the courtyard. The nobleman then hurried out and sat down beside him, saying, 'Since you won't eat with me, Brother Francis, I must needs eat with you!' And he asked Francis to admit him to the Third Order and to teach him its Rule." (Ibid., p.34).

Francis was inspired and envisioned to reach out to those who did not know Christ, to those beyond the church. Francis is on fire with the proclamation of the message. In his "Letter to a General Chapter," he wrote, *"This is the very reason (God) has sent you all over the world so that by word and deed you might bear witness to God's message."*

The brothers were sent out. We read of them going on mission — evangelizing — throughout Italy, to Spain, and to Tunisia and Morocco. In their evangelizing and missionary endeavors, it was not unusual for the early brothers to be jeered at, made fun of, and persecuted, and even martyred.

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We read of Francis himself going off to Egypt to mix with the corrupt Crusaders and ultimately to meet with the Saracen Sultan. Jacques de Vitry writes:

"The Sultan ... with a great deal of attention listened to Francis preach the Faith of Christ to him and his followers. But in the end he was afraid of seeing some of his soldiers, whom the effective words of this man would have converted to the Lord, go over to the army of the Christians.

"He, therefore, had Francis led back to our camp with many signs of honour and with safe conduct, but not without saying to him: 'Pray for me, that God may reveal to me the law and the faith that is the more pleasing to him.' " (from "Correspondence Course on Franciscan Missionary Charism," CCFMC Office, Quezon City, p.3/2).

This meeting was not successful in the Sultan's conversion, but it does demonstrate something of the Franciscan evangelism method. *"It is a prophetic sign of a new relationship. Francis lived the tolerance and openness of the Gospel, while proclaiming its message and demanding conversion."* (Ibid. p.4/11)

MISSIONARY STATUTE

The original missionary vision of St. Francis is believed to be contained in the Rule of 1221. This Rule was never adopted. Chapters 14-16 of this Rule seem to take their foundation from our Lord's words recorded by St. Matthew:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Rule speaks of:

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- The brothers going throughout the world, as a brotherhood of wandering preachers. *"When the brothers go through the world, they should carry nothing for the journey, neither a knapsack, nor a purse, nor bread, nor money, nor a staff ..."*

- Being under divine inspiration. *"Therefore, any brother who, by divine inspiration, desires to go among the Saracens and other nonbelievers should go with the permission of his minister and servant."*

- Preaching the word of God by life. *"One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes ..."*

- Preaching the Gospel by word. *"... proclaim the word of God when they see that it pleases the Lord, so that they believe in the all-powerful God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ..."*

- Preaching, leading to the action of baptizing.

(Quotations from the Rule of 1221 were taken from *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, translation by Regis J. Armstrong O.F.M. and Ignatius C. Brady, Classics of Western Spirituality, S.P.C.K., London, 1982, pp.120-122.)

THIRD ORDER EVANGELISM TODAY

The roots of Francis' vision as shown in the Rule of 1221 Missionary Statute, emphasizing preaching and sharing the Gospel, have much to say to us today as we seek to bring others to a knowledge and love of God.

Likewise, the words framed at the Roman Catholic Franciscan General Chap-

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ter in Madrid (1972) focus for us the mission of Christ in which we share:

"Francis received the Gospel of Jesus Christ in faith and was aware that he and his brothers were sent to the world to proclaim, by life-style and word, conversion to the Gospel, the coming of the Kingdom of God, and the revelation of his love. His spiritual dynamism and urge for mobility sprang from his awareness of that mission." (Op. Cit., CCFMC Office, p.2/16.)

So what is distinct about Franciscan evangelism ... especially for us as tertiaries?

To identify this, we need to return once again to our foundational material ... to the Rule of the Third Order ... and most particularly to the Principles.

The First Aim of the Order is "To make our Lord known and loved everywhere." It is that which "shapes" our "lives and attitudes." But when we are talking about Franciscan evangelism, we need to give cognisance to the other two Aims as well. "To spread the spirit of love and harmony" and "To live simply" are also important elements in Franciscan evangelism.

Likewise, it is the Notes of the Order — humility, love, and joy — which sensitively tune our approach to evangelism. Evangelism is central to our lives as tertiaries.

What, then, is the essence of Franciscanism which colors our approach to the Christian commission to make Christ known and loved?

- Firstly, tertiaries take seriously the divine call to be missionaries. This can be in our own community or in another area

or country. Wherever we are, others can see and experience the overwhelming love and generosity of our God who makes himself known in Christ,

For example, I am aware of the tertiary who is a pastoral visitor who often visits filthy homes to care for the needs of the people. She takes with her the love of God. Just as it does for her, so the love of God impels and motivates us. It sustains and empowers us in this commission as we seek to connect with those who search for meaning and purpose, for forgiveness and hope in their lives.

As we minister, we are aware that the Third Order is not created to live only to itself. We recognize that it is the springboard for going out and drawing others into Christ. We are also aware — as people on a mission, as "evangels," as bearers of the Gospel — that we are not alone.

We are a support and encouragement to one another. We are a community united through our prayer and vocation to follow Christ after the example of St. Francis. This bonding of tertiaries is a witness to those we meet and those to whom we speak.

- Secondly, in our evangelism as tertiaries, we reverence those whom we meet. We respect the positions they hold, their points of view, their faith ... but we do not deny our own faith. We listen, we dialogue, we seek to understand and to listen again.

We do this in respect of the hedonism of the world and in respect of other cultures. We are reminded in the Principles that we are "pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice which breeds injustice or partiality because of the distinctions of race, sex, color, class, creed, status, or education."

In the 1978 Mattli documents, we read that the Franciscan "will appreciate the culture values of the people and will sing the Canticle of Creatures on seeing the love,

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the sense of community, the dignity and the joy of the people: because it is all created by Him and through Him! With this theological interpretation, the Gospel will more easily be 'incarnated' within culture and be made to take on local forms." (Ibid. p.7/5)

Tertiaries are called to demonstrate a non-violent approach to life, one which is evident in a gentleness which respects and hold others in reverence.

- Thirdly, as tertiaries, we wait for the opportune time to speak. The opportune time to speak may sometimes be in a one-to-one situation, or it may be an occasion when we are required, at the very public level, to speak out for social justice and international peace.

We wait for the opportunity to speak the Gospel by word and action, in teaching and in care, by being and doing, by touching people at their point of need, by not imposing ourselves but being ready to gently and lovingly challenge, and by walking alongside, as our Lord Jesus exemplified for us.

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For the individual, this may lead to the point of desiring baptism or to the point of living more deeply within one's baptism. Tertiaries meet them at their point of need, accepting them, caring for them, sharing with them, being examples of God's loving embrace, embodying and speaking the Good News.

The Third Aim reminds us that "Tertiaries ... show themselves true followers of Christ and of Saint Francis by their readiness to live simply and to share with others."

- Fourthly, tertiaries are prepared to be vulnerable in making "our Lord known and loved ..." by desiring to serve our brothers and sisters ... by laying ourselves

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Reader's Forum: Two Letters Worth Noting

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF) celebrated their tenth year of existence in St. Louis this past June. We were honored to have five members from the TSSF Standing Committee join us. They were Anita Catron, John Dotson, Mary Ann Jackman, Marie Webner, and Alden Whitney.

We are grateful to TSSF for "mothering" Dale Trana (now Dale Carmen) in her ten years as our Minister Provincial. A new Minister Provincial has been elected, and that is Jimmie Reese OEF.

We ask for your continued support and prayers as we grow in the spirit of our founder, Francis of Assisi. We meet yearly, and our next Chapter meeting is scheduled for June 22-25, 1995 at St. Joseph's Life Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

Shalom,

Ione Parsons OEF
Treasurer/Scribe

Dear Friends,

This fall, the American Province, Society of St. Francis, will be celebrating its 75th anniversary.

We are inviting you to join us for the inaugural event of this year-long celebration at the Church of the Ascension in Merrill, Wisconsin, where it all began. There will be a festal Eucharist on Saturday, September 17, at noon.

You are also invited to have a local celebration of this anniversary. A Litany of Thanksgiving and suggested propers have been mailed to most tertiaries, but copies may be obtained by writing the Society of St. Francis, P.O. Box 389, Mount Sinai, NY 11766.

We value the relationship that you have had with SSF in the past and ask that you share in our anniversary celebration by praying with us.

Pax et Bonum!

Br. Justus Richard SSF
Minister Provincial

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open to others ... by being prepared to go the extra mile ... by our willingness to wash one another's feet, as our Lord Jesus exemplified.

There is the example of the tertiary who teaches nurses about relating and caring and who seeks to give purpose to those nurses who wash the pans of the AIDS victim — none of which is in the curriculum.

Then there are the tertiaries who are priests whose ministry emphasizes the care of those who come to the door for hand-outs and who encourage their parishes to generously budget for that purpose.

And again, there are the tertiaries who faithfully visit the housebound and forgotten old people of their parish ... and those who are willing to transport those people who no one else will pick up and take to Sunday worship.

As Franciscans, we are to share the Gospel, to be channels of God's converting grace, through our words and our actions, through the lives we lead.

As tertiaries, we bring to bear the Franciscan ethos with our emphasis upon simplicity, the spreading of the spirit of love and of harmony, of obedience and faithfulness, all grounded in prayer and contemplation.

CONCLUSION

Franciscan Evangelism is not an activity which can be neatly separated out from the rest of the Christian life. Nor is it a "hard sell" approach to the Gospel. Evangelism is central to our lives. It is a normal, natural part of our Christian journeys

as Franciscan tertiaries.

It is about being living witnesses to Christ: witnesses who are enthused and motivated by our experiences of the love of God.

It is about tertiaries who are called by God to live in harmony and good will.

It is about people who exhibit a gentleness and a nonviolent approach to life and to others.

It is about people who are committed to live Gospel lives of simplicity out of reverence for others for the whole of creation and the Creator.

It is about Christians who love and praise God in Christ, who are empowered by the Holy Spirit, and who are formed after the example of Francis of Assisi — the Poverello.

It is ultimately about Christians who desire to share this great joy and abundance of life with everyone.

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Instruments of Peace

INTRODUCTION — I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all the tertiaries in Africa who contributed in various ways to the preparation of this presentation. Contributions were received from Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), and Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg (South Africa). The chapter meeting in Maseru (Lesotho) also contributed in combining the various ideas into this one paper.

GOD'S PEACE

The topic, "Instruments of Peace," is relevant today. A glance at the world today shows numerous trouble spots where there is ongoing conflict, namely in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The nature of the conflict varies from open warfare between ethnic groups or between political parties and religious groups to conflict within individuals who need inner peace so that the world may have peace.

This is where our challenge is manifested. To be instruments of peace, we must have peace within ourselves; we need God's peace.

Dr. John Haggai, founder of the Haggai Institute of Advanced Christian Leadership Training in Singapore, says the Bible speaks of two kinds of peace which can come to a person as a result of a loving relationship with God.

- The first is "peace with God," referring to the making of a peace treaty after a war is over. When you become a child of God through Jesus Christ, no longer are you at war with God. Instead, you are at peace with Him.

- The second is the "peace of God," referring to the inner tranquility you can have in the midst of a confusing and falling-apart world because you know that God is in charge. The fruit of this Spirit, which is love, produces peace, according to Haggai.

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presented by John Shongwe

PEACE BE WITH YOU

This was the first greeting of the Risen Lord. And it is the heartfelt need and desire of every human person. It is the great concern of our times. But there can be no peace in this world of ours, no peace among nations, unless there is first peace in our own hearts. Only then, can we be instruments of God's peace, doing the works of justice and love which lead to peace.

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus gathered his most intimate friends for a final meal. There he poured out His heart to them, sharing the deepest secret of His love ... "Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you."

When we open ourselves to invite God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to abide in us, God gives us His peace. This peace comes from knowing how much we are loved and cared for by the One who has care of all the world, the Almighty, the all-loving.

GOD'S PEACE

My brothers and sisters, gathered here from all the world's continents, let us

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(continued)

examine the kind of peace we are talking about. It is peace from God, different from the world's peace.

We are challenged to be instruments of God's peace. God's peace is characterized by the following attributes:

- It is eternal.
- It is a free gift.
- It is achieved through prayer and humility.
- It can be experienced in all circumstances, even in the midst of danger, war, famine, ill health, disaster, and death.
- It is the acceptance of God's will.
- It cannot be taken away, nor can it be shaken.

When God gives us His peace, He gives us a sense of security and of our own divinity as His sons and daughters. He gives us inner serenity. He enables us to cope with all that comes our way. He gives us strength and great joy in all situations.

The peace of God which passes all understanding wells up from the heart into the consciousness. It uplifts one. It is beyond our level of understanding, but we can experience it.

Canon T. T. Carter is quoted by the Cape Town tertiaries, speaking of humility as well as for God's peace, saying:

"It is perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed or irritated or sore or disappointed. It is to expect nothing. It is to wonder at nothing that is done to me and to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me and when I am blamed or despised.

"It is to have a blessed home in my-

self where I can go in, shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret that I am at peace ... as in a deep sea of calmness when all around and above is troubled."

PASSING GOD'S PEACE

God's peace is infectious. It can be sensed by others, and they can be helped, guided, and advised by one who has it.

In our interaction with others, we can pass on the peace of God. Some people convey a sense of God's peace by the example of their lives.

We are conscious of God's peace in the Eucharist, in gatherings of Christian people, in private communion with God, and in the midst of loneliness, suffering, and even violence and opposition.

We see God's peace in the life of Jesus, in all His compassion, his acceptance of trials, the rejection and the suffering on the cross. We see it in Jesus' selfless giving and healing, and in His patience with the disciples who had problems in understanding His purpose.

We observe the presence of God's peace in the life of St. Francis: by his impulsive gifts to the poor and embracing of the leper, through his struggles and suffering, when he was abused and scorned and rejected, in his starvation and neglect and then, in his receiving of the Stigmata.

THE PRODIGAL SON

This love and peace can also be found in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

The father of the two sons makes himself a fool by giving the younger son his inheritance. He should have favored the older son according to the legal code. The younger son loses his honor, and so does the father, because the son squandered all his property.

In effect, this action kills the father.

(continued next page)

By destroying his father's property, he destroys his father, because all his possessions affect the whole family.

When the son left the protection and the nurturing of the family and went to find protection and nurturing in another country, he, in effect, left the faith.

Then he comes to himself, and he begins to look back to the family. But we never see any sign of repentance, so the question is asked: "Is he truly repentant, or is he starving?"

The whole issue is resolved by the father who again behaves without honor, who waits for his son's return, runs out to greet him and dresses him with fine robes. He was foolish in his love for his son, according to the culture. But it is the father's foolishness that brings him back.

The elder son is angry and disrespectful, but again, the father resolves the situation.

The point is that the father chooses both sons without any prejudice toward either of their unrighteousness. He chooses each son completely and totally without any prejudice. He has utterly foolish love for both sons.

The Kingdom of God unifies. The Kingdom of God draws all people no matter who they are. There are no "chosen" people in the way of Jesus.

We may ask ourselves these questions: How is each son alive in our own continents and countries? How are we, as Franciscan tertiaries, taking this foolish and indiscriminate love into the world?

We need to identify the sons in our countries and ourselves as the Father.

A REAL LIFE STORY

In one of Dr. Haggai's books, we are told a real life story of a successful lawyer in Chicago, Dr. Horatio G. Spafford.

Dr. Spafford lost most of his property in the financial crisis of 1873. In the stress and strain of the times, he prevailed

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"Instruments of Peace" (continued)

upon his wife and four daughters to take a trip to France and to get as far away from the scene of worry as possible. They left on November 15, 1873.

On the night of November 22, their ship, "Ville de Havre," collided with another ship. Of the 226 passengers on board, only 87 survived. Mrs. Spafford was among the survivors, but their four daughters perished. On reaching France, she telegraphed her husband: "Saved alone. Children lost. What shall I do?"

Dr. Haggai notes that, in the depth of his bereavement, Mr. Spafford wrote his one and only hymn, "It Is Well With My Soul." The grief of his terrible loss and the peace he experienced as he and his wife submitted their lives to God are contained in the words from a verse of this hymn:

**When peace like a river attendeth
my way,
When sorrow like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot,
Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.**

As instruments of God's peace, we may be hurt or worn out, but we get revitalized by the Holy Spirit.

We have to bring compassion to those caught up in suffering from disease, stress, division, and conflict. We have to bring reconciliation between erstwhile enemies. As instruments of peace, we have to deliver an impartial and prophetic voice to all parties involved in conflict.

May the God of peace provide you with every good thing you need in order to do His will, and may He, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases Him. And to Christ, be glory for ever and ever! Amen.

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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, P.O. Box 157, Kula, Maui, Hawaii 96790-0157.
Deadline for the Advent issue is November 1, 1994.

BROTHER JUNIPER FELLOWSHIP (Boston and New England)

The Fellowship is preparing to convene the Northeast Conference at Graymoor, NY on August 26-27-28, with a theme of "Franciscans as Peacemakers." Janet C. Moore is the registrar. Community gatherings for the rest of the year are scheduled for the Saturdays of Oct. 1 and Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. For more information about the location of these meetings or other fellowship activities, please contact convener MARGARET MOTLEY at 508-369-4820.

LONG ISLAND FELLOWSHIP

According to the L.I.F. LINE newsletter, members gathered at the home of Frank and Janet Moore on June 11 for a meeting and the profession of David Garvin. The next meeting will be a Eucharist September 17 (3 p.m.) at St. Peter's in Bay Shore. For more information about any activities of the Fellowship, please contact co-convener MARIE McSHEA at (516) 379-7529.

PHILADELPHIA, NEW JERSEY, & DELAWARE FELLOWSHIP

The next meeting will be Oct. 8 at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Essington, PA. For more information, contact convener JOAN BEDELL at 562 N. Judson St., Philadelphia, PA 19130-3123, telephone (215) 569-9955 (home) or (215) 686-9481 (work).

LAND OF THE SKY FELLOWSHIP (North Carolina)

According to "Fruits of the Loom" newsletter, the September Fellowship meeting will be held at the Southeast Convocation in Atlanta, instead of the usual meeting date. For more information about fellowship activities, please call Convener ALICE WRIGHT at (704) 689-9768. Regular fellowship meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. either in the home or parish church of different members.

SERVANTS OF SAN DAMIANO FELLOWSHIP (North Carolina)

The first meeting of this newest fellowship was held at the Episcopal Servant Center in Greensboro on July 16 with 11 tertiaries and many guests in attendance. Elected convener was JOAN FOUTS, and Fleming Bell was chosen as co-convener. At a Eucharist celebrated by the Rev. Kale King, Deacon Kermit Bailey was life professed.

Regular meetings will be held on the fourth Saturday of each month from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. For more information, please contact Joan at 212 Ridge Trail, Chapel Hill 27514 or call (919) 929-6101.

EAST TENNESSEE FELLOWSHIP

According to "The Portiuncula Messenger," the fellowship is preparing to host the 1994 Southeast Convocation in Atlanta, scheduled for September 23-24-25. The theme will be "Franciscan Servanthood."

The September meeting will be in Atlanta during Convocation, and the October 29 meeting will be at St. Timothy's in Kingsport at 10 a.m. For more information about any of the fellowship activities, please contact convener JOHN TOLBERT at (615) 288-2631.

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FELLOWSHIP NEWS

(continued)

SAN DAMIANO COSTA DEL SOL FELLOWSHIP (Central Florida)

Co-conveners CLIFFORD and ELSIE AMOS report that plans for the 1995 Southeast Convocation under the guidance of Ken Watts are progressing and that a presentation will be made at the 1994 convocation in Atlanta.

The next meeting will be November 12 in Tampa. For information about location and fellowship activities, please contact Clifford or Elsie at 90 Miami Ave., Indiatlantic, FL 32903, (407) 676-0873.

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

New convener BETTY WOOD reports that Steve Smith and Nick Pijoan recently made their life professions, and that the fellowship mailing list is at an all time high. The large geographical region has made it difficult for regular meetings, but small groups have been gathering in Breckenridge, CO and Cheyenne, WY. A Francistide fellowship is planned; for information, please contact Betty at 1406 East 19th, Cheyenne 82001, telephone (307) 632-1517.

NEW UMBRIAN FELLOWSHIP (San Francisco Bay Area)

Co-conveners ANTHONY CHRISTIANSEN and BECKY GOLDBERG report at that members gathered with their Secular Franciscan sisters and brothers on August 11 for the Transitus of Saint Clare celebration, hosted by the OFM Friars at San Damiano Retreat in Danville, California.

For more information about fellowship gatherings, please contact Anthony (East Bay) at (510) 531-9755 or Becky (West Bay and San Francisco) at (415) 345-4683.

HAWAII FELLOWSHIP

Members will gather on September 1 at St. Mark's Church in Honolulu at 5:30 p.m. for a Eucharist followed by supper in celebration of Susan Barr's transition from Third Order to First Order. Susan arrives at the Community of St. Francis in San Francisco on September 6 to begin her journey as a postulant.

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

CONVOCAATION NOTES

ATTENTION CONVENERS:

Please send the details of 1995 convocations to:

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

Deadline for the Advent issue is November 1, 1994.

SOUTHEAST CONVOCAATION

• The 1994 Convocation will be September 23-24-25 at Ignatius House, 6700 Riverside Drive in Atlanta. The convening fellowship will be East Tennessee, and the theme will be "Servanthood: Living Sacramentally." Presenters will be Br. Justus SSF, Sr. Jean CSF, and TSSF Provincial Chaplain Marie Webner. To register or to obtain more information, please contact JOHN DOTSON, 4036 Lakota Place, Kingsport, TN 37664, telephone (615) 247-4488.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONVOCAATION

• The 1994 Convocation is scheduled for the Highland Springs Resort near Beaumont, CA, on September 16-17-18. The theme will be "Franciscan Joy in a Troubled World." For information and registration, please contact SYLVIA BROADBENT at 1957 Monroe St., Riverside, CA 92504, telephone (909) 689-3857.



The Franciscan Times
Lord, Make Me an Instrument of thy Peace

IPTOC OBSERVATION

“The other tertiaries there seemed to me outstanding in their commitment to the Third Order of St. Francis, in their gentle and generous approach to presenting the changes they felt would be helpful, and in their spirituality which was not hidden by their hilarious sense of humour. Like St. Francis, they were light-hearted but never light-weight.”

— *Anne Kotze, African Province
delegate to IPTOC '93
(from Pax et Bonum, TSSF newsletter
for Africa, Christmas, 1993)*

