



The Franciscan Times

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER 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.

Voluntary Simplicity—A Commentary and Review of Resources: Books, Magazines and Ready-made Curricula by John Brockmann

*Hail Queen Wisdom, may the Lord protect you
with your sister, holy pure Simplicity*

Francis's "Salutation of the Virtues"

Francis and Franciscans have espoused the virtue of simplicity for hundreds of years. Our Order has long taught simplicity, and one can easily see this emphasis in our new *Forming the Soul of a Franciscan*. Additionally, we are all asked to include *The Principles* in our daily devotional readings, and thus every 10th, 11th and 12th day we re-encounter our Order's "aim" of simplicity.

Why then do we see little or no mention of Franciscans in all the books being published on Voluntary Simplicity and in all the articles appearing in *Time* and *Newsweek* on this subject? Why, suddenly, has the culture turned to audio cassette lectures from the New Road Map Foundation, publications such as Seattle's *Simple Living Quarterly* or *InContext*, and simplicity grassroots support groups such as Voluntary Simplicity Study Circles from the Learning for Life Project? In T. R. Nolen's doctoral study on Voluntary Simplicity (1994 Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, *Choosing Voluntary Simplicity as a Lifestyle*), of the 48 individuals studied, 18 said that they had learned of Voluntary Simplicity from books, but only two listed the Bible as their source. Moreover, 17 said that they had learned of Voluntary Simplicity from organizations, but only three listed "church" as their organizational source.

Many people in our culture have a deep thirst for a more simple life. The piper has to be paid now, not only in dollars and deficits, but in two-career lifestyles where free time for family or community is minimal, and where the spiritual time for prayer, retreat, study, and

worship has for many gone the way of sitting and visiting on porches. Our culture is overwhelmed by the paradox of working harder and longer and getting less and less physically, psychologically, and spiritually at the end of the day. Our culture is experiencing the poverty of affluence, and perhaps that's why over 30,000 people have either attended the New Road Map Foundation Voluntary Simplicity lectures or bought the audio cassettes.

After sitting down and reading a half dozen books, listening to audio cassettes, and trying out study guides, I have come to the conclusion that the most effective contemporary messengers of Voluntary Simplicity begin at a different place than do we in the Order. We, like Francis, begin approaching simplicity after we have had our San Damiano experience with Jesus. We begin in the deep desire to have a real, on-going relationship with God, and then, in seeking how to live that life, we are led by grace to embrace simplicity. Look, for example, at how the Order prefaces the message of simplicity in Day 10 of *The Principles* with nine earlier days focusing on Jesus, evangelism, love, and harmony. The one book specifically focused on simplicity that is suggested in the old Formation Letters' bibliography is Richard Foster's *The Freedom of Simplicity*. Foster, like *The Principles*, has many prefatory pages in which he examines the roots of simplicity in both the old and the new covenant as well as among the saints before he approaches living out the virtue of simplicity. In other words, Christian/Franciscan simplicity up to now has always been approached from within a spiritual context.

"We don't take gold seriously enough."

James Coburn, *Waterhole* # 3

But what if the culture was not inherently Christian, attuned to spiritual values, or possessing very extensive spiritual sensibilities? If this were true, and it

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Voluntary Simplicity (continued)

does certainly describe much of our culture, then what would a culture make of simplicity that can only be arrived at after one has already become Christian, espoused spiritual values, and thirsted for deep spiritual food. What if the culture were all like the Samaritan woman who came to draw plain, ordinary water at the well. Wouldn't the culture, like the woman, be at least confused by the words of Jesus concerning the water of life? Wouldn't the culture, like the woman, rebuff Jesus' words with skepticism?

On the other hand, what if one began approaching simplicity from the level of the plain, ordinary drawing of water? What if advocates of simplicity began at the experience of the first inklings of a poverty of affluence? Dominguez and Robin in their popular tapes and book begin their march to simplicity by first having their participants or readers contact the Social Security Administration with a "Request for Statement of Earnings" that delivers in black-and-white the "total" one has earned in their entire life. Then Dominguez and Robin require that their participants or readers figure out their net worth? The physical values of the Social Security Administration report juxtaposed with an idea of net worth almost demand that readers ask themselves the question "Where did it all go? What have I accomplished?" No wonder Dominguez and Robin titled their book, *Your Money or Your Life* and not *Nine Steps to Voluntary Simplicity*. They began with their reader's initial pangs of spiritual discomfort, and gently bring them to examine their self integrity and personal values.

In another popular Voluntary Simplicity book, *Out of the Rat Race*, Susan Gregory does quote from *The Little Flowers*, but she also talks about mission statements, calendars, cooking, and credit card debt. Jacob Needleman's excellent philosophical fable has some very interesting things to say about updating Thomas a Kempis's order, *The Brotherhood of the Common Life*, but he begins by examining how a day in the life of Donald Trump, from his best selling book, *The Art of the Deal*, can be seen as a day in hell. Finally, *The Simplicity Circle* study guide begins with participants feelings of emptiness and lack of meaning—"they are worried that at the end of their lives they will discover...that they have not lived," not with a spiritual or scriptural investigation.

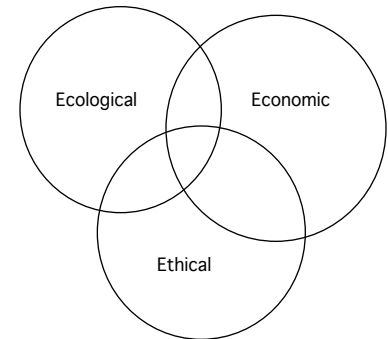
In many ways the Voluntary Simplicity movement has captured at its core the method of Jesus' communication in parables. Jesus did not talk to Galileans in theologically learned words about the Kingdom of God, nor did he communicate as if all his listeners had had John's baptism or had been able to maintain ritual purity. No, Jesus began talking of physical treasures in fields and

physical seeds among rocks. He sat at table and drank wine with publicans and sinners and spoke their language about prodigals who squander and guests not properly dressed for feasts. The Voluntary Simplicity movement talks dollars and cents and gently, almost unobtrusively, leads the readers and participants to make spiritual decisions and commitments. Perhaps there's much that can be learned from them because their message has been getting out, is being followed, and is effective. The parable approach to spreading the word of the Kingdom begins in the here and now with the concerns of average families around dinner tables.

In my research for this article I found verification of this move from material to spiritual considerations of simplicity in a dissertation written by Teris Nolen that examined how people came to choose and sustain a Voluntary Simplicity lifestyle. Nolen depicted their choices in the figure below.

Adapted from Nolen's *Model of Factors Influencing Voluntary Simplicity Choices (VS)* (1994 Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, *Choosing Voluntary Simplicity as a Lifestyle*, p. 82)

Nolen observed that ecological considerations (e.g.,



avoiding unnecessary waste of resources) and economic considerations (e.g., desires for economic self-sufficiency) were uppermost when study participants initially defined and acted in ways that were voluntarily simple. However, the ethical considerations (e.g., desire to contribute to worthwhile purposes or desires for a meaningful existence) were the considerations that led most to the adopt and continue this lifestyle. Thus beginning with the practical ecological and economic considerations that the movement has taken appears to fit how Americans actually make lifestyle choices concerning simplicity.

Yet What We Offer Is Crucial!

Getting involved with the Voluntary Simplicity movement is not a one way street; there is much we can learn from the practical focus of the movement, but there are key observations and beliefs that the Third Order can offer. We who espouse the tradition of Christian/Franciscan simplicity need to get involved in the Voluntary Simplicity movement or risk the culture getting a belly ache from its experience of simplicity just as surely as the culture did with "more-is-better." For as Jesus described the evil spirit returning to the unoccupied house bringing with it "seven other spirits more wicked than itself," so too if Voluntary Simplicity does not work to change the inner person, then perhaps even greater evils will come. These evils might come because society may come to see Voluntary Simplicity as only yet another extreme in its periodic psychological swings...swings nearly identical to those they've experienced in the transition from the words of Carter's inaugural address: "We have learned that 'more' is not necessarily 'better'..." to Reagan's "Our aim is to increase national wealth so that all will have more..."

There are three important observations that Christian/Franciscan simplicity can offer the Voluntary Simplicity movement. First, simplicity alone is not the answer. Richard Foster put the problem succinctly in the first chapter of his book on simplicity:

If we detach simplicity from them [the classic Christian disciplines], we turn it into something other than what it is. But when we view it within the landscape of the whole of Christian spirituality, we gain balance and perspective....The life with God, hid in Christ, is a unity, a seamless robe. That, of course, is the essence of simplicity and the cause of its complexity. (13)

Foster points out that in Francis de Sales's *Introduction to the Devout Life*, de Sales does offer counsel on wealth, poverty, attire, and simplicity of speech but combines these with counsels on meditation, prayer, humility, and solitude. The contemporary Franciscan, John Michael Talbot, only arrives at discussing the central topic of his 1989 book, *Simplicity*, after spending half his book on the humility, obedience, prayer, meditation, and self-discipline.

On the other hand, every military tactician has learned that one does not attack the enemy across a broad front, but rather concentrates forces on a salient opening and works in a concentrated way for the breakthrough. Perhaps the economic belly ache of "too much" in our culture and the ecological acts of simplicity are the salient opening by which many in modern culture can dis-

cover the rest of the classic virtues. In the Order, we all have made simplicity part of our rule of life, but it is only a part. Perhaps one important reason to get involved in the Voluntary Simplicity movement is to offer a vision of the role of simplicity as a means to discover the other Christian virtues of community, love, service, prayer, confession, study, self-denial, humility, and joy.

Second, simplicity is a grace and not something that is willed. With all the media appeals to willpower in weight-loss or stop-smoking programs, sooner or later there is a missing of the mark, a return to old ways, an inadequacy of willpower. In many of the Voluntary Simplicity books, in their emphasis on the practical implications of simplicity, grace gets lost. Yet Celano notes that Francis always thought that "holy simplicity [was] the daughter of Grace." (Second Life of St. Francis) Moreover, it's often at the point of failure, of the discovery of one's limits that God's grace enters into the situation if one is open and available. If simplicity is not seen as a grace, then there is the danger of the obverse, of nine-step legalisms and bondage all over again to a new set of compulsions from without rather than as a response of love and joy from within.

On the other hand, the Cursillo movement has long had a phrase that I have always particularly liked which says "Act as if." Act as if, they suggest; you really believed that God loved you; what would that be like. "Act as if," they intone, "you really did want to change your life, what would that be like." Perhaps they would suggest here, act as if you already had the grace of simplicity, what would that life be like. Many of us discovered as we moved through our formation and tendered our rules as postulants and novices that we did not really feel all that Franciscan, but we trusted that being Franciscan would all come in God's good time...and that grace did come in time. So too, perhaps the outward acts of simplicity suggested by the Voluntary Simplicity movement will put those people within the vicinity of the grace of simplicity. What we need to do is to try to be there with our own and Francis's stories of failure and with our repeated discoveries of grace and renewal and second chances. We need to be there with the message that simplicity is a grace and not another thing achieved or bought at any price.

Third, many of the books in Voluntary Simplicity refer to Gandhi's deep observation concerning simplicity where he noted that one will

only give up a thing when you want some other condition so much that the thing no longer has any attraction for you.

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The Fast Life by Treese Allen

Fast from judging others;
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from fear of illness;
Feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute;
Feast on speech that purifies.

Fast from discontent;
Feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger;
Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism;
Feast on optimism.

Fast from negatives;
Feast on affirmatives.

Fast from bitterness;
Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern;
Feast on compassion.

Fast from suspicion;
Feast on truth.

Fast from gossip;
Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm;
Feast on prayer that sustains.

Fast from worry;
Feast on faith.

Coming Stories for May/June Issue

Deadline for articles for next issue--May 15

- Tertiary works with inmates to produce poetry set to music—sample music will be included.
- A Review of New Great Courses on Tape—*Francis of Assisi* by Professors Cook and Herzman
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Third Order

Poems by Patti Noel

Crossroads (8 October 1998)

Here I am Lord at the crossroads again
One is the road old and familiar
The other is new and strange
The old has a wide path well trotted
The new is narrow and nearly over grown.

Which is where you would have me go Lord?
My mind tells me to travel the old and familiar
My heart hears you calling me to the new and strange
If I go that road, do I turn left or right?
And what will I find down that path
Who will I find on it?

I have been here so many times
And yet here I am again.
At the crossroads that call a challenge
Challenges for chancing new changes
Or to go forward to the old and familiar.

I am told that the path to you Lord,
Is the less traveled one and maybe overgrown
How am I to know which road is to you?
Are you to my left or to my right Lord?
What if I make the wrong choice?
Is there another crossroad to correct me?

I am waiting to see where you are
And you are waiting for me to make a choice
We wait in silence for each other.
Waiting for the world to be still
Waiting for signs that can be trusted

You wait for me Lord to take the first step
And I wait until the dust settles so I can see you.
So here I am at the crossroads
Looking for direction
One direction in the old and familiar
One direction in the past and that which is lost
One direction challenged by the world and worldly things
And one direction into your heart's desire for me

The past I can see and know that place
The old and familiar is the wide path ahead
What is it that I don't see Lord?
Is the world to my left and you to my right?
Or is it the other way around?
You are my left and the world my right
The path looks the same from where I am standing

I have been here before, and have chosen wrongly
I have chosen the work and paid the price
I don't want the world's glitter and gloom
I don't want its pain and suffering
Its temptations of glory and riches
If I am to have it without you Lord.

Help me to choose the path to you Lord.
Stand with me in this crossroad
And guide my feet down the path that leads to you
Clean from my eyes worldly things that blind me from you
My head tells me to go left because it is logical
My heart tells me to go right because you sit on the right
The right hand of our father
Please Lord let it be into your arms that I walk

Silence (8 November 1997)

Silence is a gift, it is a place
a place to just be.
It is a chosen place to be in your presence Lord,
to focus on the inner voice,
the inner voice that calls us to listen.

Silence is a place that bring stillness to the voice,
it brings stillness to the soul that waits.
It is the soul that waits to hear the voice,
the inner voice that guides and comforts us.

Silence is a place to be present to others,
and goes past just pleasantries.
It is one soul speaking to another,
in a community that hears a same voice.

Silence is a place of surrendering,
it is the surrendering of self in search.
It is in a search through the soul to find the voice,
the voice that echos in our soul and calls to us to be.

Silence is a place in community,
a community that surrenders to the inner voice.
It is the inner voice that calls us to be a community,
a community that hears and responds to the calling.

Silence is a place, a resting-place,
a place to rest in the Lord and be present to him.
It is a place to be open and to receive him into us,
to receive his love and grace.

Silence is a place to be still and know God,
to be still and be touched by him.
It is to be still and stand in awe in his presence
the presence that allows us to know forgiveness and receive life.

Silence is the place where our soul calls,
where the soul calls and cries out to be heard.
It is in silence that our inner voice calls
calling to the God who hears our cries and responds.

Silence is the place where God responds,
responds to us by answering our cries.
He responds to our cries because we know him,
in knowing him we dare to call him Abba, father.

Silence is a place where our Abba is present,
and in his presence we accept him and receive his love.
In receiving him our soul cries out in trust and in joy,
a joy filled with knowledge that we will have eternal life with him.

In honoring the multiplicity of their readers' backgrounds, and perhaps in response to the injuries suffered from the inadequacies of western religions, some Voluntary Simplicity books look east for the "inner thing" that will displace the wants and desires to which Gandhi referred. Some books leave the definition of this "inner" new thing blank. However, the problem here is what will take the place in the swept inner room; will the demons return in a new guise and now only more powerful? Christian/Franciscan simplicity is quite clear about what this "inner thing" is that displaces the outer desires and attractions, and that quite simply is the love of God.

In the final analysis, there is much we can learn from the Voluntary Simplicity movement as well as much that they can learn from our experiences and our beliefs.

Resources Commentary

*Give me neither poverty nor wealth,
but only enough. (Proverbs 30:8)*

Now that I have perhaps piqued your interest to become involved in reading about Voluntary Simplicity or perhaps even leading a Voluntary Simplicity Study Circle as part of your ministry, I would like to offer resources for your work. Why not write in to the *Franciscan Times* and let the rest of us know of any other resources or your experiences with this movement. I'll briefly comment on the resources and perhaps include one or two items I found particularly useful.

To keep things simple, the following can be obtained at libraries or through interlibrary loan using the Internet searching tool "Worldcat."

Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin***1/2 Penguin Books 1993 (pbk.) (It also exists as a 1984 version on six one-hour audiocassettes and a 120 page workbook. New Road Map Foundation, Dept. PBK, PO Box 15981, Seattle, WA 98115 \$60.00)

I think that Dominguez and Robin have created the best of the books in this movement. They have a wonderful wiseacre tone, lots of catchy phrases (e.g., "making a living" becomes "making a dying"), and the backbone of their book is a nine step method towards financial independence and financial integrity. They appear to keep it all very practical and physical, but along the way discuss money and making a living from successively bigger perspectives: a practical/physical realm ("more is better"), from an emotional/psychological realm (money as power and security vs

Gandhi's "satagraha" or soul force), a cultural realm ("growth is good" and inflation/recession/depression/cost of living fears), family of humans realm and the universe (need to realign spending not just for ourselves but so everyone will have enough). Frugality and stewardship are covered along with Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* and the addictiveness of money that robs a person and a people from pursuing spiritual values. The authors also have a wonderful section on how one can redirect their life to volunteer service for others once they discover how little paid work they actually need after expenses have been cut. To illustrate how popular this book is, Nolen's dissertation study (mentioned earlier) interviewed 48 individuals; 18 said that they had learned of Voluntary Simplicity from books, and 6 specifically mentioned this book (three mentioned the Elgin book listed below; only two listed the Bible as their source of learning from books).

Money and the Meaning of Life Jacob Needleman *** New York: Doubleday 1991. (Also available on audiocassette from Bantam Doubleday.)

In comparison with the other books, Needleman does not begin with actuarial tables and budgets, but with a religious and spiritual perspective that he hopes will create "disequilibrium" in readers concerning how they handle their financial affairs. Needleman notes that he wants to sacramentalize the money question so that it is taken seriously, and he uses Jesus' "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" as a refrain for examining how money is misused, and how it prevents individuals from attending to their own spiritual values and life. I found it an odd book in that seems to begin philosophically and then moves to an extended story about Solomon's building of the temple. Along the way, the reader examines the role of money in the story as well in Needleman's students' Socratic dialogues relating to his Solomon story. Needleman repeatedly makes the point that when spiritual values are lost, money and work take on many of their metaphysical qualities. Thus, he explains the transference of values proclaimed by Apple Computer employee tee-shirts—"Working 80 Hours A Week And Loving It." I thoroughly enjoyed the magical way he moves from exploring voluntary simplicity insights from the 14th century Brotherhood of the Common Life to Lewis Hyde's 1979 essay on the gift economy of art. *Out of the Rat Race: Practical Guide to Taking Control of Your Time and Money So You Can Enjoy Life More* Susan Gregory ** Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1994 (pbk.)

Gregory's has ample references to the two already mentioned. Her approach again begins somewhat

philosophically in the Quaker fashion of suggesting that one should live from “inside out”: begin with being clear about one’s principles and values and then living a life style that expresses those values and principles. As a mother she has wonderful tales of “living inside out” that take the reader from simplicity in action during her child’s stay in the neo-natal unit to negotiating parental responsibilities with her spouse. She juxtaposes an observation from Francis:

When the soul is troubled, lonely and darkened, then it turns easily to the outer comfort and to the empty enjoyment of the world.

with one from a mall shopper who confided:

I often head for the mall without any idea of what I might buy. It’s like entertainment. I even feel a rush when I buy things that are pretty. I know deep down that I’m not shopping for the items, but rather for the feeling.

She importantly observes that change is a process and requires a shifting of attitudes and a re-orienting. Yet, I am still not sure what I think about the concept of SMART goals—a kind of rule—offered in her pages by George Sweeting, former president of the Moody Bible Institute: life goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable, and Tangible. A nice feature of this book that could aid its use as a textbook in a parish study group is that each chapter closes with a section called “Your Turn” which includes four of five items to carry the ideas of the chapter into practice.

Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich. Duane Elgin *** New York: William Morrow, Rev. Edition 1993 (pbk)

This is a book referred to by all the above books and functions as the movement’s philosophical touchstone. The introduction to the revised edition by Ram Das suggests the book’s integration of Western material technology and Eastern insights into consciousness. Elgin spends a good deal of time explaining what simplicity is not: it is not impoverished living which frequently leads to helplessness, passivity and despair; nor a turn away from progress, a need for rural living, nor a denial of beauty. Along the way we hear of the historian Arnold Toynbee’s “Law of Progressive Simplification” (“true growth in a society is the ability to shift increasing energy and attention from materiality to culture, compassion, community, and strength of democracy”), and how simplicity in interpersonal communication might mean less gossip and more eye contact. Elgin’s emphasis is on persuading the reader to move from life on automatic pilot to life as continuous conscious decision-making. Only when one is off auto-

pilot can one even begin to discriminate between needs and wants in responding to the needs of the world.

Inner Simplicity: 100 Ways to Regain Peace and Nourish Your Soul Elaine St. James * Hyperion 1995 (pbk)

Each of St. James’s books claims to be national bestsellers, and all seem to be written in similar practical ways: a smorgasbord of 100 page-long ideas and suggestions that would work great as refrigerator Post-It reminders. Some of her ideas reminded me of some of the simplicity suggestions we include in the Formation letters such as: learn to receive (#12), have a week-end retreat at home with the family (#19 & 20), have a family meal in silence (#7), figure out what others have to give you, learn to see problems as gifts (#34), examine the costs of saying “NO” (#55) and do nothing (#94). Some of the ideas are nice, but I am unclear what they have to do with simplicity, e.g., do things you fear (#50), smile a lot (#42), and laugh a lot (#59). However some of her suggestions worry me, e.g., be selective about current events (#43)—should one cut oneself off from news of the world?—or, get out of relationships that don’t support you (#71). Finally, I found in most of the other books that simplicity was a means to redirect one’s time, attention, and energy for the service of God or others. I didn’t see such an end highlighted in this book.

The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture David Shi*** New York: Oxford University Press 1985

The observation that “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” seems especially relevant in considering the Voluntary Simplicity movement. Shi’s historical review of the simple life in America is an excellent book to read. His is an intellectual history of Americans who for 300 years have been attempting to live out the shifting cluster of ideas, sentiments, and activities that have meant the simple life. In his pages we meet those who have proved simplicity could be a living creed and not a hollow sentiment such persons as Quaker John Woolman, the Catholic Rural Movement (allied in the 1930s with Dorothy Day’s urban Catholic Worker Movement), John Burroughs, as well as Emerson and Thoreau. Shi suggests that simple living has frequently been maintained by quaint nostalgia, and that Americans have been repeatedly baffled by the complexity of simplicity that did not always lead to high thinking but could at times lead instead to eccentricity or ways for the privileged classes to keep workers content with their lot. Yet, as the author points out, the simple life has been a resilient aspiration for Americans despite its repeated failures.

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Bringing Voluntary Simplicity To Your Block: A Journal and Two Ready-made Curricula

Simple Living Quarterly: The Journal of Voluntary Simplicity 2319 N. 45th Street Box 149 Seattle, WA 98103 \$14.00 per year

I found the primary use of this little quarterly to be a resource guide. The usual suspects were there in opinion pieces (Elgin and Dominguez & Robin) along with reviews, case studies in simple living, and reprints from other related journals. The editorial set the tone for the journal along the lines that simple living did not mean living in deprivation but knowing when enough is enough rather than being driven by consumerism.

(Nolen's dissertation also makes reference to *InContext* magazine with issues centered around topics such as: "What's Enough" (#26), "We Can Do It!" (#33) with various articles describing tools for community transformation to simpler lifestyles, and "It's About Time" (#37) describing various ways to reconceive one's relationship to time in a simpler way. For back issues of *InContext* write to Positive Futures, PO Box 10818 Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. 1-800-937-4451)

Voluntary Simplicity Study Circle Guide by Cecile Andrews (1994) Learning for Life Project 711 N. 60th St. Seattle, WA 98103 \$6.00

Andrews has a Ph.D. in Education from Stamford, and seems to have cleverly adapted a set of democratic folk learning practices from Sweden and Denmark for this 40-page simplicity study workbook. The study project seeks to be a "transformative, learning for life" rather than an intellectual or academic course, to create a supportive community for individuals to explore simplicity lifestyle decisions, and to use discovery learning. Parts One, Two, and Three describe the Study Circles and how they run even to the outline of a typical meeting. Part Four has short readings, questions and procedures for running a nine-meeting program. These meetings cover such topics as: enjoyment, creativity, silence, time, working, and community. Like the movement in general, it is practical and ecumenical. Currently these study groups are meeting in 15 states as well as Canada and Puerto Rico.

This is a program that I used in a little study group at a bookstore coffee house. I have altered the curriculum's short readings to include short biblical readings ranging from Hebrew scriptures' concept of the jubilee to Francis's beloved Gospel tale of the "Lilies of the Fields."

LifeStyle Simplification Lab by Elaine Stover and Nelson Stover (1995) New Living Patterns for New Times, Institute of Cultural Affairs 5911 Western Trail, Greensboro, NC 27410 Phone 910-605-0143 or e-mail at ICAGboro@jgc.apc.org ("Complete Kit: Sample Brochure, Participant's Guidebook, and Facilitation Guide"—\$28.00)

This is the program examined by Nolen's 1992 dissertation. The Stovers have been living a life of voluntary simplicity for 25 years, and Nolen describes their Lab as a one-day experience (two three-hour sessions) designed for between 15 and 40 participants. "The Lab" includes five parts: a group discussion of a three page article entitled "Economics, Ecology and Us," a thinktank set of exercises in which participants define the images, impediments, and suggestions for achieving a simple lifestyle; another short group discussion of a one page article taken from Dominique' and Robin's book (described above) entitled "What is Enough?" a second thinktank set of exercises in which participants define for themselves what's "not enough" what's enough, and "what's too much" in "stuff, relationships, and knowledge" in order to develop a set of values and boundaries for knowing when and what is "enough;" and finally a creative summary exercise called a "minicabaret" in which Lab participants create songs, skits, poems, or slogans to capture the insights discovered in the course of the day. The Stovers report that they have offered the seminar to some 500 participants in this country and overseas. And, although they include the singing of the Shaker's "Simple Gifts" as part of the day's exercise as well as listing Foster's *Freedom of Simplicity* in their resources, most of the Lab seems to have what Nolen would call an economic or ecological emphasis. However, "The Lab" has a good range of activities that might prove to be an excellent format for a Third Order convocation.

Christian/Franciscan Simplicity

Freedom of Simplicity Richard Foster *** San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981 (this is available from the TSSF Library)

Before Foster discusses practical details of simplicity, he has nearly 100 pages that describe the Judeo-Christian roots of simplicity. He quite wonderfully interweaves the Hebrew scripture ideas of hesed—loving kindness—and misphat—ethical righteousness—with Jesus' lilies of the field and identification with the poor. Francis, of course, makes his appearance to allow Foster to discuss the joyousness and reckless abandon of simplicity. However, along with Francis, Foster explores simplicity in the Quaker George Fox and in the racial reconciliation of Clarence Jordan's Koinonia Farm in Americus, Georgia, begun in 1942. When Foster gets to the practice of

simplicity, he talks like Gregory about living "inside-out," but he details what this inside, this living at the Center as a Christian is for him. He also discusses being conscious of what one is doing; he adds not just a plain consciousness, but a consciousness of Christ in the equation of his own personal actions, desires, and needs. I found a very helpful discernment checklist that has to do with discontent; if simplicity brings content, what is one going to do with pangs of discontent. Do such pangs suggest a failed simplicity? Foster suggests that: (1) We share such feelings with a few people we trust to get their insights; (2) If the discontent arises over those whose plight is desperate or (3) Over the well-being of our children, then it is probably of the Lord; (4) One must take care not to assume that wanting to improve our own state is wrong; (5) Examine whether the discontent is discontent arising because of a lack of peace with Jesus thus deserving of confession; (6) Distinguish between genuine psychological needs, e.g., for a pleasant surrounding, and obsessions; (7) Distinguish between desires arising from heavenly love and those arising from money; and (8) Still every motion arising from greed. Like the other books this covers budgeting and handling expenses but with much less concrete detail. Also as do the other books, his points out that cutting expenses and needs for income allows one to devote more in service to others and more to give away. Unlike the others, however, he also examines simplicity within the church and religious life.

Simplicity John Michael Talbot (with Dan O'Neill) **
Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1989 (pbk.)

I really wanted to like this book more than I did. Talbot & O'Neill correctly position simplicity within a careful exploration of humility, obedience, prayer, and meditation, and they clearly note that simplicity is the result of grace not willpower. I was excited to see so much focus on Francis and even to read a number of comments and positions from our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscan Order. It was very interesting to read of Talbot's intentional covenant community, the Franciscan-like Brothers and Sisters of Charity in Eureka Springs Arkansas, and how simplicity has allowed them to reach out to others locally and internationally. However, just when the reader asks: "...how can this be done? How can I respond to this call in my everyday life, in my neighborhood, in my parish?" Talbot & O'Neill answer: "Seek God, and he will show you." Thus just when it was time to move into the practical matters focused upon by the more secular Voluntary Simplicity books, Talbot & O'Neill demurr just as those books demurr about fully explor-

ing the spiritual dimensions of simplicity. I also wondered how Talbot & O'Neill's interesting explorations of the development of the rosary and the role of charismatic prayer in tongues specifically related to the topic of simplicity. (A nice feature of the book that would make it easy to use in a study group is that each chapter closes with four or five study questions.)

2001 Convocations Information Thus Far

- **Southeast:** September 28-30, 2001, Ignatius House, Atlanta. Contact Jacqui Belcher.
- **Western:** 8/10-12, San Damiano Retreat, Danville, CA
- **Midwestern.**
- **Northern Mountains and Plains (NE-WY)**
- **Northeastern:** 8/24-6, Graymoor Friary (Garrison NY). Contact Don Josephs.
- **Trinidad/Tobago:** 5/4-6, Contact Pamela Redhead-Mongoo.
- **South Central:** 5/18-20, Cedarbrake Center, Belton TX. Contact Francesca Wigle.
- **Southwest.**
- **Guyana.**
- **South California:** 9/14-16, Spiritual Life Center, Onmza., Contact Dorothy Hawkins.
- **Order of Ecumenical Franciscans:** 6/28-7/1.

CONVOCATION NOTES

ATTENTION CONVENERS:

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:

R. John Brockmann TSSF,
P.O. Box 277, Warwick, MD 21912-0277.

**Dorothy Adams- Died January 2, 2002.
Some Remembrances by Three Close
Friends**

One of God's Angels

By Caroline Benjamin, Third Order Secretary

Like many of us, I was one of Dorothy's many postulants back when she served the Third Order as an AFD. Through her replies to my reports, I came to know her as gentle sage, earth mother, kind and helpful counselor and, above all, lover of God, Francis, and Clare. A serendipitous event brought her to Sanctuary West, our small Texas Hill Country ranch for a six-week visit in the spring of 1990; its purpose was for her to recover from the pressures of working for the Presbyterian Church Headquarters. Afterward she and Denzel moved to Louisville, Kentucky. Physician's orders were for her to do nothing, but, as anyone who knew her would guess, Dorothy managed to throw her total self and energy into such activities as reading, bird watching, and walking in the quiet out of doors getting to know birds, jackrabbits, cottontails, armadillos, squirrels, and lizards as friends. Although ranchers claim the endangered golden-cheeked warbler does not exist in these environs, Dorothy proved them wrong by quickly finding several pairs nesting on our property in the northeastern facing tops of some of our mature cedar trees.

She was beloved by the parishioners at our small church in Bandera (St. Christopher's), where she became good friends with our Irish-born priest, Fr. Nelson Daunt; she had not met him previously but just happened to be his son Francis' spiritual director in Georgia. Dorothy and I remained soul friends for the rest of her too brief life, although the only other time I was to see her alive was at the Provincial Convocation in New Orleans, where we happened to be put in adjoining rooms sharing a bathroom—what a wonderful surprise to meet there the first evening, toothbrushes in hand! Dorothy meditated and had such a deep level of communion with God that she often sensed, through intercessory prayer, when one of her flock was hurting. In my case, she called to find out that my husband (Jerry) had just been diagnosed with stage III colon cancer 4 years ago; I'm convinced that her prayers were invaluable in his healing. It's difficult for me to believe that she left this life so quickly but that's how she often did things—spontaneously and joyously. I have always considered Dorothy an angel and I know that she is now watching over all of us who knew her; especially she is watching over her beloved tabby, Sophia Felicity, who has come to live with us and our two dogs at Sanctuary West.

**From Paddy Kennington, Assistant Formation
Director**

Overhead, a large red hawk swooped down in the middle of the city park and pounced on a hapless rat. With an avian elegance, the graceful raptor with prey in its claws rose from the ground and settled in a tree not more than six yards from where I stood. This all happened in the shadow of the Coca-Cola skyscraper and within sight of the Atlanta skyline. A couple of bluejays took exception to the hawk's presence and began to scream and dive at the much bigger bird who chose to fly away to another cluster of trees. I was so excited about the hawk, I couldn't wait to tell someone. The someone happened to be my boss who pointed out that the "hawk" might well have been a falcon.

Well, I was so sure it was hawk. Wasn't I a former biology teacher? I ran a computer search for raptor pictures and sure enough, except for size, the hawk might have been a falcon at least from a frontal view. I reached for the phone. "I'll just call Dorothy. She'll know the difference." My hand rested on the headset of my office phone. Dorothy isn't at the end of that line anymore. She wouldn't be answering to her cybernunc email address, either. I sat for a moment and let the bittersweet pain sink in; how I miss her and wish I could speak to her just one more time.

In a very dramatic but understated way, Dorothy Adams was a special, holy woman. She was for me mentor, guide, friend, confidant, healer, and Franciscan sister for over eighteen years. And Dorothy was for countless other people both within and without the Third Order, a bearer of God, Theotokos. When I was with her, we shared a closeness that I know came from her nearness to the Holy Spirit. Her inner vision and ability to share spiritual space with another grew from her faith and life given over to love and joy in all things of creation.

Dorothy taught me to love bird watching as well as to appreciate Rumi, revel in Julian's *Showings*, and delight in the medieval women mystics as if they were all together with us in her small living room. For hours, we would talk books and spiritualities and spiritual direction. Now I realize at a deeper level that she had the knack for saying just the thing which my soul longed to hear. It was she who jarred me out of my egocentric focus and got me to move forward after two major surgeries and several months of illness. Dorothy was the one who would always be interested in what I had to say, always be trusted to care, always be the constant against which I could lean when times got tough.

Even as she is now gone from us who loved her so, Dorothy continues to be the barometer of my life. When she died, Jacqui Belcher, Caroline Benjamin, my husband, John, and myself spent three wonderful days together, attending her funeral, remembering Dorothy stories, grieving, and sharing a special closeness. That deeply moving experience continues on for me and in many ways, I feel as close to Dorothy as I did when she was alive. I guess I do not want to release her. I am equally convinced that she does not want to release me.

From Jacqui Belcher

Dorothy Adams passed into life eternal sometime during the early morning of Tuesday, January 2, 2001. It's at times of death, I find it more difficult to be Christian. While well-meaning priests and friends, intending to comfort, speak of resurrection and a better place, all I can feel is a great void and an immense sense of loss. Yet somehow with Dorothy it's been different. Yes, I miss her earthly presence. I'm even angry at her leaving so abruptly but I sense no void; her spirit still fills my life. Perhaps it was the love letter she wrote to her family and friends the Sunday before she died that eased my grief. A letter in which she expressed her readiness to enter into that communion of mystical saints she already knew so well. Whatever the reason, she continues to be a beautiful gift to me, a perpetual blessing. How typical of Dorothy!

In life, Dorothy, like any good diamond, was multi-faceted. And like a diamond she was tough. She took many knocks during her 68 years, but most people wouldn't have known it. For what we saw was her exuberance for life that outshone the physical and emotional pain. (Okay, Dorothy, I won't become maudlin.)

The more I listen to people reminiscing about her, the more I believe that Dorothy's greatest gift was her ability to be genuinely present to each person with whom she came into contact. Every ONE was special to Dorothy. I can still hear her lovely, lilting greeting, "Hello, my friend." It made me feel immediately at home and welcomed. Dorothy was the person I turned to for advice, spiritual guidance, to share a joke, talk about my love life, family, work or simply to chew the fat and find out what was going on in her life.

Interwoven in the very fabric of her life, Dorothy had such a burning love for God that it was almost sensual. It was exhilarating to talk with her. She and I shared many similar tastes - with Dorothy's eclectic taste, most of us couldn't help but have interests in common with her. One such love she and I shared was for the poetry of Rumi, the great 13th Century Persian poet. A week after her funeral I came across the following from his

work, "A Garden Beyond Paradise". To me it captures Dorothy's essence.

Glorious is the moment we sit in the palace, you and I

Two forms, two faces, but a single soul, you and I

The flowers will blaze and bird cries shower us with immortality

The moment we enter the garden, you and I...

What a miracle, you and I, one love, one lover, one Fire

In this world and the next, in an ecstasy without end.

I am compiling a scrapbook of stories about Dorothy and her wonderful way of being present to people while she served as counselor, Area Formation Director, Chaplain, and spiritual friend and guide. I would appreciate a paragraph or more of any story or stories you might like to share about Dorothy. You can send the stories as an email attachment to: drpadk@yahoo.com Or via regular mail to: Paddy Kennington, 388 Chester St., SE, Marietta, GA, 30060-2086." Many thanks and God Bless, Peace, Paddy Kennington



Dorothy and her spiritual directee, Archbishop Desmond Tutu While he was in residence in Atlanta

To Know Frances was to Know Francis

Sermon preached at Frances Baum's funeral by the Rev. John Brockmann

Frances Baum died late Wednesday night, January 17th 2001 (1914-2001). I think, however, that Frances—the Frances we knew—had left us some weeks ago in the hospital, and she did not know me when I held her hand and we prayed together last Sunday

She was the first and only professed member of the Third Order in Delaware for many years, having been professed by Br. Robert Hugh in Assisi itself while she was on a pilgrimage with him in 1990. Her first name for some 65 years of her life was Joan, but upon profession she resolved that all would call her by her middle name, Frances. And so we all did.

Frances was the first real Tertiary—as opposed to mail-only—I met during my Formation, and she, in turn, greeted each of the succeeding five members of our Juniper's Seesaw Fellowship in Delaware as they entered Formation as well as our two associates and various "fellow travelers."

Francis was fueled by a spiritual energy as he walked to Rome and the many miles to meet the Sultan. Our Frances wearing her little white sneakers would walk the mile or so from her apartment to church for Morning Prayer with such a briskness that she never was late, and with such a timeliness that people in the neighborhood through which she walked told her they set their watches on the occasion of her passing their homes.

Francis was an encourager to his followers in their plans to travel the world and spread the word of Franciscan simplicity and life of penance. He encouraged Clare when she arrived in flight from her home. He encouraged Luchesio and Buenodonna when they wanted to live as Franciscans and yet stay married and live a life outside a monastery. Frances was the first to ask me when I would be ordained priest when it was only a twinkle in my eye; in fact, I think it was Frances not the Bishop or my rector who first heard of my sense of call.

Francis was a man of prayer so rooted in his prayer that he was transfigured by the stigmata on Mt. Alverna. Frances was our Fellowship's Prayer Leader at each meeting—especially when we had them at her assisted living apartment. Frances loved to call us all to attention and to march us through the Noon Prayer with lots of homemade litanies and prayers of petition for help, healing, and thanksgiving.

Francis was a man not easily swayed by external opinion, including that of the Pope when the Pope

threw him out of the audience room the first time. Francis came back, confirmed the Pope's dream, and received his blessing on his new Order. Frances seemed to have a byline she would repeat often, and it had to do with her Irish sea captain great grandfather. Evidently on one voyage early in the 19th century, her great-grandfather was asked by a rich merchant to take slaves on board his ship at one American port and ship them to another. Now it was customary in those days to end letters with the closing "Your humble and obedient servant." Frances told us how her great-grandfather had refused to carry such cargo and had taken affront at the notion that the rich merchant thought he could economically bully him into carrying his cargo. Thus he wrote at the end of his missive "I have not and will never be your obedient servant." Francis, of course, was always helping others, to the point that once he gave away the altar book to a poor woman so she could sell it and get some food. Frances also had this unstoppable desire to help others even when she herself was in assisted living and even when hobbling a bit because her gait was off balance at times. She would worry so when she couldn't help others, and Frances was so creative about finding ways to help others.

Finally, Francis was a troubadour, a poet who graced the Italian language with its greatest early poem, "The Canticle of Brother Sun". Frances's father was a Philadelphia Irish newspaper man who delighted in versifying in a number of published books. One of the great adventures that Frances and I had a few years ago was driving out to a wonderfully huge used book barn, and finding a copy of her father's poems in a book, a copy of which she had lost many years earlier.

The mystical communion between Francis and Frances really comes home to me this morning when I look on this lovely statue of Francis with dancing, uplifted arms. I don't know if you all can see way in the back of the church that the statue has been decorated by strings to which are attached little pink roses. The lady I spoke to earlier about this said that she had been praying alone yesterday and had decided to persuade the rector to move the statue in here to the Church to honor Frances, and then that she felt compelled somehow to attach these strings of roses.

Well, those of us who know the story of Francis well recall that one winter he and Clare were met by reproving glances when they visited a house—glances which said in so many words: "Ah, we know what you two "celibates" are up to." And so as not to give scandal, Francis resolved to have Clare go on her way and he on his. Clare was most upset at this and begged to be told when they could return on their common journey

together. Francis, probably feeling that that would no longer be possible, looked Lady Clare in the eye and said 'We can come together again when the roses bloom in this winter.' Moments later, you will recall, dozens and dozens of rose blooms sprang forth in the winter forest. And thus Francis and Clare went on their way together.

Well once again, roses are miraculously blooming in the winter here strung on this dancing statue of Francis, and once again I am sure that in God's good heaven Francis and Frances are walking together at an energetic pace, probably versifying the whole time or talking about how they can help this or that person.

The Marvelous Francis Sculpture Festooned With Roses That Appeared at Frances Baum's Funeral—Surrounding the statue are Delaware St. Juniper's Seesaw Members (from left to right) Bonnie Barnidge, John Brockmann, Angie Rummel (Associate), and Anne Adkins (Long time Fellowtraveller)

GREETINGS FROM YOUR CHAPLAIN

As I write this, Lent begins tomorrow. Someone once said to me, early in my Franciscan journey, that Tertiaries live a perpetual Lent, meaning that we're always imposing some kind of discipline on ourselves in order to strengthen our relationship with and service to God. I have always been grateful to the Third Order for teaching people how to go about this.

There are so many things we can learn from each other. Continuing formation for the professed is something that needs to be addressed. What and how? We can help each other. What do we need, and how should it be done? Please send me your ideas. Write, phone, e-mail. I would love to hear from you on this or any other subject.

I was just rereading the previous issue of the *Franciscan Times*. The stories that were shared of people hearing and responding to God's call are good examples of the movement between prayer and action that Francis himself struggled with. I am excited about our Provincial Convocation theme of "Discernment in Community." Like a person, a religious order is an evolving creation, so we need to learn more about how best to discern where God is calling us individually and as a community.

I am grateful for you, my companions on the Way, and I'm looking forward to hearing from you. May this season of Lent be a blessing to you all.

Julia Bergstrom

France and John Brockmann at a Fellowship Retreat Five Years Ago

Fourth General Chapter of the Spanish Franciscan Ecumenical Fraternity in Cirdenas (Cuba) (9-13th January 2001)

by Pablo Manuel Alvarez

Background— Three years ago, the Franciscan Ecumenical Fraternity was founded in Cardenas, Spain as a Community of eight persons who were Christian, Ecumenical and Franciscan. The Fraternity had its difficult stages, as occurs in all that is new. In a short time, however, the Fraternity was reduced to five members who then decided to begin the work that they were unable to do before. With full liberty, with no economic means, and almost without any didactic material, they began the work. They were and are men and women of much faith and with great vocation.

The fourth General Chapter of the Franciscan Ecumenical Fraternity took place in Cardenas (Cuba) between the 9th and the 13th of January, of this new millennium. It was marvelous to be there with the brothers and sisters of the Third Order from different parts of the island. It was a great happiness to see the number of new members who were admitted. They were in the great majority young people, prepared and enthusiastic.

One may think that four days for a General Chapter was a bit much, but on the 14th, the F. E. F. reached the 10th anniversary of its founding. The Lord has blessed us greatly. We have always acted in good faith, following the dictates of our consciences and what the Holy Scriptures teach us, and above all, we have been grateful.

Our experience in Cuba has been another sign of what Our Lord is asking of us "That we spread the Gospel unto the ends of the earth," and so it has been in this large island of the Caribbean where there is a thirst for God and where the harvest is large but the workers few.

The 4th General Chapter began with an invocation to the Holy Ghost by the Minister General and continued with the reading of reports of the five Communities and a Mission that were founded in those last three years. Thirty-three brothers and sisters of the F. E. F. in Cuba and some invited persons attended. Some of the members of the Fraternity in the Evangelical Seminary of Theology were not able to attend because during those days they were away working in the parishes to which they had been assigned. But it was providential that such a number of members was able to meet from different parts of the country where the greatest difficulty is the problem of urban transport. At the present time the number of members of the F.E.F. in the Province of Cuba amounts to 55 persons, brothers and sisters, without counting the missions.

The reports were read in this order:

- "The Community of the Holy Cross on the North" at 70 Km. from Havana - made up of brothers and sisters of the Methodist, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches.
- "The Community of St. Francis of Assisi", in Pueblo Nuevo (Matanzas) - made up of brothers of the Liberal Catholic (Orthodox), Roman Catholic, and Reformed Presbyterian churches.
- "The Community of the Evangelical Theological Seminary" in the city of Matanzas - made up of Methodist, Baptist, and Church of God churches.
- "The Community of Brother Sun", in the city of Havana - made up of brothers and sisters of the Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches.
- "The Community of La Porziuncola" in the town of Cardenas and Seat of the Province of Cuba - made up in the most part of brothers and sisters of the Episcopal and Reformed Presbyterian churches.
- "Mission of Sister Moon" in the village of Merceditas at 10 Km. from Cardenas, where a brother has adapted a room in his house to serve as Chapel for more than 50 neighbors who attend the weekly religious services of the Fraternity.
- "Mission in the town of Bolondr6n", where a brother offers his house with a half botanical garden to the F.E.F. in Cuba.
- "Santa Clara Mission", the first that the members of the F.E.F. founded in Cuba. It is run at present by the Episcopal church.

Voting for the National Council followed. This National Council is formed by the following professed members: the Local Minister of the City of Havana, (Episcopal), first woman Minister in the F.E.F. - the Local Minister of the Town of Cardenas, (Episcopal) - Minister-Deacon of City of Matanzas, (Orthodox) - the Local Minister and Pastor of the Seminary of Matanzas, (Church of God) - and the Local Minister and Presbyter of Santa Cruz del Noite, (Episcopal).

Then there was the election of the Vice-Minister General of the International Franciscan Ecumenical Fraternity and Professor Rene Francisco Castellanos, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Spiritual Director of the F.E.F., elected by a majority vote. He is also a psychologist and Professor of Latin and Greek in the Seminary.

Voting then proceeded for the positions of Minister Provincial and Vice Minister Provincial of Cuba, posts that fell to brother Oreste Posadas Tirse and brother Humberto de Lara Osvelia respectively, both of the Episcopal Church.

The Minister Provincial made a review of the three years of the existence of the Fraternity on the island and the future projects, amongst which was the formation of a regular First Order with Seat in the City of Matanzas.

During the Chapter, the "Statutes of the International Franciscan Ecumenical Fraternity" were also approved. They can not be altered, if it were necessary, until a new General Chapter.

The closure of the General Chapter was on Saturday 13th with a solemn Ecumenical Eucharist officiated by the Rev. Ivan Gonzalez, Presbyter of the Episcopal Church and the Rev. Rene Francisco Castellanos, of the Presbyterian Church. All those present received Holy Communion. During the ceremony, sixteen persons were admitted, postulants, novices and professed.

Part of the General Chapter consisted of meetings and various visits. On the first day a commission from Alcoholic Anonymous came to thank us for the literature and leaflets that we have sent from Spain and for a small monetary contribution from the Fraternity in Seville three years ago, which helped them in their work. It is presided over by a Sister from the F.E.F. One evening we attended one of their open sessions in the Church of the Trinitarios where they meet weekly. There we learned of "Neurotics Anonymous" which we might open in Spain, if it's God's will.

We were invited by its Director to the Ecumenical Centro de Reflexion & Dialogo in Cardenas. Apart from its cultural and ecumenical activities, they work a productive farm and distribute the harvest free to orphanages, refuges and welfare centers. They have some large sheds for preserving and canning fruit and green vegetables.

The most impressive visit was at the home for the aged. Originally this was managed by nuns who had to leave and the State took charge of it. For the last 42 years the Gospel has not been preached in that place, but now, thanks to God, members of the F.E.F. have been allowed to visit weekly and celebrate the Holy Eucharist, which is attended by more than half of the hundred old persons sheltered there. Many of the old people are not able to leave their beds and so, at the end of the Service, the elements of bread and wine were taken to their beds. There were moments of great tenderness and emotion when the "sign of peace" was exchanged. To see those lustreless eyes and that look begging for a caress is something that we shall never forget.

An agreeable visit was made to the Seminary to enable the writer to meet almost all the youngsters of both sexes who compose the F.E.F. in that place. It was a very happy occasion. The Seminary in itself deserves a

visit. Its carefully attended gardens, its furnishings and its quarters for the seminarians are worthy of praise. We add to this the happiness of the student body, who invited us to lunch with them, which made a perfect day of the Chapter. Professor Castellanos told us before we left: "One should imitate St. Francis of Assisi, not Jesus, because we carry Him inside of us. If we imitate someone, that person is outside of us. Francis offers us a model of the Christian life".

We made two more visits, one to the Mission of the village of Merceditas, where a Holy Eucharist was celebrated at nightfall with the attendance of a large number of neighbors of that place, and another to the Santa Clara Mission, where a Service of Holy Communion was held also, officiated by the Pastor of the Episcopal Church in Cardenas.

On the 14th, the 10th anniversary of the F.E.F., a Holy Eucharist was celebrated in the Church of San Francisco in Cardenas where thanks were offered to the Lord for this first decade of our Community and the third anniversary of our presence in Cuba. Deo gratia.

El IV Capitulo General de la Fraternidad Ecuménica Franciscana ha tenido lugar en Cárdenas (Cuba) entre los días 9 al 13 de Enero de este año del nuevo milenio. Fue maravilloso estar allí con los Hermanos y Hermanas de la Tercera Orden de varios puntos de la isla. También una gran alegría ver la cantidad de nuevos miembros que han sido admitidos. Gente joven en su gran mayoría; jóvenes preparados y entusiastas.

Podemos pensar que son muchos días para un Capitulo General, porque precisamente el día 14 sólo se cumplía el X Aniversario de la fundación de la F.E.F. Pero como quizás ya sabéis, el Señor nos ha bendecido grandemente. Hemos tenido grandes dificultades desde el principio, hemos recibido injurias y vejaciones de personas endiabladas que por envidia o cualquier otro motivo no quería que este grupo ecuménico y franciscano sobreviviese, pero el Señor nos ha mostrado que si somos fieles a su Palabra, El no nos dejará. Siempre hemos seguido lo que nuestra conciencia nos ha dicho y hemos actuado con buena fe, siguiendo lo que nos enseñan las Escrituras y sobre todo, hemos sido siempre agradecidos.

Nuestra experiencia en Cuba ha sido otro signo más de lo que Nuestro Señor está queriendo de nosotros; "que extendamos el Evangelio hasta el fin del mundo" y así ha sido en esa gran isla del Caribe donde hay ansia de Dios y donde la mies es mucha y los obreros pocos.

(Continued on p. 16)

Franciscan Ecumenical Fraternity in Cuba (cont.)

En este mismo mes, hace tres años, fundamos en la ciudad de Cárdenas una comunidad con un grupo de no más de 8 personas cristianas, ecuménicas y franciscanas. También tuvieron sus etapas de dificultades, como sucede en todo lo que es nuevo. Al poco tiempo quedaron reducidos a 5 miembros pero decidieron entonces empezar la labor que antes quizás no podían, y con toda libertad, sin medios económicos y casi sin material didáctico, empezaron solos la obra. Eran y son hombres y mujeres de mucha fe y de gran vocación. No vamos a mencionar nombres en este informe (solo los resultantes de las votaciones), porque los nombres los sabe el Señor quien conoce el interior de nuestros corazones.

No queremos pecar de pesados con este largo prólogo y lo más escuetamente trataremos de reflejar nuestra experiencia en esos días.

El IV Capítulo comenzó con una invocación al Espíritu Santo por el Ministro General y continuó con la lectura de los informes de las 5 Comunidades y una Misión que en estos tres últimos años se ha fundado. La asistencia fue de 33 hermanos y hermanas de la F.E.F. en Cuba, más algunos invitados. Varios de los miembros de la Fraternidad del Seminario Evangélico de Teología no pudieron asistir por estar esos días fuera ejerciendo en las parroquias donde han sido asignados. Pero fue una gran suerte que se pudieran reunir de distintas partes del país un número así de miembros cuando la dificultad mayor es el transporte urbano. Actualmente el número de miembros de la F.E.F. en la Provincia de Cuba asciende a 55 personas entre hermanos y hermanas.

Los informes se leyeron en este orden:

- “Comunidad de Santa Cruz del Norte” - a 70 km. de La Habana - (compuesta por hnos/hnas de las Iglesias Metodista, Episcopal y Católica Romana).
- “Comunidad de San Francisco de Asís”, en Pueblo Nuevo, Matanzas (compuesta por hermanos de las Iglesias, Católica Liberal, y Presbiteriana Reformada).
- “Comunidad del Seminario Evangélico de Teología”, Ciudad de Matanzas (compuesta por hermanos y hermanas de las Iglesias, Episcopal, Metodista, Bautista e Iglesia de Dios).
- “Comunidad del Hermano Sol”, en la capital La Habana (compuesta hasta ahora por hermanas y hermanos de la Iglesia Episcopal e Iglesia Católica Romana).

- “Comunidad de la Porciúncula”, en la ciudad de Cárdenas y Sede Central en la Provincia de Cuba (compuesta en su mayoría por hermanos y hermanas de las Iglesias Episcopal y Presbiteriana Reformada).
- “Misión de la Hermana Luna” (interdenominacional) en el poblado de Merceditas - a 10 Km. de Cárdenas - donde un hermano ha adaptado una Capilla en su casa para los más de 50 vecinos que semanalmente asisten a los servicios religiosos.
- “Aposento en la ciudad de Bolondrón” donde un hermano presente, ofreció su casa (con un jardín casi botánico), a la Fraternidad Ecuménica Franciscana de Cuba.
- La “Misión de Santa Clara”, primera que fundaron los miembros de la F.E.F. en Cuba, está regentada en la actualidad por la Iglesia Episcopal. Asistió solo una hermana.

Seguidamente se pasó a la votación del Consejo Nacional que quedó formado por los siguientes miembros Profesos: Ministra local de la “Ciudad de La Habana” (Episcopal), primera mujer ministra en la F.E.F. - Ministra local de la ciudad de “Cárdenas”, (Episcopal) - Ministro Local de “Matanzas”, (Católico Liberal), - Ministro local y Pastor del “Seminario”, (Iglesia de Cristo), - Ministro local y Presbítero de “Santa Cruz del Norte” (Episcopal). Cinco miembros componen el Consejo Nacional.

Se procedió a la elección del Vice Ministro General de la F.E.F. Internacional y salió elegido por mayoría el Profesor René Francisco Castellanos, Pastor de la Iglesia Presbiteriana, Director Espiritual de la F.E.F. en Cuba, Psicólogo y Profesor en el Seminario de las asignaturas de Latín y Griego.

También se votaron los cargos de Ministro Provincial y Vice-Ministro Provincial de Cuba, cargos que recayeron en el Hno. Oreste Posadas Tirse y Hno. Humberto de Lara Sosvilla respectivamente, ambos de la Iglesia Episcopal.

El Ministro Provincial hizo una panorámica de los 3 años de existencia de la Fraternidad en la isla y los futuros proyectos, entre ellos la fundación de una Primera Orden Regular con sede en la ciudad de Matanzas.

También durante el Capítulo salieron aprobados por unanimidad los “Estatutos de la Fraternidad Ecuménica Franciscana” Internacional. Ellos no podrán ser alterados, en caso de que fuese necesario, hasta un nuevo Capítulo General.

Se clausuró el Capítulo el Sábado día 13 con una solemne Eucaristía Ecuménica oficiada por el Rev. P.

Iván González, Ministro de la Iglesia Episcopal y el Rev. P. René Francisco Castellanos, Presbítero de la Iglesia Presbiteriana. Todos los asistentes tomaron la Santa Comunión. Durante la ceremonia, un total de 16 nuevos miembros fueron admitidos entre Postulantes, Novicios/as y Profesos.

Parte del Capítulo fueron encuentros y visitas varias. El primer día vino una comisión de Alcohólicos Anónimos para darnos las gracias por la literatura y folletos que desde España les hemos enviado y por una pequeña aportación en metálico de la Fraternidad de Sevilla hace tres años, lo cual les ayudó en su trabajo. Lo coordina una nueva hermana de la Fraternidad. Varios asistimos por la noche a una de sus sesiones abiertas, en la iglesia de los Trinitarios donde semanalmente se reúnen.

Allí aprendimos de otra asociación parecida llamada "Neuróticos Anónimos" de la que solicitaremos información, para abrir otra en Sevilla, si es la voluntad del Señor.

Visitamos el Centro Ecuménico de Reflexión y Diálogo invitados por su Director. Este Centro es un oasis donde se respira paz. Aparte de sus actividades culturales y ecuménicas, trabajan una granja productiva y la cosecha la reparten gratis a los orfanatos, asilos y centros benéficos. Poseen unas naves de confección y envasado de frutas y verduras en conserva.

La visita más impresionante fue al Asilo de Ancianos. Originalmente estaba asistido por monjas que tuvieron que salir y el Estado se hizo cargo de ello. Desde hace 42 años no se predicaba el Evangelio en ese lugar pero ahora, gracias a Dios han permitido a miembros de la Fraternidad Ecueménica Franciscana que hagan una visita semanal y celebren la Eucaristía a la que asiste un buen número del alrededor del centenar de ancianas y ancianos allí acogidos. Muchos ancianos no pueden abandonar la cama y al final se le lleva el pan y el vino a sus lechos y se les imponen las manos. Fueron unos momentos de gran ternura y emoción siendo el culminante cuando se dio "un signo de paz". Ver esos ojos sin brillo y esas miradas pidiendo una caricia, no se nos olvidará en la vida. Es digna labor de un franciscano o franciscana llevar alegría por doquier. Nunca, el que estas líneas escribe se ha sentido más orgulloso de sus hermanos y hermanas de Cuba.

Una grata visita al Seminario para conocer a casi todos los jóvenes de ambos sexos que forman la F.E.F. en ese lugar fue de bastante alegría. El Seminario en sí merece ya una visita. Sus cuidados jardines, sus instalaciones, su Capilla y las viviendas de los seminaristas son dignas de elogio. Sumamos a esto la alegría de la

juventud estudiantil y que nos invitasen a almorzar con ellos para que fuese una perfecta jornada del Capítulo. El Profesor Castellanos nos dijo: "Imitad a Francisco de Asís, no a Jesús, porque a éste lo llevamos dentro. Si imitamos a alguien, ese está fuera de nosotros. Francisco nos ofrece un modelo de vida cristiana".

Hicimos dos visitas más; una a la Misión del poblado Merceditas donde entrada la noche se celebró una Eucaristía con la asistencia de un gran número de vecinos de aquel lugar y otra a la Misión de Santa Clara, donde también se tuvo un culto de Santa Comunión oficiado por el Pastor de la Iglesia Episcopal en Cárdenas.

Podemos decir que en este IV Capítulo General hemos presenciado cosas maravillosas y verdadero amor fraterno. El día 14, y coincidiendo con el X Aniversario de la F.E.F., se celebró en la Iglesia de San Francisco, una Eucaristía donde se dieron las gracias al Señor por este primer decenio de nuestra Comunidad y tercero de nuestra presencia en Cuba. Deo gratia.

Two Loaves and Fishes—Little College on the Prairie (English) by Kathleen Collado

I studied Christian Education in a Bible College in a very small village (some 400 people) in Alberta, Canada. There were over 2000 students in the College, and they all lived under very strict Evangelical rules. I found it difficult to adjust to the times of silence and rigid lifestyle. I, like all the other students, was required to work four hours a day as well as keep up with a full day of classes and chapel services three times a day. But it was during my time there, on my long walks out into the prairie, that I discovered the blessings of conversational prayer.

One late afternoon I had walked a good distance when I noticed that the sky had darkened. I was talking with the Lord and listening to his voice when I heard bells and chimes all around me. Startled, I looked up into the sky to see rainbow colored lights wave across the sky much as a curtain would. I sat down trembling with the wheat stalks hiding me. I didn't know what I was seeing, so I prayed for the Lord to protect me.

Can you imagine how Blessed Mary felt when she saw the Angel Gabriel? I later learned I had seen the aurora borealis, common in the far North, but its appearance had caused me to draw very close to our Lord Jesus, and I felt safe in his abiding presence.

While working at the college library I found several missionary magazines which listed various mission boards offering training programs. I decided to leave the college in Canada and travel to Milwaukee to

(Continued on p. 18)

Five Loaves (cont.)

prepare for missionary service. The day I left college there was a three to four foot snow fall, and I had to drag my trunk and my hand bag through the snow since no ride was available.

The 15 blocks seemed like 15 miles, but I kept praising the Lord and singing gospel songs, and finally I felt the heaviness of the trunk lighten as I pulled it along with one arm in the snow and my hand grasping firmly on the handle. Amazed at how light the trunk had become, I turned and raised my arm now noticing that I was holding only the handle in my hand and that the trunk was some 50 feet back!

Through much pushing and pulling I finally reached the little train station that would take me to Edmonton, and back to the USA. The station clerk made me a hot cup of tea, put some more logs in the pot bellied stove, and shared stories of life in the Canadian prairies. He said he had a daughter my age and that he didn't want me to leave Canada without some assistance so he gave me a Canadian silver dollar and wished me God's speed.

In the Desert With Only Five Cents Left

When I reached the mission school in Milwaukee, I found it to be very small and not what I had expected. It was a few weeks before Christmas, and I was one of about one of eight students who stayed at the mission apartment house. There again alone in my room I had those blessed conversations with the Lord and I kept seeking the place where He wanted me to serve. I felt called to be a missionary in China, but I wasn't sure that was where God was calling me. I had been greatly influenced by my Great Uncle, Amandus Stevold, a Lutheran Missionary from Norway. I always wanted to follow in his footsteps, but Jesus wanted me to follow in His footsteps.

I applied with a friend I met in Milwaukee to the Taiwanese embassy, but they said we needed to first have a church appointment or support. We then found a notice of a mission among the Navajo Indians in New Mexico who wrote that they needed missionaries. So my friend and I set off on the bus to Shiprock, New Mexico and arrived with only 15 cents between us. But when we called the mission to come pick us up at the bus station, we found out they only needed people to send support to their missionaries and that they didn't need any missionaries themselves!

Now what?

With our last nickel, we called every mission in the phone book, but no one answered, until, at the last number, a Methodist Pastor said our call was an answer to her prayers! She said they had just finished building a Navajo Indian children's home and immedi-

ately needed two people to serve as caregivers for the children and to assist in the Bible lessons out on the reservation.

I knew that day that our Lord Jesus understood my desire to serve him and that He was with me. Beginning that day, I served six wonderful months on the Navajo reservation, and, after my mission trip to Jamaica, I returned to serve in missions with the Yaqui people in Arizona and the Athabaskan peoples of northeastern Alaska.

I Learned

During all these journeys, I learned that God will accept us with all our flaws, if we allow Him to be the potter and we the clay, if we yield up ourselves and allow the Lord to mold us into a useful vessel. I've also learned during these travels that God has many faithful servants in many places who bring Christ to us in many ways, like Sister Campbell in Jamaica (of whom I wrote of in my last column), the Canadian train clerk in Alberta, the Methodist missionaries in New Mexico, and the Navajo and Athabaskan Christians.

However, in the late 1960s, my missionary journeys seemed to come to an end when I fell from the mission house in Alaska and received a spinal lesion. Thus, I had to return to my family and seek God's call for my next "journey". This new journey led me to serve as an instructor with developmentally disabled adults—a field I continued to serve in until 1993 when I too became physically disabled.

But praise God, the Five Loaves and the Two Fishes continue to feed me, and God still fills my life with people who live the Gospel life like our Brother Francis—living it not only in word but in deed and in truth.

Two Loaves and Fishes—Little College on the Prairie (Spanish) by Kathleen Collado

Yo estudié educación cristiana en un colegio bíblico de Alberta, Canada, en el cual había 2000 estudiantes con solamente 400 gente en el pueblo. Los estudiantes vivían bajo reglas estrictas evangélicas, y para mí fue bastante difícil adaptarme al horario; largos periodos de silencio y vida rígida. Como los demás, yo fui mandada a trabajar cuatro horas diariamente, atender clases y asistir la capilla tres veces por día; pero, en ese tiempo allí yo hice largas caminatas dentro de la pradera. Al mismo tiempo descubrí la bendición de la oración conversacional. Una tarde camine una buena distancia cuando me di cuenta que el cielo se puso obscuro; yo estaba hablando con Dios y escuchando por su voz cuando me di cuenta que sonaban campanas en forma muy rara. Me sorprendió tanto que miré al cielo y vi un arcoiris, algo como una ola de

colores cruzandolo como una cortina. Yo cai temblando bajo una planta de trigo; no sabiendo lo que yo estaba viendo, recé a Cristo para que me proteja. Se pueden imaginar a ustedes que la Virgen Maria era sorprendida por la visita del Angel Gabriel? Después entendi que todo que yo habia visto fue la Aurora Boreal, cosa comun en esa zona. La experiencia me acerco mas a Dios, y siempre me senti segura con su presencia.

Cuando estuve trabajando en la biblioteca del colegio me encontraba con varias revistas de misioneros que contenian listas de misiones en las cuales algunas ofrecian programas de ensenanzas para misioneras. Yo determinaba dejar la escuela en Canada y viajar a Milwaukee, Wisconsin, para prepararme para servir en las misiones. El día que deje el colegio era un día con 3 a 4 pies de nieve. Yo tuve que jalar mi baul conteniendo mis posesiones por falta de un carro para ir a la estacion de tren. Las 15 cuadras hasta la estacion me parecieron mas como 15 millas! Mientras caminaba cantaba canciones a mi Cristo. De repente senti que el baul que yo jalaba era mas ligero; la asa de el solamente en la mano porque el baul se habia salido y me di una vuelta. Mi baul estaba 50 pies atras en la nieve. Después de tantojalar y empujar llegue finalmente a una chica estacion del tren que me llevaria a Edmonton y mas tarde a EEUU. El encargado de la estacion me dio una taza de te caliente, puso mas madera en la estufa para dar calor y me conto historias de la vida de las praderas de Canada. El me dijo que tenia una hija de mi misma edad. El no queria que yo salga de Canada sin tener un buen recuerdo, por eso me dio una moneda de plata (Silver Dollar) como recuerdo o para cualquier emergencia. El me dio la despedida con mejores deseos y pidiendo la proteccion y bendicion de Dios.

"Solamente 5 Centavos en el Desierto"

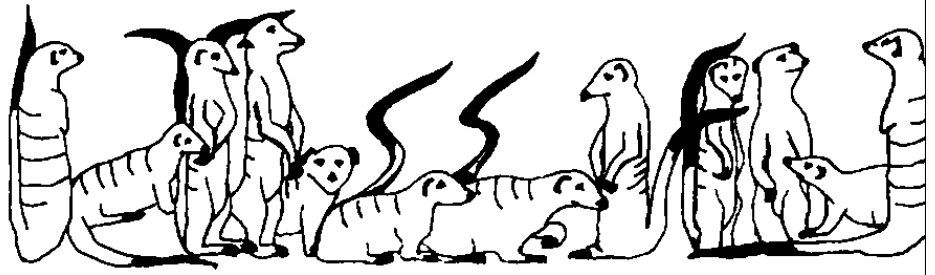
Cuando yo llegue a la escuela de la mision en Milwaukee, fue una sorpresa de ver tan chica que era. Llegue pocas semanas antes de Navidad. Yo fui una de las estudiantes que quedaron en la mision durante las fiestas sin ir a sus casas. Ahora a solas en mi cuarto, comenzaba las conversaciones con Cristo como antes y le pedi que me mostrara donde yo podria servirle desde que yo senti llamada a ser misionera en la China, pero no segura. Talvez era la influencia de mi gran tío, Pastor Amanduz Stevold, misionero de Noruega en China. Siempre yo quise seguir en sus pasos, pero Jesus quiso que yo siguiera los pasos de El! Con deseo de ponerme misionera, me registraba con una amiga conocida en Milwaukee, a la embajada de Taiwan en Chicago. Ellos nos informaba que necesitabamos el apollado de una iglesia, o, de otro modo, tener dinero

para soportarnos. Mas tarde recibimos un aviso que ellos necesitaban misioneras que trabajarian con Indios Navajo en Nuevo Mexico. Cuando llegabamos teniamos solamente 15 centavos. Al llamar a la mision pidiendo que nos recogieron en la estacion, ellos nos dijeron que no necesitaban misioneras, mas bien nosotras necesitabamos dinero para soportar la mision! Y ahora que? Con los ultimos 5 centavos llamabamos todas las misiones alistado en el libro de telefonos y nadie contestaban hasta el ultimo numero marcado. La persona que contesto era la pastora Metodista. Ella nos dijo que ellos estaban rezando por ayudantes y nuestra llamada era una respuesta a sus oraciones.

Recientemente ellos habian construido un Hogar Ninos para Indios Navajo y tenian necesidad de dos personas para ayudar a los ninos, y dar lecturas biblicas en la reservacion Navajo. Ese día yo sabia que nuestro Señor Jesus habia aceptado mi deseo de servirle a El; y que El estaria conmigo siempre. Comenzando ese mismo día, yo servi 6 maravillosos meses en la reservacion Navajo. Después de esto, yo fui a mi servicio en Jamaica. De regreso de Jamaica, viajaba hasta Arizona para trabajar con los Indios "Yaki", y mas tarde con los Indios "Athabascans" del noroeste de Alaska.

Durante todos estos viajes yo aprendi que Dios acepta a nosotros con todas nuestras fallas. Si nosotros permitimos que El sea el Alfarero y nosotros la arcilla. El hara de nosotros una copa que pueda usarse para el bien. Tambien estos viajes me ensenaban que Dios tiene servidores fieles en todas partes, los cuales pueden traernos a Cristo por muchos caminos. Sirvientes como la Hermana Campbell en Jamaica (de la cual escribi en mi primero articulo). Gente como el empleado de la estacion de tren en Canada, los misioneros Metodistas en Nuevo Mexico, y los Navajo y Athabascans Cristianos.

Mas tarde en los 1960's mis viajes de misionera terminaron cuando yo me cai en la casa misionera en Alaska y receibi una lesion en la columna vertebral. Entonces tuve que regresar a mi familia y pedir a Dios que me llame a un nuevo viaje. Este nuevo viaje me guio a servir de instructora de adultos con retardacion mental, una vocacion que mantenia hasta 1993 cuando empezaba mi desabilidad fisica. Pero con alabanzas a Dios los 5 panes y los dos pescados continuan alimentandome, y Dios todavia esta llenando mi vida con gente Cristiana que viven la vida Cristiana segun el ejemplo de nuestro hermano Francisco, que vivio no solo por palabras, sino con obras de caridad y en la verdad.



2002 Provincial Convocation: 6/25-30, (Santa Barbara California).

Now you can see the meercat logo for our Provincial Convocation coming up in 2002. The meercats represented here are famous for their communal living and integration. Our theme is Discernment in Community, and we will be using as our touchstone the book *Listening Hearts* by Susan Farnham et al. The book summarizes the best in Christian discernment and is the result of a project by the Diocese of Baltimore to improve their own methods of discernment. Barbara has tentatively agreed to be the first of our keynote speakers and to present a continuing retreat during the convocation so long as we all do our homework in Fellowships and Convocations. Chapter urges you as an individual, as a Fellowship, and in your convocations to read and work on retreat exercises as given in the Listening Hearts collection.

Here is a list of the Listening Hearts series available from Morehouse Publishing:

Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community (\$9.95; in quantities of 10 or more, \$9.00)

Listening Hearts: Manual For Discussion Leaders (\$5.95)

Retreat Designs and Meditation Exercises: Guidelines for Retreat Leaders and Covenant Groups (\$9.95; in quantities of 10 or more, \$9.00)

These books can be ordered at 1-800-877-0012.

A Call for Papers, art, exercises, plays, etc. will be forthcoming in the next issue of the *Franciscan Times*, so start thinking of what you could offer the rest of the TSSF community around the theme of Discernment in Community.

Sabbatical Newsletter #10

by The Rev. Beverly Hosea

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1 (NRSV)

This is a hard verse to translate into English and not lose some of the impact of the Greek original. What this verse is declaring boldly and radically is that there is a connection between faith and reality, hypostasis, translated here as "assurance." Faith is much more than hoping. Faith is trust that what is not seen, not available to our senses as empirical data, is, in fact, actual. In faith what others may have only hoped could be so, now is the experienced reality.

My daughter gave me a narcissus bulb for Christmas. It had started to sprout before I unwrapped it, and the three little sprigs emerging were curled over because the bulb had been upside down. I planted it right side up in the bowl provided and watered it according to the directions. I watched it daily as these little sprouts

uncurled themselves and began pushing upwards. They shot up relentlessly, and I measured them two or three times a day observing a half inch or more growth in just three or four hours' time. I could almost see the plant growing minute by minute. Four buds appeared, daily bulging larger until the hull housing each bloom was stretched so thin that it became translucent. Saturday the blossoms forced their way through, splitting their "cocoon" and emerging to leave them behind like a collar at the nape of the neck. The plant now stands at over 15 inches tall, and the clusters of blooms fill my cell with fragrance.

Such an incredible force, violent almost in its course of growth, a power to be reckoned with. That narcissus bulb, if I may speak this way, had a single focus for its attention being a narcissus. What it did came naturally for it; it was hard-wired genetically that way. There was no consideration about what kind of flower it wanted to be or even the rate of growth. It simply acted in alignment with all of creation and with its own nature.

It's been a year now since I began this sabbatical in order to engage in this meditation process. It seems like a natural point at which to take a look back and evaluate, see what has happened and what this all has produced, to check on the fruit of the labor. That's the way we often go about thinking about this. However I can't do that. To try to do that at this point probably wouldn't consist of anything more than pulling up the sprout and checking the root system. What has been produced? Nothing.

The year has sped by, and I can hardly believe that I have been engaged in this meditation process this long. Didn't I just begin? But I have done what I had intended to do. I have sat here in my cell and meditated, and in the course of that I have worn out one meditation cushion, and have had to make a new one.

My proficiency with Hebrew and Greek has improved. I can say that. It has been an act of sheer pleasure each day to read the Daily Office lectionary with the time to linger over words in lexicons and the Word they are windows opening to. The Gospels particularly have thrilled me, if I can use that word to describe their effect. The act of reading is an act of devotion, bringing the self present to the context that the words describe, and coming into the Presence of the Word made flesh.

But the main activity of the day, the full time employment I have been engaged in, is the time given to meditation. The reasons why I first meditated have dried up and withered away: to get better, to attain enlightenment, to become a spiritual giant. This has not turned out to be a course in self improvement or self management. Now I have had some practice in doing this thing called meditation, and I don't know if I will ever "get it." I look back over my journal notes from the year and what my spiritual director has told me, and I notice that the same lessons, the same teachings get repeated over and over again. The same stuff keeps coming up. I haven't in the course of one year become a great spiritual hero(!), although I have come to see that I had hidden aspirations that I might accomplish this. I still have the same issues and hang-ups, perhaps with a bit more awareness. I haven't gotten better.

One thing for certain has happened in the course of this year. Faith has grown. I can truthfully say that my faith is more solid, more trusting, even while I continue to get confused and question everything as I did before.

Just by sitting there hour by hour and day after day I am more and more convinced of God's grace at work in my life and in the world. I am more willing to trust this grace at work, to have my life depend on this grace, enough to let go and let go and to keep letting go of all the "I" stuff in my life.

I learned all this basic stuff about salvation long ago, believed it, and then proceeded to live otherwise for many years. I think I came to meditation with the obscured agenda that this was a religious exercise that could enable me to complete my own salvation, as though my openness to God's action in me was an openness I could generate on my own via this exercise or practice of meditation. Instead this meditation practice is leading me right back to the beginning again, to the basic salvation stuff, like grace.

Grace is the process of God's mercy towards us. This mercy is a quality or characteristic of God which flows from God spontaneously, not in response to our need, but prior to our awareness of need and even prior to the need itself. This is a loving, outpouring, flooding of compassion and self giving which we can see most clearly in Yeshua. Grace is the way mercy comes to us. Faith acknowledges the reality of this mercy.

The work is not mine but Christ's. While I sit here doing nothing, Yeshua is holding all creation together. God is sustaining all life moment by relentless moment, a continuous act of creation. Each breath I take is in continuity with this creative act of God.

Meditation, becoming more aware/awake, is like the narcissus bulb (a natural meditator): stop doing all the stuff I generate as "helpful," and just be in the natural alignment of grace, and blossoms will produce themselves. The inevitable will come with this narcissus. The blooms will age and wither, the bulb will go dormant for a time, then repeat the cycle. This will all be as relentless as the surging push upwards of the new sprouts. I've watched my own body over the course of the year with its subtle changes and aging. I've watched my hair grow back. What strange creatures we are to want to resist what is our nature!

What can I tell you? Everything is all right.

In Yeshua's love and mercy,

Beverly

Anglican Rosary

by Cheryl Holmes

I am presently using the following booklets for praying the Anglican Rosary. Kris Elliott (a Texas tertiary) and Betty Kay Seibt have done an excellent job of bringing together a lot of information on the A.R. One book is "Holding Your Prayers in Your Hands: Praying the Anglican Rosary." I like the format a lot because it uses the different kinds of prayer from the Book of Common Prayer (page 857) as well as other prayers such as a Couple's Prayer, Praise for the Natural Order (based on St. Francis' Canticle), and a Meditation on the Virtues based on "Salutation of the Virtues" by St. Francis and much, much more. It also gives a brief history of the developing use of the A.R. The other book is "Praying the Way of the Cross with the Anglican Rosary."

More information on the Anglican Rosary can also be found at the following website and the beads themselves can also be found at most Episcopal Church bookstores. <http://www.westtexasonline.org/SDK/index.htm>

Briefly Noted—St. Francis by Brian Wildsmith

A lovely illustrated new book for children of all ages about the life of St. Francis has been chosen as an American Bestseller, Pick of Lists. It is fairly accurate in what it covers: Christmas Eve in Greccio, the stigmata, meeting the Pope, the arrival of Clare, etc., and includes in the frontpiece, "The Canticle of the Brother Sun"

Prayers to Bring You Peace in Troubled Times*a collection sent in by the Rev. Peter Funk***When I awake:**

*God's peace be in this dwelling and
in every place I go today.*

**When I am with friends or meet a stranger:
in my heart I will say,**

God's peace and blessings be with you.

When I am afraid or despairing under stress:

*My peace I leave **with** you. Do not let your
heart be troubled, and neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)
Cast your burdens on the Lord and the Lord will sustain
you. (Psalm 55)*

When there is anger:

*Please God, immerse me in your peace. When I open myself
to your peace, Lord, I'm better able to handle the situation, to
understand it and, ultimately, to forgive.*

Where there is sorrow, loneliness, or illness:

*O God of peace, help me to know you are with
me always, to know you share my suffering. Help me to
know I can talk to you as my closest friend, and that you are
my strength and my salvation.*

When with family and friends:

*God's joyous peace **be** among us.
Where there is your peace Lord, love can grow.*

When in the midst of beauty, magnificence, or joy:

*Thank you, Lord, for **the** peace and
enjoyment that come with memories of cherished moments.*

When I go to sleep:

*God's comforting peace protect me. "I lie down in peace; at
once I fall asleep, for only you, Lord, make me dwell in
safety. (Psalm 4:8).*

*Lord, help me to share your peace with everyone I meet.
By sharing your peace I will more surely keep it.*

**"Go in peace to love and to serve the Lord."
(The Book of Common Prayer)**

From the Provincial Minister, Anita Catron—About the Recent Mailings

Dear Third Order Brothers and Sisters,

Over the past few months you have received a number of Third Order publications. Chapter has worked diligently to update manuals and publish regularly scheduled items. We hope these will help you as tools in your Franciscan journey as an individual and as a member of our Franciscan Community. While we may be late occasionally, we try to be thorough. So enjoy them!

The publications or pieces sent are the following:

1. Vow vs pledge sticker. Please apply this to the inside back cover of your *Daily Principles* booklet. It was inadvertently left out when the Principles were last printed several years ago.
2. Pope John 23rd insert. Please apply this to your *Devotional Companion*. It replaces the biography and prayer for Ferdinand whose biography Chapter thought was not in the spirit of peace.
3. *Forming the Soul of a Franciscan*, formerly the *Formation Letters*. These now have gone to all tertiaries and they have been rewritten by many members, many voices, many Franciscan thoughts. These can be the basis for self-study or at fellowship gatherings. I suggest a thorough study of them for this year.
4. *Third Order Directory and Intercessory Prayers for 2001*. Compiled and updated yearly.
5. Booklet entitled *The Holy Eucharist with prayers of St. Francis and St. Clare*. This was compiled for our use for Franciscan services. It has been approved by The Rt Rev Jerry Lamb, our Bishop Protector, American Province.
6. *Statutes*. Updated and revised per Chapter recommendations and approval. Please review it for your own use and information.
7. *Franciscan Times*. Our last issue was a comprehensive issue, containing Chapter minutes in their entirety. You are now reading the Lenten issue.
8. *Area Chaplains' Handbook*. Area Chaplains have received updated copies for their use in working with the professed.
9. *Convener Handbook*. Selected pages have been updated. If you are a convener, you should have received the indicated pages.
10. Other items of interest
 - A. Webpage (www.tssf.org).
 - B. Joan Kidd email list—not all members are from the American Province. This is a list; no commentary, no

bulletin board, no forum. It is by courtesy of Joan Kidd. If you wish to be included, please write Joan or email here at (Joankidd@aol.com).

In February the professed membership received a letter from the Provincial Secretary inviting them to submit names for the election of professed members to serve on Chapter. Seven members will be elected. After the election process takes its course, an announcement will be made of your new Chapter representatives. One of our aims is to take into consideration geographical diversity.

Your voice can be heard when you write a Chapter member, the Chaplain or the Minister Provincial. Your comments are invited, as are your concerns.

Blessings and peace,

Anita Catron

Roses for Francis

by Muriel Adey (from the Canadian Franciscan newsletter)

When I was doing Clinical Pastoral Education our supervisor asked us to think about roses—the many kinds of roses, the needs of each kind, where it grew best, and so on. We were asked to see ourselves as a particular kind of rose. One person had told us previously that his favorite part of parish ministry was being invited into the best room and being served tea in the best china, no matter how humble the home. In his meditation he saw himself as a tearose in a formal rose bed. Another, who had already told us that she had a keen sense of smell saw herself as a variety of rose notable for its perfume. And so on. Each person's choice seemed very obvious to those who knew that person even a little bit. Myself? I saw myself as a yellow rose flowering all alone at the bottom of the garden by the compost heap where it has been relegated. If it could have spoken it would have admitted to feeling unappreciated, yet also, to feeling that it had a purpose in that it brought some sunshine to a neglected place.

As I began to understand the image my meditation had given me I could see how it revealed, very accurately, the situation I was in and the ministries I was carrying out. I had finished seminary but my diocese had not yet decided that women could be ordained so I was in limbo. Yet I was finding places to minister that were not being covered by the traditional ministries of the Anglican Church. Relegated—yes, and even unappreciated by some - yes, nevertheless flowering and being useful to others.

Further reflection brought more insights. I noticed that

(Continued on p. 24)

Roses for Francis (cont.)

the rose flowering by the compost heap was climbing over some branches piled there after the trees had been pruned. The rose needed those branches - it was a climbing rose! No wonder that it had been thrown out of the more formal garden - the seasonal pruning given to hybrid tea roses had not allowed it to reveal its true character and it was failing to thrive. While this insight didn't connect with my situation vis-a-vis the church, it did remind me that I'd long recognized the need for a scaffolding for my life which I had found when I found the Third Order. I've often used this metaphor with counselees searching for meaning and order in their lives by asking them to ask themselves whether they need scaffolding, or a pole, or whether their own internal skeleton is enough support.

Some years later, in a quite different context with different people, I was presented with the same task, that of imagining myself as a rose. Immediately I was again that yellow rose at the bottom of the garden by the compost heap. This time, however, the garden had changed. It now extended to where the rose was, and the pruned branches were now arranged into a lovely rustic arbour over which the rose had climbed and thrived, providing a glorious sight in the garden, shielding the compost heap from view. A lovely shrub lined walk now connected that area to the main garden, inviting one to walk to the bottom and see the rose and the other flowers now planted there. I was struck by the fact that I had not changed my nature, but the surroundings had changed to include me in the garden. By this time I was ordained and working as a hospital chaplain who was also in charge of the small parish in which the hospital stood. Obviously I now felt included and appreciated, all by remaining true to who I was and trusting that God had called me to be where I was.

To fast forward to the present time and my reason for writing this now. For the past three years it has been my privilege to be an elected member of the Third Order Chapter - the only elected member from west of the Great Lakes as someone commented, and also the only Canadian to have ever been on Chapter so far as I know. (I was the Formation Director for women from 1974 - 81, then elected in 1998 for three years.) During the Chapter of 2000 I was invited to be Celebrant at one of the Eucharists, a humbling experience, an Awe-ful one, in the Chapel at Little Portion. Since Chapter had been talking about the variety of people God calls to explore the Third Order way, and how that very variety causes our structures to adapt and change, and since one subject comes up year after year in this regard, that

of and sometimes groan in the process as we attempt to discern whether a person is likely to thrive as a professed member of the Third Order SSF, or whether a person would thrive better in another context, for the homily I drew on the theme of the Roses as I had experienced it myself, this time applying it to membership in TSSF, and in a Fellowship. Supposing a person seems not to fit in with the members of the Fellowship, or with the Principles of the Order, what can the Fellowship, or the Counsellor do? The gardener in the meditation first rejected the rose, but when she or he discovered the rose growing better than before, though in another place, cultivated that place and gradually extended the garden to include it, thereby improving the garden greatly. As I continued to reflect I thought of transplanting the rose back into the formal garden and building a trellis for it, thus increasing the variety there. However, I have to admit that this alternative doesn't appeal to me as much as the one of extending the garden to include it!

If and when Fellowships and Small Groups, Counselors and Formation Directors, find they need to wrestle with personal relationships and discernment of vocations, I hope that "Roses for Francis" may be one tool we can all use.

EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS SEEKS GLOBAL JUSTICE

By Emmett Jarrett

"Jesus sent his disciples out like sheep among the wolves - and they came back! They were able to come back safely because they followed instructions. How do you know when your vocation is genuine? When the deepest desire of your heart meets the deepest need of your community, then your vocation is genuine," said the Rev. Canon Edward W. Rodman, Canon Missioner for the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, to the Episcopal Urban Caucus gathered in New London, CT, last week.

The Caucus, a 21 year-old network of Episcopal urban ministers, met in New London, February 21-24, 2001, for four days of worship, fellowship, theological reflection, workshops and planning around the theme of "Defining the Church's Agenda for the New Global City." One hundred seventy-five activists from urban centers around the country gathered in the small New England city of New London. Members of the Caucus went on a bus tour of New London after hearing Davey to see first hand the process of globalization. Visits to Pfizer's new construction contrasted sharply with nearby neighborhoods where homes have been destroyed to make way for upscale hotels and recreation

centers. The results of "urban renewal" in the 1960's are still evident, and a shuttered downtown testifies to the removal of retail shops and businesses from the city center to suburban shopping malls.

Urban education reform was a major theme of the Caucus assembly. "Whose pictures are in God's wallet?" asked David Hornbeck, former superintendent of Philadelphia schools. "If all children deserve equal education, why do some children—disproportionately children of color and poor, and mainly from inner city areas—get less than others?"

Hornbeck's colleague, Linda Powell, professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, invited Caucus members to think back to their earliest memories of school. "Realize that these are the 'lenses' through which you see the issues of school reform," she said. A panel of high school students from Williams in New London and schools in Buffalo, NY, answered questions from the adults about life in schools now. "What do you need to make a good education?" one person asked. "A teacher who likes his or her subject and likes us," said the students. Ingrid Young, 18, remembered telling a family member that her favorite teacher was black. The family member told her she shouldn't trust black people. "I told him I could trust this teacher," she said. "I had learned for myself that you really could trust people."

"You are the prophets of the Episcopal Church," said the Rev. Canon Carmen Guerrero to the Caucus assembly at its final meeting. "You had the vision to establish Jubilee Ministry with the poor in the USA in 1982, and you supported the Jubilee 2000 global debt cancellation movement in the 1990's." Guerrero, staff officer for Jubilee Ministries at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, reminded members that "the heart of the Gospel is justice, and the way to do justice is empowerment of the poor." The global agenda is as much a part of this vocation as church work at the local level.

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship and the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice also met in conjunction with the Urban Caucus assembly. Janet Chisholm, interim director of the national interfaith group, Fellowship of Reconciliation, spoke to the EPF luncheon on the theme of "building a culture of nonviolence." The Economic Justice Network awarded its first annual "Gloria Brown Award for Economic Justice" to the Naugatuck Valley Project as an example of church and community organizing for justice for all.

The assembly passed resolutions in support of solidarity with women and children who are victims of oppression in the global economy, and with union

workers in hotels and restaurants. New members were elected to the Caucus Board, which met following the Assembly and elected R. P. M. Bowden, of Atlanta, President, and the Rev. Margaret Rose, also of Atlanta, Vice President. The next assembly will be held in Los Angeles, February 6-9, 2002, and the overall *theme will be Multiculturalism.*

The national headquarters of the Caucus was moved from Boston last year. The coordinators are the Rev. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, and Anne Scheibner, of St. Francis House, New London. The change in location and leadership reflects the Caucus's determination to renew its commitment to urban ministry in a new millennium and to encourage local community perspective and involvement. St. Francis House is a Franciscan house of prayer, a house of hospitality, and a base for justice ministry on the Catholic Worker model. A "new model of community" is represented by the Caucus in its affiliation with St. Francis House. Members of the "extended community" of St. Francis House helped coordinate local efforts for the Caucus Assembly in New London.

John Brownfield 1931-2001 Died 1/13/01

Father John Brownfield was born and raised in West Virginia. He was a priest for 41 year, serving churches in West Virginia, Sutter Creek and Gait, as well as Sacramento. In Sacramento, he served Our Merciful Saviour, St. Matthew's, All Saints and most recently, St. Michael's. He and his wife Sandy, were both members of the Third Order of St. Francis, enjoyed their ministry in Cursillo, having served often on teams in Northern California. John is survived by his wife Sandy, two children, and eight grandchildren.

John Brownfield

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Send in your contributions to the Pentecost issue! The deadline is May 15.