



The Franciscan Times

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.

Christmas 2007

Lynn in Durgapur

(from Lynn Coulthard's blog about her experiences in India)

I am a retired elementary school teacher who spent most of my time teaching first-graders in a rural school in Watauga County, Boone, NC. After retirement, I knew I wanted to fulfill a dream of working and living in a third world culture. I did this by becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer in Jordan. Part of serving with PC means that you become an ambassador for your host country in your home country. What a wonderful opportunity to share with my friends, family, and community folks the lives of the Arab people and especially the Muslim. Now I am headed to India, again to teach English. This time to Hindu children living in the slums. I feel very fortunate to be able to do this at this time of my life. It's challenging and exciting, and I hope to make a difference in some small way in the lives of these children and their families.

Hope these stories give you a little more of a glimpse into life in India.



The Bike

As most of you know, I bought a bicycle to make getting around easier. It's been a mixed blessing of sorts.

When I was young, I spent hours riding my bike and

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Medical Mission to Liberia 2007

Kathryn Challoner

My last memories of that July 2003 Liberian Medical Mission remain hazy to this day: working in Monrovia with thousands of sick starving refugees as the rebels held the city under siege; the telephone call from the American Embassy warning that the rebels were invading and ordering me to "safe haven"; Benedict Kolee (my medical student) driving me across a war zone, crashing through barriers and dodging gunfire to reach safety; my vision blurred by tears and rain watching as the Black Hawk helicopters descend on the Embassy lawn; evacuating to Sierra Leone; and promising myself that I would return.

The civil war ended...finally.

Thus on September 11th, 2007, my medical team re-entered Monrovia. The co-team leader was Dr. Benedict

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Challoner is co-director of the division of international emergency medicine in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California. Her team included two other Keck faculty, two emergency medicine residents, three nurses, and three Keck medical students.



Lynn in Durgapur (cont.)

performing great circus acts on my two-wheeler. My poor mom had to stand in the yard and applaud as I rode back and forth in the street doing things like riding without hands, without hands and feet, and so on. Now that I am no longer young, I am still riding a bike, and I am lucky to stay on the thing. I have a bike in Blowing Rock, but riding here is a bit different. Here, the bike is in the mix of every other kind of transport and it is quite tricky getting down the lane without hitting anything or anybody (walkers, dogs, and cows). But with practice, some old tricks are coming back into my memory bank. I can now get on and off without looking too klutzy. My feet do not touch the ground, only the very tip of my toes, so I had to relearn how to get on scooter style and stop the same way. I can now hug the shoulder while motorcycles and cars zip by me. I can avoid potholes and sometimes speed bumps, and more importantly, I can weave in and out of cow dung. I can ride my bike to the market and haul stuff home on the back. Bikes here come with a flat rack on the back just for such things. Sometimes, my loads are not balanced and that presents a big problem which I usually have to stop and correct or else, wipe out. My bike also came with a bell. Now this bell, which I have used maybe twice, sounds more like the ice-cream truck's bell so no one is particularly afraid of it. Riding my bike in Durgapur is one of my greatest accomplishments and it's carbon neutral!

The Cow

One morning when I was on my way to the gate of my building, there was an ox standing there blocking my way. What to do? Well, I wished it good morning, patted it on the head, slowly opened the gate and slipped past her. She never moved or even said Moo.

Dogs of Durgapur

The dogs of Durgapur and probably all of India look the same. They are lean, not so mean except with each other, and have a personality. They are short-haired with pointed ears. They walk with a confident spring to their step, nothing like our domesticated poochies. They act as if they could take over anytime they wanted to.

These dogs carry the scars of street animals. A lot of them get by on three legs and most all of them have patches of fur missing. Some of them have been in so many night fights, they have a twitch in their head, even when they are asleep.

They hang out where ever there are people. At the school, when the last bell rings and the kids dash out,

the dogs dash in and begin prowling the halls and classrooms looking for any crumb or morsel left from snack time. They don't bark at pedestrians, cows, or bike riders, but one night when I was walking home from the center, I was carrying a flashlight, and of course, the light was moving along with my gait which aroused the dogs at the corner tea shack. They rushed out at me, barking and howling. I guess they thought I was the moon. Some men at the shack shooed them away and I quickly doused my light. I think I learned a good lesson there.

The Clever Little Girl

The first time I went to the City Center to buy household things, a little girl accosted me and tried to sell me some incense, which I later bought. I met this little girl again when I was by myself at The Big Bazaar. She greeted me like a long lost friend, helped to the excess baggage check in counter, waited in line with me until the store opened and escorted me straight to the children's clothing department. Okay, so I bought her some jeans and a shirt. She seemed thrilled, and so I was hoping these were not going to end up on the black market somewhere. I also gave her my free gift for spending so much money, ice cream bowls. She was delighted.

I met her again this past Sunday. This time I was with my friend Lorraine when my little friend pops up inside The Big Bazaar. We were already in the check out line so no new clothes today, but some wash cloths. She claimed she wore the new clothes. She also said she attended school. I doubt both, but I like this kid and I'm sure I'll be seeing her again.

(to read more, click on <http://lynnindurgapur.blogspot.com/>)



Medical Mission to Liberia (cont.)

Kolee, now a physician, returning home. We brought with us over 600 pounds of antibiotics and medical and surgical supplies to be given freely to the people of Liberia. We brought teaching material and modules, CDs and books, to be given to the A.M. Dogliotti Medical School. We gave two massive free symposiums to the health care providers and physicians.

We toured facilities, and worked in hospitals alongside our Liberian colleagues. One hospital I worked in had no oxygen, no autoclave, only one antibiotic and, at times, no electricity. The ultrasound was broken, the laundry dryer was broken and there was no XR. My team was wonderful. They reached out with their hands and their hearts and friendships were formed and alliances forged.

Liberia lies at a critical crossroads. The official figure from the Minister of Health is that there are 35 Liberian physicians left in all Liberia to care for over 3 million people. The majority of health care is being provided by the NGOs, and they are now leaving

The healthcare infrastructure lies in ruins. The hospitals lack basic supplies, testing and imaging capability, antibiotics and medicines and support. At the Medical School there is no clean running water. The school runs on a generator for electricity, and fuel is expensive. There is no lab, no Basic Science Faculty and the students study by candlelight.

There is a 85 % unemployment rate.

Liberia wants us to come back. The people there are very resilient but lack hope. They have to believe that there's a future that they can be part of, which will require partnership and support from the global health community." (This was Challoner's 11th trip to West Africa and her fourth visit to Liberia.)

God gave us the knowledge

He gave us the skill

Then He gave us each other.

Kids in Monrovia

**St. Francis and the First Living Nativity Scene**

Larry Harrelson (reprinted from December issue of Living Church)

Christmas is popular and profitable. Regrettably commercialization of Christmas has skewed the season's focus, causing much heartache, indebtedness, and self-centeredness.

The first Christmas occurred in a much different context, poverty. The New Testament describes the incarnation not in shopping terms but as "the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

The draw of God's humility and divine vulnerability impelled early Christians to celebrate the holy nativity. It is a compelling story. The Son of God leaves heavenly glory and comes to earth as the infant child of hard-working, poor parents.

The first living nativity scene at Greccio, Italy in 1223 was developed for the express purpose of teaching this humility of the poor Christ. The idea took hold in Christian piety, and all nativity scenes and crèches descend from the Greccio celebration.

Nativity scenes now occupy favored places in many homes during the Advent-Christmas seasons. Crèches are found in most liturgical churches and appear in churches of other denominations as well. Living nativity scenes are popular in many communities.

Who started this and why? None other than Saint Francis created the first living nativity scene. To grasp its significance, we must first understand God's work in "the little poor man of Assisi."

Born in 1182, Francis was the eldest son of a wealthy cloth merchant and a devout mother. In his youth, he was a fun-loving party boy. As a young adult, Francis zealously became a cavalry soldier, went to war for Assisi against Perugia, and was taken prisoner. War, imprisonment, illness, and the grace of God dramatically changed him. Francis discovered what was important in life and decided to follow the poor Christ, opening his life to radical grace.

Francis' conversion was sealed by a providential encounter with a dreaded leper. Riding his horse one day near Assisi, Francis turned a bend in the road and suddenly came upon a leper. Fighting back his urge to flee, Francis dismounted, gave the man a

(continued on page 4)

coin, and kissed the diseased man's hand. In return, the leper bestowed on Francis the kiss of peace. Soon after this, Francis "left the world" to live the Gospel. Francis took on the skin of the Gospel and the Gospel took on the skin of Francis.

By 1223, after years of itinerant ministry and bodily deprivation, Francis was in failing health. His eyesight was poor. He could no longer travel on foot. Preaching was difficult. The "friars minor" had grown tremendously in numbers, and strong voices vociferously called for a lessening of the Order's austere requirements. A Rule of Life much like other established religious orders with buildings, lands, and comfort was desired.

Francis was pressured into rewriting the Order's rule, which went through several revisions before the enlarged Order accepted it. The final rule of 1223 had little of Francis' spirit. "The majority of the Gospel quotations have been suppressed and the language is dryly legal, without effusiveness or poetry. There is no longer talk of caring for lepers, respecting a rigorous poverty, far less of the right to rebel against unworthy superiors."¹

Francis withdrew to a hermitage near Greccio and avoided most of the brothers. The little poor man was in severe spiritual and physical pain. The approach of Christmas in 1223, however, revived Francis. The Feast of the Holy Nativity had always moved Francis deeply because it clearly depicted the humility of Christ who voluntarily left glory to become a vulnerable infant in a working class family. The poor baby Jesus had no crib, only a manger for a bed.

Francis desired to share his Christmas joy with the people who lived in and around Greccio. The saint was energized by a new idea, one of celebrating the nativity in such a way that those present would more directly experience the divine gift. Francis explained, "I wish to enact the memory of that babe who was born in Bethlehem: to see as much as is possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he rested on hay."²

A good and wealthy spiritual friend named John provided the organization and resources, including the ox and the ass. The first biographer of Francis, Thomas of Celeno, poetically describes that Christmas Eve celebration with its living nativity scene.

"Finally the day of joy has drawn near, the time of exultation has come. From many different places the brethren have been called. As they could, the men and women of that land with exultant hearts prepare

candles and torches to light up that night

whose shining star has enlightened every day and year. Finally, the holy man of God comes and, finding all things prepared, he saw them and was glad. Indeed, the manger is prepared, the hay is carried in, and the ox and the ass are led to the spot. There simplicity is given a place of honor, poverty is exalted, humility is commended, and out of Greccio is made a new Bethlehem."

Mass is celebrated next to the manger, in which lies a baby doll. A priest presides at the Eucharist. The humble deacon Francis happily sings the gospel and "preaches to the people standing around him and pours forth sweet honey about the birth of the poor King and the poor city of Bethlehem." A devout man claimed he saw the sleeping doll open its eyes when Francis bent over the manger to bless it. The night was full of light, and the woods rang with joy.

Christmas at Greccio was Francis' last large public event. The stigmata, more suffering, and death awaited him. Yet the little poor man's example of living the Gospel continues to summon, and Christmas nativity scenes everywhere beckon us toward the poor Christ.

¹ Chiara Frigoni, *Francis of Assisi* (New York: Continuum, 1999), pp. 112-3.

² The account of Christmas at Greccio is taken from the first life of Francis by Thomas of Celeno, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol. I: The Saint*, ed. by Regis J. Armstrong, J. Wayne Hellmann, William Short (New York: New City Press, 1999), pp. 254-7.

The Community of St. Francis now has its revised edition of the CSF Office Book available.

The suggested donation is \$60 (which includes postage). If you are interested or would like more information, please contact us at CSFsfo@aol.com or 415-824-0288 or St. Francis House, 3743 Cesar Chavez St., San Francisco CA 94110.

St. Anthony's Bookstore at the Provincial Convocation

St. Anthony's Bookstore was a great success at the Provincial Convocation and fortunately for those of us who could not attend the convocation we still have an opportunity to purchase some of the items that were ordered exclusively for the store. The T-shirts, mugs, mouse pads and pens have the "Dancing Francis" design and the tote bag has Francis and the whale designed for the convocation by Sister Pamela Clare.



Order Form: Please mail with payment to Ann Harris, TSSF, 3681 E. Curtis Drive, Sacramento, CA 95818

Item	Size/Color	Price	Quantity	Total
T-Shirts	M Grey/Burgundy	10.00		
	L	10.00		
	XL	10.00		
	XXL	12.00		
	XXXL	12.00		
Mouse pad	Teal	3.00		
	Blue	3.00		
Mug	Green (recycled currency)	4.00		
	Grey (recycled phone book)	4.00		
	Blue (recycled denim)	4.00		
Tote Bag	Blue - St. Francis and the whale	4.00		
Pen	Recycled paper barrel	1.00		
Shipping: Orders up to \$14.00 please add \$2.00 Orders \$14.00 to \$40.00 please add \$5.00 Orders over \$40.00 or overseas please contact Ann Harris for shipping costs.			Shipping Total	

Sea Bricks and St. Francis

Sea bricks are small pieces of brick that have been tumbled smooth by the waves and washed ashore. The bricks were once used as ballast in old sailing ships. David Gillette collects them and had some of these small pieces of brick available for everyone at the provincial convocation. This is the description that David wrote after listening to Brother Wayne and Brother Bill's presentation on the early documents of Francis:

I know that I look at the world from a different point of view than most, but I love St. Francis and started thinking about sea bricks. I figure that any bricks that I find local must be at least 200 years old. Then I realize that they have a history that started long before mine and would go on long after me. Then as I was listening to the Brothers it dawned on me that Francis has a history longer than the sea brick and with our help will have one that continues long after we have passed. I have collected some sea bricks so that any who would like may have one.

If you would like your own sea brick please contact David and Judith Gillette for shipping costs.

TSSF, Chapter 20007

Ken Norian, Minister Provincial

Chapter 2006 was the first one I chaired as Minister Provincial. So, while much of my first year as TSSF Minister Provincial was a year of transition, the time between that Chapter and now has been one where I have settled into the role.



Minister Provincial,
Ken Norian

Yvonne Hook was ratified as Coordinator and Secretary for the Associates. She has put in tremendous effort to breathe life into something that was in critical condition. She has contacted each Associate, received and responded to reports, created a new directory, begun work on a website, and distributed several mailings. Our Provincial Convocation was held at the end of June at Endicott College in MA, and significant energy and resource were focused on the planning and execution of this event. The keynote speakers were Bros Bill Short and Wayne Hellmann, OFM the editors of the new "Omnibus" entitled *Francis: Saint, Founder, Prophet*. There was an overwhelming sense of community among those who attended. This is always a wonderful opportunity for Tertiaries from all over the province to fellowship, study, pray and play (see page 11 for convocation resources still available). We are striving to make the next provincial convocation as affordable for as many people as is possible. In the interim, consider putting aside some money in your cookie jar for the next Provincial Convocation in 2012.

The Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission provided significant input into the Provincial Convocation. This past year they were active in the Franciscan Witness of Prayer and Fasting at our 2006 General Convention. They are also working with other Provinces to support a Franciscan presence at Lambeth 2008.

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Secretary for Associates,
Yvonne Hook

We continue to work with the Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF) and the R.C. Secular Franciscans (SFO) through



Ken with SFO National Minister, Patrick Mendes and OEF Minister General, David Delacroix

the Joint Committee for Franciscan Unity.

There have been some challenges in the course of the past year. The tensions that exist within the Episcopal church have not gone without notice in our community. While we

are somewhat to the "left of center" compared to the wider church, there are still many different perspectives represented among us. Our goal, largely successful, has been to focus on those things that we share in common mission. While not ignoring those things on which we disagree, our model has been that of the Joint Committee for Franciscan Unity. Within this Committee are very liberal and very conservative Franciscans. Yet, we are able to enjoy a deep and rich fellowship while working toward common goals. At the recent meeting of the Ministers Provincial of the worldwide TSSF, we affirmed our commitment to walk together as Anglican Franciscans, regardless of the turmoil in the Anglican Communion. There is a picture of the Ministers Provincial taken at Little Portion in this edition of *The Times* (see page 10).

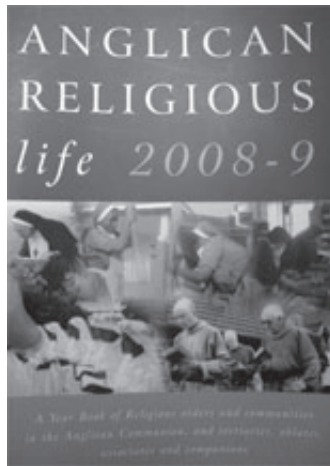
Also included in *The Times* is a Statement of Unity that was accepted at our Chapter. I recommend this to individuals, fellowships, and convocations for your prayer, study, and comment (see page 10).

A matter that presented itself almost immediately after Chapter 2006 was that of the Tertiaries in Brazil. There was what could appropriately be called a crisis in regional leadership and the relationship of Tertiaries in Brazil to the rest of the Province. Approximately half of the Tertiaries in Brazil withdrew from formation or asked for release from vows. The reasons and the details behind this are beyond the scope of a summary report. But suffice to say that the Tertiaries who remain are committed to their vocation as Tertiaries in TSSF. We are working through the logistics of caring for the professed and nurturing those in formation.

Bett Wood, Pamela Redhead, Patronalia Hanley-Brown, Dominic George, Bett Wood, and Anita Catron were welcomed as newly elected members of Chapter.

Caroline Benjamin and Joan Verret reached their term limits as Provincial Secretary and Fellowship Coordinator. Lynn Herne was elected Provincial Secretary (see p. 32) and Marla Asson was elected Fellowship Coordinator (see p. 31).

In the new edition of the *Anglican Religious Life 2008-9*, TSSF is listed in addition to SSF, with detail on each province. I have written an essay on what it means to be a Tertiary, which is included in the book (see page 9 of this issue). This book may be Googled at <http://www.canterburypress.co.uk/bookdetails.asp?ISBN=9781853118142>



I would encourage all who are able to review our website. All past editions of *The Franciscan Times* may be found there. There is also a "secure area" where documents not intended for the general public may be viewed. Point your web browser at <http://www.tssf.org/resources.shtml>. The "secure area" may be accessed via the user name: tssf and the password is: alverna

I encourage all with web access to look for the "forums" in the top right section of the www.tssf.org website. Registration information may be found there. There are forums for a number of different topics, including a subforum for each fellowship.

An area within the CSF/SSF/TSSF communities that TSSF is taking a leading role in is the *Franciscan Action Network*. The FAN is designed to bring a coordinated and effective voice to matter of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in our World. The particular focus of FAN's advocacy is the US Government and related Washington DC based institutions (e.g. World Bank, IMF, Organization of American States, etc.).

The advocacy topics to these institutions will be both international and domestic in scope. In these arenas, the FAN hopes to bring a spirit of healing and reconciliation as they advocate for the transformation of the

New Fellowship Coordinator, Marla Asson (see p. 31)



world as inspired by the Spirit of God and Francis. The FAN is made up of Franciscan entities that choose to be associated with the efforts. These entities are largely Roman Catholic with non-Catholic groups representing the broad reach of the Franciscan message. These entities are congregations and provinces of religious men and women, regions of Franciscan seculars and ecumenical partners, building upon Francis' spirit of crossing borders to join in the common invitation of God to transform the world. Our own Emmett Jarrett is on the Steering Committee of the FAN (see page 24).

If ever there is anything that you have questions about or would like to pursue further, please do not hesitate to contact me at: ken@tssf.org

TSSF in the Province of the Americas continues to be a witness to fundamental Christian truths and Franciscan values. As a community, we are also a foundation and source of support for the work and service that individual Tertiaries do in their own ministries and areas of service. May God give us the will and ability to "reflect the love of Christ, who, in his beauty and power, is the inspiration and joy of our lives".



Chapter 2007 (from left to right, bottom to top)

Sr. Jean (CSF Minister Provincial), Pamel Redhead, Bett Wood, Barbara Leonard (Provincial Chaplain), Anita Catron, Dessordi Peres Leite (Brazil representative)

Bill Breedlove (Formation Director), Joan Verret (outgoing Fellowship Coordinator), Patronalia Hanley-Brown, Marla Asson (incoming Fellowship Coordinator)

Steve Best, Caroline Benjamin (outgoing Secretary), Bishop Scruton (Bishop Protector), Lynn Herne (incoming Secretary), Patrick Mendes (SSF National Minister), Ann Harris (Bursar), Ken Norian

John Brockmann, Br. Jude's eyes (SSF Minister Provincial), Domnic George, and David Delacroix (OEF Minister General)

From the Bursar:



September 30th brought to a close the 2006-2007 fiscal year for the Order. You will be receiving a copy of the end of the year accounts and the proposed budget for next year with the minutes from the 2007 Chapter meeting. Here are some highlights from the past year:

- T Our Income was higher than projected and our expenses lower than expected!
- T This was not our usual year due to the once-in-every-five-years Provincial Convocation that was held in Boston in July. This was a very successful and enjoyable event and financially we were able to return to savings the funds that were used to prepay the contract with Endicott College. At the 2008 Chapter we will start planning for the 2012 Provincial Convocation and these funds will again be available.
- T Our books were audited and we received a clean audit with some good suggestions for upgrading our software and incorporating our growing community.
- T The Third Order is now holding funds for the Associates and these funds are tracked separately from our main account.
- T Given the high cost of travel and printing we have seen some significant saving from using telephone conference calls and email.
Reminder: Please keep your email address current with the secretary.
- T With grateful hearts we received memorial gifts from Wiley Merriman, Rheta Weidenbacker and Harlow Russell; may they rest in peace and rise in glory!

Looking forward to the coming year we are planning on maintaining our current level of pledges and the budget reflects this:

- T This will be a 'normal' year with Chapter members and first Order visitors traveling to

regional convocations.

- T Our contributions to the worldwide Third Order Franciscan Central Fund and African travel funds have increased slightly and we have increased our giving to the worldwide Franciscan Aid fund.
- T The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) is a new ecumenical project – stay tuned for more news as the year progresses.
- T JPIC is planning a pilgrimage in the fall of 2008 and we will fund part of the cost.
- T The set-aside for the next Provincial Convocation has been increased with the goal of underwriting more of the costs to make it more affordable for a greater number of our members.
- T A library has been started in Trinidad to serve the community in the Caribbean.

All in all this has been a very good year for the Third Order and for the bursar. I very much appreciate the little notes that accompany many of your checks. They enrich my prayer life and bring me a joyful sense of community. If you have any questions please contact me by mail or at my new email address, anntssf@gmail.com

Socially Responsible Banking

Anne Harris, Bursar

There are times when I think that my puny individual efforts are not going to make any difference in solving the plight of the poor in this world. Then I come across something that makes me realize that I am part of a much larger community and my small effort can make a difference. Most people will choose a bank for its convenient location, its interest rates or even its free coffee but most of us do not look any further into how our bank operates. The Third Order keeps its savings at ShoreBank, one of the first banks whose mission statement emphasizes community based, socially responsible banking. They recently sent us an update on their efforts to alleviate the subprime mortgage crisis in the Chicago area.

If you have not done so already perhaps you could consider whether your money is being held by an institution that has these values? It's a small step that could have far-reaching consequences.

What is a Tertiary?

Ken Norian, (an entry in Anglican Religious Life 2008-9, p. 173 (edited by Peta Dunstan author of This Poor Sort: A History of the European Province of the Society of St. Francis) ISBN 978-1853118142)

This is a question often asked since it is a term not in the vocabulary of most people. *Tertiary* has a Latin derivation indicating "third". Members of a Third Order are then called Tertiaries.

So, what is a Third Order and, more specifically, The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis? Why are people called to this Order? What do Tertiaries value about being Third Order Franciscans? The answer to these questions begins with Francis of Assisi who was called by God to rebuild the Church.

Francesco Bernadone was the son of a wealthy merchant who was born late in the 12th century in Italy. Through a powerful conversion experience Francis came to mirror the love of Christ and the living Gospel so closely that nearly everyone who met him wanted to follow his way of life. He realized that not everyone could or should take up a celibate life of poverty and homelessness, yet he recognized that people unable to do this were still drawn to serve God with deeply committed hearts and lives. Long before Francis was born, groups of men and women in ordinary secular walks of life were living under rule and vows as members of "Third Orders". Francis saw this as appropriate answer for many of his followers and so, over eight hundred years ago, the "Brothers and Sisters of Penance", later known as "Third Order" or "Secular" Franciscans came to be.

The Anglican Franciscan movement began in the United States, England, and India early in the twentieth century and merged into the Society of Saint Francis. The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis is a fully independent Order with its own provincial and worldwide Constitution, Rule, Principles and Statutes.

Tertiaries are no less committed than Friars or Sisters who live in community. Our vocation is lived out in a different and, some would say, more challenging way. We are not "wannabe" nuns or friars, a "pious guild" nor a devotional society. We are lay and clergy, single or in committed relationships, serving God as we are called, in the ordinary occupations of life. Because we are an Order, the shape of our lives is formed in the context of the Order's Principles and Rule.

There are three Aims of the Third Order that summarize our mission. First we seek to make our Lord known and loved everywhere. By word and example, Tertiaries witness to Christ in their daily lives. By

prayer and sacrifice, we help forward God's work wherever He has called us.

We seek to spread the spirit of fellowship, love and harmony within the family of God. By working happily with people of different race, color, creed, education and opportunity, Tertiaries seek to break down the divisions in the world. We try to live in the spirit of the prayer written in the spirit of St. Francis: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."

We strive to live simply. Acknowledging that everything belongs to God, we seek to use His gifts wisely and to be good stewards of this fragile earth, never destroying or wasting what God has made. We provide the things necessary for ourselves and our families without demanding luxuries. We seek never to forget the needs of others.

Tertiaries seek to serve God through prayer, study and active work for the Kingdom. Tertiaries are called to prayerful lives—of openness to God and to others. The Eucharist is the heart of our prayer. While Tertiaries give first place to the study of the Scriptures, we also seek to widen our understanding of the Church's mission, of our Franciscan vocation, and of God's world. Tertiaries seek to discover what God wants us to do. In our daily work and lives, we try to serve God and work for the good of others. The best service we can offer is to reflect the love of Christ, and to show his joy and peace to others by example.

Tertiaries seek to live their lives in a spirit of humility, love and joy. While most Tertiaries do not physically live together, we are truly a community that is knit together in community and prayer. We are called daily to share in an offering of prayer for each other. We rejoice in all of the marks of a Christian community - a rule, shared prayer, well wrought liturgies, a formation process of several years, shared stories, spiritual friendships and heroic pioneers like Francis and Clare. The mutual support we offer each other in all aspects of life, especially in ministry and prayer, is most appreciated by members of the Third Order community. This support stems from the unconditional love and acceptance from others with similar commitments to seeking and serving Christ in all people. Tertiaries make a lifetime commitment to live a Rule of Life in company with the sisters and brothers in their Order.

If you are striving to be a peacemaker; feel called to action and contemplation; are yearning for a deeper relationship with God; passionate about social justice; concerned about ecology, the poor and the marginalized then the Third Order may be a place where you can find a spiritual home. There are several thousand Anglican Tertiaries around the world in many countries organized around five areas including the Euro-

pean Province, the African Province, the Australian Province and Hong Kong, the New Zealand Province and Solomon Islands, and the Province of the Americas.

As St. Francis of Assisi said at the time of his death: "God has shown me what was mine to do; may God show you what is yours to do."

At a Meeting of the Ministers Provincial of the Worldwide Third Order—A Statement of Unity

The following is a statement of how we plan to weather the turmoil that is currently roiling the Anglican Communion. We urge every fellowship and convocation to read this and discuss how we/you are going to live into this "unity".

We recognize that within our Third Order community our sisters and brothers live with a tremendous diversity of views. However, what unites us are our Principles and our commitment to live and walk with one another whatever happens within and among the various provinces of the Anglican communion, while not always agreeing with—always respecting the views of others in Christ and St Francis.

Our Order has as its aims "To make Christ known and loved everywhere, to live in love and harmony, and to live simply, by prayer, study and work in the spirit of love, harmony and joy"

Quoting from the letter sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury from the joint Chapter of the Brothers and Sisters of the First and Second Orders and the Inter-Provincial Chapter of the Third Order which gathered in Canterbury in 2005, "while bound together as one family, we struggle to cherish differences in gender, culture, theology, economic backgrounds, sexual orientation and varied religious histories., we offer to you....A model of moving forward as Church: walking in the way of Saint Francis of Assisi whose embrace of the leper and the way of non-violent love knit together a universal family of Christians, rooted in the Gospel, growing in joy and simplicity and extending a reign of God marked by peace and justice.

Within our Province of the Americas are included brothers and sisters from Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. The various differences referenced in the above letter are well represented within our TSSF Province of the Americas.

The Chapter of the Province of the Americas believes that our best statement of unity may be found in our Principles, and we are committed to breaking down barriers between people, seeking equality for all, spreading a spirit of love and harmony among all people—cheerfully facing any scorn or persecution to which this may lead.



The Ministers. Left to right: David Bertram (Africa), Dick Bird (Europe), Dorothy Brooker (Minister General), Ken Norian (Americas), John Hebenton (Aotearoa, New Zealand & Melanesia--See page 31 for two poems by John), Sally Buckley (seated) (Assistant for Australia, Papua New Guinea & SE Asia).

Resources from the 2007 Convocation

On our TSSF.org website, there are now a number of items from the 2007 Convocation that you can see or download.

Canticle Stations: a meditation on the care of God's creation by Joyce and Amanda Wilding. If you have Internet Explorer, you can view it by clicking here. Otherwise you can download the PowerPoint document.

There is also a .zip file containing all of Joyce Wilding's resources on environmental ministry. Contents include PowerPoint documents (Canticle Stations, Environmental Ministry, Food & Faith, Greening of the House of the Lord, Psalm 104, Water of Baptism) and Word documents (Water Survey, Paper Sources, Greening the Church, EpEN Fact Sheet, Food & Faith, Green Building, and more). You can download this 56MB file by clicking here. (Please be patient; it's a large file!) You'll need WinZip to open it.

But wait! There's more: a .zip file containing all of Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann, and Bill Short's PowerPoints from their presentation on the new three-volume Francis of Assisi: the Early Documents. Again, this is a rather large file, but you can download it by clicking here. You'll need WinZip to open it.

St. Anthony's Bookstore was a great success at the Provincial Convocation and fortunately for those of us who could not attend the convocation we still have an opportunity to purchase some of the items that were ordered exclusively for the store. The T-shirts, mugs, mouse pads, and pens have the 'Dancing Francis' design and the tote bag has Francis and the whale designed for the convocation by Sister Pamela Clare. You can download an order form here.

The Path to Profession

Victoria Logue

My husband, daughter and I were given the most wonderful opportunity this summer: a fellow priest of my husband's offered us the use of his apartment in Todi, Italy, for a week for what amounted to a small deposit and cleaning fee.

So, in early June after spending three marvelous days in Rome, we rented an Alfa Romeo and drove up to Umbria. The apartment turned out to be literally just within the walls of the medieval hilltop city. From the window of the master bedroom, we had a bird's eye view of the valley and its olive groves; to our right, the medieval buildings wound their way around the crown of the hill. I could spend paragraphs rhapsodizing about the apartment, the neighbors and the town, itself, but the biggest plus about Todi was its proximity

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For Profession & Novicing Dates
For Notification of Deaths
Send Them To the Secretary of the Order:
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to Assisi.

A 45 minute drive took us to the top of the hill upon which the town is located. For every monument that seemed the very antithesis of the poverello of Assisi, another would allow us to catch a glimpse of the world in which he lived. My husband was struck most by the little cave of a storage room in which Pietro Bernardone locked up his son; Griffin, my 16-year-old daughter, delighted in the church which Francis attended as a child; and I found peace at San Damiano.

On Sunday, after attending the service at the Anglican Church in Assisi and enjoying a glass of wine and biscuits during their "coffee hour," we walked down to San Damiano. I had decided that while I was in Umbria, I wanted to say my Franciscan vows in a place that felt sacred to me. While I had begun the process toward profession, I knew it could be months, if ever, before I might actually be able to profess. Whether I was accepted for profession or not, I knew I would always be Franciscan at heart, and I wanted to be able to be able to give voice to that.

(continued on page 12)



We followed a dirt road away from San Damiano and stood amongst the trees in an olive grove and with Frank as the officiant and my daughter as the litanist, I made my pledge and took my vows minus the cross of profession. It was wonderful experience and we ended the day by driving up to The Hermitage and wandering its paths.

In August, I was informed that I had been approved for profession and was asked to take a 24-hour silent retreat before that service, which I was able to schedule for September 23. The week prior to my profession, I met with my spiritual director and drove straight from her house on Saint Simons Island to Honey Creek, the Conference Center for the Diocese of Georgia. Normally, September in Southeast Georgia is only slightly less miserable than August in Southeast Georgia, but we had a rare spell of excellent weather. A wonderful breeze was blowing and the temperature hovered in the mid-70s. It was the perfect 24 hours for a retreat. I spent hours wandering around the grounds and sitting by the tidal creek watching the water flow by, something that has been very meditative for me since reading Siddhartha in the ninth grade.

As it was a Wednesday night, I was able to attend the Eucharist at the newly established

Episcopal Church of Our Savior at Honey Creek before a final walk and Compline. The next day, I was able to leave Honey Creek and break my fast at the weekly gathering of my Cursillo Reunion Group at Taco Bell. It was quite an uplifting and meaningful experience and confirmed to me that I was doing the right thing.

We planned my profession as part of the regular 10 a.m. service at King of Peace Episcopal Church in Kingsland. My husband, Frank, would celebrate; the Rev. Linda McCloud would deliver the sermon; and Paddy Kennington would officiate.

But, the best laid plans . . . Paddy called at 7 a.m. that morning to say that she'd spent the night in the emergency room with her father. She and her husband had driven down from Atlanta, stopping in Savannah along the way

so Paddy could visit her parents, to officiate at my service. While I was sad that Paddy would not be able to be there for the service, I was thankful that she happened to be in Savannah when her father was diagnosed with pneumonia and congestive heart failure; that she was there for her parents when they needed her.

As my husband is a priest, he was given permission to officiate at the service and at 10 a.m. we began my profession using the Eucharistic Service of Saints Francis and Clare.



The entire path to profession has been an amazing experience for me. From the first two years I spent developing and following a rule of life before I even approached the Order to postulancy and novicing. I've had my ups and downs but I've always moved forward even if I've stalled a time or two. I've developed a wonderful relationship with my spiritual director and enjoyed getting to know my formation directors. From convocation meetings and spiritual retreats, monthly reports and my daily prayer, and everything in between, I wouldn't change a thing.

A Proud Father on His Son

Bill Berge writing on the tssf-1@yahoogroups.com

I would like them all to know that Clark has been elected the youngest and first American First Order



Franciscan to be their world wide Minister General. As you can imagine Marian and I are pretty proud parents. I hope this is not too much to ask of you. Let's hope we Franciscans all can be a part of closing our global rifts between Anglican and Episcopal factions.

Dan B. Treece, RIP

Dan Treece was born 16 January 1931 in Alva, OK. He went to Seminary at Nashotah House during the 1960s when, for a few years, they had a very strong emphasis on social action. During his seminary years he was involved in social action and marched with Dr. Martin Luther King in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His senior thesis in seminary was on King. His first church was St. Francis Ghetto Mission, which he established in Oklahoma City, OK and served for 2 years. He left full-time clerical work and worked for the Poverty Program, under the Johnson Administration, in Florida and South Carolina. Following that he worked in the oil business for a number of years and served as a non-stipendiary priest in the Diocese of Colorado. He served as Regional Vicar of the Utah region of Navajoland from 1979-81 and served as Vicar of St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in Breckenridge, Colorado, taking it from Mis-



sion to Parish status. He retired in 1996 with his wife, the Rev. Jean Treece, to Bluff, Utah. Jean relates that Dan "kept bumping into St. Francis" in his life. He named the Mission in Oklahoma City after St. Francis. He also celebrated the first mass at St. Francis

T S S F Publications

The Principles of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis for Daily Reading (\$2.50)

Order of Admission (\$1)

Spiritual Director Guide (\$2.50)

Statutes (\$1)

Devotional Companion (\$4.50)

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Homeless Mission in Denver in the early 1980's. When Br. Robert Hugh, SSF came to do a teaching mission at Central City, CO and talked about the Third Order, it seemed natural that he and Jean would enter into the formation process.

Dan was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and spent the last several years of his life a nursing home for this condition. He died 7 October 2007 in Mancos, CO.

Louis Willie, 84, Defused Racial Clash, Is Dead

By the Associated Press (September 19, 2007)

Louis J. Willie Jr., a black businessman who helped defuse a racial dispute surrounding the 1990 P.G.A. Championship, died here Sunday. He was 84.

The 1990 P.G.A. Championship was held at Shoal Creek Country Club, in suburban Birmingham. Protests mounted after the club president said Shoal Creek would not be pressured into accepting black members. Mr. Willie helped quiet the situation by accepting an honorary membership.

After that, the Professional Golf Association and other golf groups said they would not hold tournaments at clubs that lacked minority or female members. Shoal Creek's first dues-paying black member joined in 1996.

"What I admired most about my father was his willingness to be available to help the community," his son, Louis Willie III, said. "That to me is where he had his most impact."

Mr. Willie, a native of Texas, helped Mr. Gaston build a business empire that included Booker T. Washington Insurance, Citizens Federal Savings Bank (now Citizens Trust Bank) and two radio stations.

Eulogy by Louis Willie III

My task today is to reflect on the life of Louis James Willie. I could talk of his business career, his civic involvements, or the awards and honors that he received. But I don't believe that would do him justice. Besides, you can read all of that on the program insert. What I really want to talk about is the essence of the man whom I was fortunate enough to call Dad. Because I don't believe that it is the professional resume that defines who a person is. What really counts, the true



legacy that any of us would be fortunate to leave, can only be measured by the love we show to others and the love we receive in return. When it comes right down to it there is nothing more important, and I can tell you without equivocation that Lou Willie was a man who loved – greatly, and deeply, and without strings attached. He loved his family – his mother and father – his brothers and sister – his cousins – his nieces and nephews – his friends – even his enemies – and he dearly loved God – but most especially, he loved Yvonne, and thankfully me – his adopted son. My Dad taught me about love by demonstrating his love for me. There was never a time in my life when I felt unloved – no matter what stupidity I got involved in. If I was home sick from school, my dad would leave a business meeting to talk with me on the phone until I felt better. He talked to me. He read to me. He included me in his life. Some of my earliest memories include his description of what it meant to be adopted. He described it as going to a candy store. When you had a child, it was like being blindfolded and groping around until your hand closed on a piece of candy. You got what you got. But when you adopted a child, you went into the store, carefully looking around until you found the perfect piece of candy, the perfect baby. Can you imagine being made to feel so special?

Dad also taught me about being free of hate. During some of the worst racial violence in the country, my father told me repeatedly that the perpetrators were not indicative of the entire race of people, they were merely bad individuals doing evil things.

It was this innate sense of fairness, his genuine love of mankind that led my father, along with my mother to Join the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis: a group of people who dedicate themselves to making the Lord known and loved throughout the world. The

Order sets out, in the name of Christ, to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all. Their second aim is the spreading of a spirit of love and harmony among all people. They are pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind.

The essence of a man. The legacy of love and devotion left by Lou Willie. A legacy to which I aspire and one that if it were adopted by all of us would make the world a truly better place.

In closing, I have to tell you that I have a distinction that very few of you know about. I hold the world record as the youngest person to win the lottery. On August 5, 1955 when I spit on Lou Willie's tie, he decided right then and there that I was the baby he and Yvonne would adopt. At the tender age of 5 months and 4 days old, I cashed in on the biggest lottery of all time by being selected to be a part of the best family in the world. Thank you Dad! We love you, and we'll miss you.

Let us pray:

**O God Sublime and Glorious,
Come and enlighten the darkness of our hearts;
give us honest faith, firm hope and perfect love.
By Your gift may we feel and know Your Holy will,
that we may obey it and not go astray.
Amen**

J. Robert Philpott, Jr., RIP

J. Robert Philpott, Jr., 61, of Charlotte, NC, died October 6, 2007 at Carolinas Medical Center.

He was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina on March 21, 1946. He graduated from Lexington High School in Lexington, North Carolina, in 1964, and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the Virginia Military Institute in 1968, where he stood first in his class among Economics majors and was named a member of Omicron Delta Epsilon, the national honor society in Economics. Upon graduation, he was tapped into the Kappa Alpha Order. After graduating from VMI, Mr. Philpott served as a Minuteman II missile launch officer in the United States Air Force's Strategic Air Command. While in the Air Force, he received a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Missouri and was awarded a Distinguished Academic Achievement Award from the United States Air Force in 1971.

From 1972 through 1981, Mr. Philpott served as a regional corporate lending officer for the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company, N.A. From 1981 to 1985, Mr. Philpott was a Vice President in the Corporate Finance Department of J.C. Bradford & Company. In this capac-

ity, he served as an investment banker and financial adviser to a number of corporations in both the South-east and other areas of the United States.

Mr. Philpott founded Philpott Ball & Werner ('PB&W') in January 1991 with George Ball and was President and Managing Director until 2007. PB&W is a private investment banking firm which assists corporations throughout the United States, Canada and Western Europe. PB&W's services include mergers, acquisitions and divestitures; transaction financing; corporate finance and litigation advice; fairness opinions and corporate valuations.

Mr. Philpott joined the VMI Foundation Board of Trustees in 2001. During his time as a trustee, he served on the Audit and Finance Committee and the Fundraising and Stewardship Committee, eventually becoming the chairman of both. On July 1, 2004, he became the Foundation's Vice President for Administration. In 2007, Mr. Philpott became the nineteenth President of the VMI Foundation.

He was a professed member of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis. He was an active member and vestryman of Christ Episcopal Church of Charlotte where he was the chair of numerous commissions. He also conducted services at Southminster Retirement Community and was active with the Urban Ministry Center.

The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb--A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community—A Review

Alice Bangs

In October, 2007 an open invitation called "A Common Word Between Us and You," was extended by 138 mainstream prominent Muslim scholars to heads of major Christian denominations. The twenty-nine page letter, though not a first in inter-faith proposals between the two faiths, sounded an urgent need for "strategic dialogue," warning that the "future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians."

The common ground starting point offered by the Muslims is Jesus's two commandments to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind, and to love one's neighbor as one's self. The letter explores passages in the Bible and the Koran that develop these and other shared principles.

I thought of that letter on a grass roots level after I was asked to review the book entitled *The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb--A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. The author is Eric H. F. Law, an Episcopal priest, and a professional consultant and

workshop facilitator in multicultural leadership.

As the title might suggest, this is not about corporate ladder leadership techniques, nor is it about "touchy-feely" group encounters. Law recounts his efforts and struggles to bring together people of diverse cultural backgrounds. The groups are categorized as "people of color" (mostly African-Americans, also Latinos, Asian-Americans, and American Indians); and "whites" (mostly of northern European background).

The author has developed a particular format called "Mutual Invitation." A bare bones description is that a leader of a group session (who does not present him or herself as being an expert in any field) familiarizes the participants with the ground rules of the purpose and content of the planned gathering. He then invites someone in the group to share his or her view. Then that person has the privilege of inviting another person to share. Anyone is free to "pass," but still retains the power to invite someone else to speak. And so it goes, till all have had time and opportunity to speak or reconsider their initial "passes."

Behind this deceptively simple description are years here and abroad of study, observation, participating in and leading multicultural gatherings. A frequently occurring factor that became uncomfortably obvious was that whenever culturally diverse groups met, the white English-speaking participants usually dominated, albeit often unconsciously, through agenda-setting, talking, and decision-making. Law calls this the "wolf and the lamb" scenario.

How can "wolves and lambs" (ie. the ethnic cultures of the world) come to live peaceably together without fighting or uneasily avoiding each other? How can a world of "wolves and lambs" work toward cohabiting a "peaceable realm"—a neutral term Law prefers to "kingdom." (Please read Isaiah 11:6-9.) For us Christians, Law maintains the answer lies in the roots of our Faith, our understanding of cultural differences, and a letting go of believing one's own culture to be superior to another (ethno-centricity.) I thought of our Franciscan Rule as I read through the book.

When individuals and/or local TSSF fellowships create websites that reference TSSF, it should be clearly indicated that the site is not an official site of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis in the Americas. Additionally, a link should be included to www.tssf.org.

This is about bridge building, justice, and reconciliation. (Please refer to the Second Aim, Days 7-9 of our Principles.) The book is a self-examen of attitudes from both people of color and of whites--the attitudes of the latter mostly emanating from etho-centricity, a sense of entitlement and assertive self-confidence from their power base. To come to recognize and be willing to move away from ethno-centricity means donning the cloak of humility and vulnerability. This is a call to let go of the urge to control and manipulate; to drop foolish pretentiousness; to set aside busyness and be an open, patient listener in order to hear—and become changed.

This does not happen overnight. Law says it is an ongoing process. Much of our response to other cultures is instinctive. We have thought values and patterns which differ from those in other cultures. Sometimes they are expressed tactlessly or insultingly. Even genuine attempts to reach out can backfire and hinder the bridge-building process.

To interject a personal note here, my husband and I share joint custody of our toddler granddaughter with her other grandmother who is black and lives in a poor neighborhood. My husband and I are white and live comfortably. Our granddaughter lives with us four to five days a week, and the rest of the time with her other grandmother on her days off. Our first piece of common ground was the shared love for our mutual granddaughter and the desire to do what's best for her. As time has passed, we three custodians, if you will, have come to know each other better, and as a result, that piece of common ground has steadily expanded; nonetheless, we all tread gently and carefully.

As a Chinese-American, born and raised in Hong Kong, Law is still learning about his internal cultural identity, and its reactions to various multicultural situations. He has been on both sides of perceived power and powerlessness in group encounters. His personal cultural reaction of silence, as disapproval, has been misinterpreted as indifference, incompetence, and sometimes assent. On one occasion he was admonished by an African-American for his perceived lack of sensitivity in how he arranged for a particular hymn to be played.

Toward the end of the book, of special interest to Episcopalians, Law offers a detailed and intriguing chapter on liturgy as a spiritual discipline for leadership in a multicultural community. He submits his Mutual Invitation process as one such liturgy, outlining a six-part format with explanations of the necessity for each step. As we in the Third Order well know, spirituality and discipline are companions.

Law concludes that the discipline of practicing "liturgies" for multicultural gatherings can jolt us out of our comfortable routine of unreflective cultural patterns and values. In this way we can start to move toward the reality of the "Peaceable Realm."

At first glance, I thought the book might be one of those replete with statistical charts and diagrams, and yawn-inducing analyses of case studies. Thank goodness, it was not so. Yet it was difficult to figure out where to begin, once it was time to start writing—rather like trying to jump on a horse and ride off in four directions at the same time. There were several topics I wanted to emphasize and elaborate on from personal interest and past study. I know I am leaving out some material that I ought to touch upon, but to include all would make this piece way too long. It was not difficult though, to talk about the book. A few nights ago when my husband and I went out to dinner, my food cooled off as I enthusiastically prattled on about what I'd read.

As Law puts it, we must strive "to take courage, to go against our instinct, to uncover our own cultural waters, and to live in the uncharted intercultural waters of the Peaceable Kingdom." May all those called together by "A Common Word Between Us and You" do likewise.

On the Road With Francis of Assisi, A Timeless Journey Through Umbria and Tuscany, and Beyond, by Linda Bird Francke. (Random House, 2005).

Reviewed by Alice Bangs

The author and her husband carefully researched Francis' life, and Clare's as well. They prepared for their trip with guidebooks, advanced reservations for overnight accommodations, renting cars and Italian cell phones, and then undertook a generally chronological journey around the Italy of Francis's day--the area he travelled back and forth for twenty years. Also included is his visit to Egypt.

All the detailed and careful preparation for the trip makes for a rather un-Franciscan-like approach, but for the reader, it makes for a thoroughly engrossing book. Settle in your chair, take your time, because it is a treat to feel you are on the road with the author as she traces Francis's travels, while at times feeling wrapped up in the power of his reputation and legend. She deftly blends the biographical and spiritual components with all their joy, yearning, humor, suffering, and tragedy with descriptions of the contemporary landscape and people she meets, especially Franciscan friars as per-

sonal tour guides.

I immersed myself in her descriptions—

"The light is different in Apulia, the province in the heel of southern Italy's boot. Compared with the crisp light in the high hill towns of Umbria and Tuscany, Apulia's light is soft and seems to bear within it its own shade. The diffusion comes from the salt in the air from the Adriatic Sea on Apulia's east coast and from the Tyrrhenian Sea on its west."

Did you know that the only Franciscan hermitage to offer food to travellers is at La Verna—and that only because the place is visited by a million tourists and pilgrims a year? And that the renowned ceramic artist Andrea Della Robbia's exquisite fifteenth-century terracotta artwork around the sanctuary's buildings were commissioned by early Franciscans only because they regarded his work as "not fit for a grand church, but was cheap and in keeping with the Franciscan spirit of poverty"—this and other vignettes offered by a young English-speaking Croatian friar who guided the author and her husband around La Verna.

In light of contemporary relations between Christians and Muslims, the chapter about Francis in Egypt in 1219 during the Fifth Crusade is engagingly informative. Through a friend, the author was put in touch with a former Egyptian ambassador to the United States. He in turn arranged a meeting with the governor of Damietta. The governor had never heard of Francis of Assisi, but courteously assembled some local experts to share their knowledge of the Fifth Crusade with the author—two from the Department of Egyptian Antiquities, a Crusade historian, and a Coptic Christian priest. Also joining the assembly were newspaper reporters and photographers.

Imagine yourself sitting in the governor's office, gazing at a carved wood bas-relief depicting King Louis IX of France on his knees in front of scimitar-wielding Muslim warriors. (It is the familiar Muslim victory ending the Seventh Crusade in 1250 that is celebrated and revered there.)

Despite the governor's understandable lack of knowledge of Francis, there is a Franciscan presence in Damietta. The Coptic priest said that, despite the fact that Roman Catholic Crusaders killed about twenty thousand Egyptian Orthodox Christians on the bank of the Nile during the Fifth Crusade, because they were afraid the latter would join the Muslims, he was approving of the decision by the then sultan in 1250, at the end of the Seventh Crusade, to allow Franciscans to establish a convent. It is now a Christian school run by a French nun for 1200 girls and boys. The author was invited to visit the school, and she was heartened to see a bust of Francis displayed in the school church.

This is one of those books I will enjoy reading again—I found myself wanting to refer back to previous pages, and regretted I didn't make notes as I went along, but then I didn't want to interrupt the flow. So the book is still on my reading table with pencil beside it, ready for me to delve into it again.

There are accompanying beautiful photographs, but of course, not enough, given the number of places described. It must have been difficult for the author to make selections and keep them down to a working number. I also regret that they are not in color. But nonetheless, I remind myself that in any picture we are looking at Francis's day-to-day journeys through the diffused lens of time—or perhaps salt in the air?

A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding

Finn Pond

Part 1. Book Review

The Committee on Science, Technology and Faith (ECUSA). 2005. *A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding*. The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. pp. 36 [Printed copies available from Episcopal Books and Resources (<http://www.anthology.com/episcopalresourcecenter/wc.dll?main~bd>) for \$5.00; an electronic version as a PDF file is available to download at www.episcopalchurch.org/science.]

As a biologist and a deacon, I am very pleased with this document. At a time when many Christians have entered political arenas advocating anti-evolutionary agendas, I am heartened once again by the reasoned stance of the Episcopal Church. At a time when our failures as stewards of creation threaten global environmental catastrophes, I am thankful that my church recognizes our moral imperative to honor and care for God's creation. As a Franciscan, I shout, "Amen!" to a theology that upholds the intrinsic value of all creation. We should share this document with our brothers and sisters, and perhaps most especially with our children because the way we think about nature affects our relationship with God and our neighbors – it affects the way we live out our faith.

Christianity proclaims that the entire universe – living creatures and non-living matter, things visible and invisible – came into existence by the intent and action of God. What, however, does it mean to say that God is creator? We believe also that God sustains and redeems all, but how do we understand God's presence and continuing activity in the world and in our lives?

St. Thomas of Aquinas declared that the doctrine of creation is important: "Any error about creation also leads to an error about God." Our view of nature affects the way we live out our faith. Dante Alighieri, in *The Divine Comedy*, says that to despise nature and her gifts is to do violence against God. What then do our lifestyles of consumption say about our faith?

Angela of Foligno, a thirteenth century Franciscan, wrote that she perceived in a vision the presence and the power of God throughout the world, and, in an "excess of wonder," she cried out, "This world is pregnant with God!" If we understand that God is immanent in creation, are we not called to use creation's resources for the benefit of all creation, avoiding the exploitation of other people and the earth's wealth for selfish purposes?

Many school boards battle over the teaching of creationist alternatives to evolution in public schools. Traditional Christian theism describes God as all-powerful, all knowing, unchanging, perfect, and eternal, a designer God who engineers and controls all of creation. Is such a God compatible with the scientific understanding of an evolving universe where contingency, or randomness, plays a role in our lives? Theologian John Haught argues in his book, *God after Darwin*, that a loving God, a God who in humility emptied himself, is a God who gives creation the freedom to evolve. How then does science interact with our faith?

The way we think about creation shapes our answers to many questions, both theological and practical. How many of us, however, can articulate a theology of creation? In the spring of 2005, a resource became available to help us do exactly that – to think more deeply about creation. The Committee on Science, Technology and Faith (ECUSA) prepared "A Catechism of Creation: an Episcopal Understanding":

- to facilitate dialogue between this Church and members of the scientific, technical, and medical communities;
- to be an educational resource for this Church, its seminaries, and the wider Christian community; and
- to provide guidelines in Christian ethics for use in everyday decisions within contemporary American culture.

This short booklet (36 pages) uses a traditional question-and-answer format to present a catechism of creation in three parts. The first part, "Theology of Creation," provides a Biblical and theological foundation for a creation theology. The second part, "Creation and Science," considers the compatibility of our Christian faith with contemporary scientific understanding, addressing issues such as modern cosmology, biologi-

cal evolution, and "intelligent design." The final part, "Caring about Creation," focuses on our calling and our moral responsibilities as stewards of creation.

The question-and-answer format provides a quick yet remarkably thorough introduction to contemporary theological reflection about the creation. This document also dispels the notion that Christian faith and modern science are in conflict, and challenges us to care for well-being of all creation. An appendix provides a useful bibliography for anyone wanting more in-depth coverage of these areas. A second appendix lists relevant Bible verses as well as a list of lectionary readings related to creation.

One intention of the catechism is to guide lay people toward a deeper understanding of God as creator. Another goal is to educate and empower lay people to speak out on environmental issues and to engage school boards on issues of evolution and faith. Does the document succeed?

How it Could Be Used in Your Parish

I used the catechism in a three-week adult course at my church last year. We covered one part of the catechism each week. In preface to our time together, I handed out ahead of time a short article to introduce the section of the catechism assigned for that day (these introductory articles are reproduced below). I began our 45-minute sessions by asking some of the questions from the catechism (before people had seen the catechism):

- What does it mean to say that God creates "out of nothing"?
- What theological truths about creation does Genesis 1 convey?
- What evidence is there that human beings are evolved creatures?
- What are theologians saying about God's creating activities in light of modern scientific discoveries and theories?
- What has science taught us about our relationship with the earth and its creatures?
- Why is this a time in which Christians should be especially concerned with the state of God's earth?

The questions invariably generated considerable discussion and we did not always arrive at shared answers, but it primed people to want to know what the catechism said. I then handed out copies on the section for that day and we looked at the answers to the specific questions I had asked. This often led to more discussion and a desire within the group to go through the documents more carefully and systematically. We never got through an entire section in the time allotted, but I know that many people worked through the catechism during the week because they returned the following

week with additional questions or comments.

There are of course many ways to use the catechism and different levels at which one could cover the material (we did not use any of the readings from the bibliographies, though this would allow for an excellent, longer course). With a youth group, I might have had us simply read through the catechism, leaving room for questions and comments as we went.

Part 2. Introductions to the Catechism

This past year I used *A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding*, and for each of the three sections, I wrote an article as an introduction to the catechism.

Developing a Theology of Creation

“... I mean only that a wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude towards God, and that the consequence is an inevitable doom.” T. S. Eliot¹

The words of T. S. Eliot resonate with my Franciscan calling. God’s creation has intrinsic value and my relationship to all of creation intertwines inextricably with my relationship to God – to dishonor creation, dishonors God. These beliefs lie deeply embedded in my theology. Of course, Eliot’s assertion raises the question: What is a ‘right attitude’ towards creation?

In an influential article published in 1967, historian Lynn White argued that Christianity bears much of the guilt for our modern ecological crisis because of its arrogance toward nature and its insistence that nature has value only to the extent that it serves humankind. This wrong attitude toward nature, entrenched in Western, institutional Christianity, he said, was bringing us closer to an environmental catastrophe. Indeed, a dismissive attitude toward the material world runs through the history of Christian thought – the physical realm discounted as inferior to the spiritual and unimportant because it is inconsequential to the final destiny of humankind.² Other Christian traditions exist, however, which present radically different attitudes toward creation. White, recognizing this, claimed that, “Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not.”² He suggested that St. Francis become the patron saint of ecology.³

In the church today, I encounter diverse attitudes toward creation. Some Christians resist granting special value to the physical world, arguing that our ultimate concern must remain focused on spiritual redemption. Others value creation for utilitarian reasons – seeing throughout the physical world God’s gracious provision for all our needs. They acknowledge our responsi-

bility to act as good stewards so not to diminish God’s bounty. St. Francis, however, refused to act as someone separated from the created world. Rather than merely ascribing a pragmatic significance of creation, he pointed to the intrinsic value of creation. Because it is God’s creation, sanctified by the incarnation, he found deep, spiritual reasons for upholding and honoring the physical aspects of our existence. St. Francis celebrated our intimate connection with all of creation. How we think about nature has consequences for the world and, in light of the global environmental crises we face, I am heartened that this Franciscan view of creation is finding its way into the thinking of the church.

Seeking Understanding

Saint Anselm of Canterbury said that theology is faith seeking understanding – a quest to make intellectual sense of what we know by faith to be true. Theology seeks an ever-deeper understanding of the nature, attributes, and actions of God, and seeks to articulate what is our relationship to God and to one another. Theology offers a foundation for spiritual meaning in our lives – uncovering our true selves as part of God’s creation and pointing us toward God’s grace, peace and joy.

Through intentional and rational study of Christian and Hebrew scriptures, through reflection and contemplation, and with contemporary knowledge of the natural world and of humanity, theology attempts to clarify Christian doctrines and beliefs. For example, a theology of redemption may focus on questions of sin and forgiveness, Christ and the cross, atonement and salvation. But theology can also speak about practical aspects of Christian living, such as a theology of wealth or a theology of love.

Doctrines of Creation

What then is a theology of creation, and why is it particularly significant to the church in the 21st century? Does a theology of creation simply inform us about our role as stewards of creation, or does it go deeper than that?

Christianity proclaims that the entire universe – living creatures and non-living matter, things visible and invisible – came into existence by the intent and action of God. Every Sunday we declare in the words of the Nicene Creed that God is the “maker of heaven and earth,” that it is through Jesus Christ that “all things were made,” and that the Holy Spirit is the “giver of life.”

Early Church Fathers taught that God created the universe out of nothing; that God is *transcendent* or apart from creation. They taught that God’s creative activity is ongoing or continuous; that God is *immanent* or intimately present in creation, sustaining and

upholding the universe. They also taught that God is working to bring creation to fulfillment, to bring a new creation into being. These are central doctrines of Christian faith, though not always emphasized. Many contemporary theologians believe that theologies of redemption have overshadowed doctrines of creation to our detriment.

Theologies of Creation

Like any other intellectual endeavor, we encounter different opinions, different ways of thinking, about creation. Some theologians have tried to move the church to rethink the importance of God's creative acts, to emphasize the goodness of creation and our role as co-creators with God called to work toward redeeming all of creation and bringing to fulfillment God's purpose. Bernard Och, a Jewish scholar, writes, "The *creatio originalis* is an exclusively Divine activity governed by God's will alone. The *creatio continua* is a joint enterprise between God and humanity, directed towards a future which is created by God and man in historical dialogical confrontation."⁵⁴

Others argue that any movement away from redemption theologies threatens the core of Christianity. Consider, for example the words of Jim Edwards:

I suggest that we are witnessing a shift in the theological center from a theology of redemption to a theology of creation. We are shifting away from a theology of God's redemptive acts and promises in history to a theology of the state of things in their natural order as being the rightful and final expression of God's will. The final word of the new theology is not what God can do and wills to do in the gospel, but what God has done in creation.

*Along with the shift from Christology to creation is a shift away from the doctrines of sin and repentance, which according to the preaching of the Cross are indispensable for receiving new life in Christ. The new theology often assumes that what is is essentially good. The paradigm shift changes the theological proclamation of the church from a call to transformation according to the image of Jesus Christ to one of affirmation of who I am as I am.*⁵

A Christian theology of creation, however, need not abandon the theme of redemption. Many theologians recognize that "creation and redemption are the two pillars upon which Biblical theology rests. They define the parameters within which the drama of Divine/human encounter unfolds."⁵

Creation theology considers all the ramifications of the great proclamations of the first chapter of Genesis: God is creator, there is goodness in creation, humankind bears God's image, and we are stewards of creation. Creation theology recognizes that the entire universe has come into being as the result of God's intentional

and purposeful creative act and explores humankind's place and role in God's creation. Creation theology also asks how our understanding of God and the person and work of Christ shapes our understanding of creation.

The creation of the world by God is no independent fact: creation is intended to be the opening of history. The Old Testament history of creation does not answer the question 'How did the world come into being?' with the answer: 'God created it', but answers the question 'From where does the history of God's people derive its meaning?' with the answer: 'God has given the history of His people its meaning through creation'.⁵

There are certainly many questions raised by any discussion of creation theology. For example, how do Christians understand God's action in the world? Is a theological understanding of God's action in the world compatible with an evolutionary understanding of nature?

Central to a theology of creation is how we understand God's mode of action in creation. Different models or metaphors capture the various ways people have thought of divine activity.⁷⁶ The classic theistic view is a 'ruler-kingdom' model. God is sovereign, directing all aspects of human history. In contrast, the deist adopts a 'clockmaker-clock' model of divine action. God created the universe, set it in motion – wound the clock – and lets it run. Other theologians describe a 'workman-tool' relationship between God and humans; or 'person-body', 'leader-community', 'agent-action', and 'parent-child' models.

A Catechism of Creation

Increasingly, Anglican theologians relate God's action in the world to the image of the self-humbling, self-emptying love of the incarnate Christ (Philippians 2:7), willing to suffer for the world, waiting to redeem our mistakes rather than preventing them. Love grants freedom to the universe and opens up a future into which all creation moves. God creates space and time for the beloved's true self to emerge. Jürgen Moltman writes. "God does not create merely by calling something into existence In a more profound sense he 'creates' by letting-be, by making room, by withdrawing himself."⁸⁷ But God has not abandoned us; rather 'God, having created the world, also dwells in it, and conversely the world which he has created exists in him.'⁹⁸ This view is panentheistic, believing that God not only created the universe but also is intimately present in creation, giving energy and life, becoming for us the God in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

How we think about creation shapes how we act in

the world. I believe St. Francis expressed the heart of a right attitude toward creation: We are part of God's creation – a creation in which God is present, a creation possessing inherent value, and a creation continually praising God. This Franciscan understanding leads us to honor, respect, and care for creation.

We have a resource to begin to as a church to rethink our creation theology. The Episcopal Church Network for Science, Technology and Faith (a Committee of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America), wrote "A Catechism of Creation"⁹ with the intended purpose:

- to facilitate dialogue between this Church and members of the scientific, technical, and medical communities;
- to be an educational resource for this Church, its seminaries, and the wider Christian community; and
- to provide guidelines in Christian ethics for use in everyday decisions within contemporary American culture.

I highly recommend this document as a resource to lead church groups into meaningful discussions of what is a 'right' attitude toward nature.

Integrating Science and Faith: A Personal Statement

The relationship between our faith and science is particularly pertinent to modern day Christians. We live in an age increasingly dependent upon technology, an age where we turn to science expecting that, as we learn more about the workings of the natural world, our lives will be made better. We rely on science to cure disease, lengthen our lives, restore the health of our planet, ease our workloads, and give us all an improved standard of living.

At the same time, voices within some Christian communities are critical of science. Some people question any findings of science that contradict traditional views of the world, or challenge us to rethink what it means to be human. Some people evaluate scientific theories, not on the merit of the science but by an ideological litmus test. If the science confirms what they believe to be true, then the science is accepted. If the science contradicts some deeply held belief, then the science is assumed to be flawed in some way.

I believe, along with many others, that science does not threaten faith in God. Science seeks to describe and explain the natural realm. Although scientific explanations are incomplete, and perfect understanding may always elude us, we are coming to understand ever more clearly the workings of the natural world, which

I believe *is* God's creation. All truth is God's truth, and the reality of the physical world cannot differ for people of different faiths. We all participate in, and interact with, the same reality. I believe that the physical universe is the creation of God and is knowable by rational minds. I also believe that knowledge of the natural world, far from undermining our faith, provides an opportunity to define more clearly our faith.

I believe religion and science have different domains of authority. Science tells me about the natural world and my faith speaks to the meaning underlying the physical world and provides meaning to my existence. My faith points to the relationships between myself and God, myself and others, and myself and God's creation. The Bible and my faith *do not* explain the workings of the physical world; neither can they arbitrate in questions of science. Rather, my faith must acknowledge the findings of science and be informed by them.

This does not mean that science is always right. Science is progressing toward more accurate and complete knowledge about the natural world, but we must live with incomplete understanding in the present. Science cannot yet explain many natural phenomena. And I personally believe nature has many surprises in store for us.

Problems between Christian faith and science arise because humans have a compulsion to possess all the answers; to be in the know, to be able to explain the universe and the phenomenon of our existence, and to be privy to God's purpose. We want certainty, and we want control over knowledge. Sometimes, however, we must simply, and in complete humility, acknowledge that we do not yet know. Unfortunately, gaps in scientific understanding have historically been occasion for Christians to declare that God resides where science has no answers. What science cannot explain must be the direct action of God. This 'God of the Gaps' mentality cheapens God's power and glory. God is not in the gaps and never has been. God is the author of the entire natural world – both the natural processes we understand and the natural processes we do not yet understand.

Science is not the enemy some Christians portray it to be, for truth about God's creation can never contradict faith in God. Regardless of how people use science to bolster arguments for theism or atheism, I believe that in the final analysis it is not scientific understanding that either leads people to God or deflects them from God. The Good News of the gospel is not that we find our way to God via science or any other means, rather the Good News is that God comes to us.

Science raises challenging questions for our faith and may force us to reshape our theologies, but science

need not conflict with faith or a belief in God. Science limits its inquiry to the natural world and says nothing about God – our philosophical and worldview filters color anything we infer about God from science. The Good News is not that we can fully come to know God but that God knows us fully. Furthermore, I don't believe that justification for faith can rest safely on science, for scientific understanding can never be perfect, rather justification for our faith should rest upon the transformation of lives through faith in Jesus Christ.

If science and religion operate in different *magisteria*,¹⁰ what is the role for our faith in dealing with scientific issues? With any increase in technological power, there are concerns about the moral and ethical use of that technology, and certainly, our technologies pose many ethical concerns that we must wrestle with. Should we carry out gene therapy in humans? Should we clone humans? Should we genetically manipulate livestock and crops? The list of ethical questions continues, and as science and technology develop, we will be faced with new and perhaps more difficult questions. Our faith informs the application of scientific knowledge and technology. In addition, the *magisterium* of faith informs us of the right and proper use of the earth's resources and of our responsibility to other species. One of the great deficiencies of the Christian Church is that it has neglected for far too long a focus on our relationship to God's creation.

Biological Evolution and Christian Faith

The publication of Darwin's theory of evolution by means of natural selection pushed Western science into a new paradigm. Darwin changed the way scientists think of organisms, including humans, and in doing so challenged the Christian worldviews of his day. Even now at the beginning of the 21st century, Darwin is still a controversial figure in the minds of many people. Ernst Mayr declared, "No other work advertised to the world the emancipation of science from philosophy as blatantly as Darwin's *Origin*. For this he has not been forgiven to this day. . . ."

Yet on the other hand, many people accepted Darwinian evolution readily. The intellectual and scientific climate of the time had primed people to accept biological evolution. Only a plausible mechanism was lacking. Darwin's idea of natural selection was so clear and simple that Thomas Henry Huxley remarked, "How extremely stupid [of me] not to have thought of that."

Theodosius Dobzhansky, a leading 20th century geneticist, stated that, "Nothing in biology makes sense, except in the light of evolution." Biologists recognize evolution as the great unifying principle of biology, having great explanatory and heuristic value. If this

is the case, why does it pose such a problem for some people?

Clearly, the answer has to do with the religious views of individuals. With the paradigm shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric universe there was a great upheaval in the dominant worldview of the period, but in the case of evolution the intellectual and emotional upheaval is much more pronounced.¹¹ The Copernican revolution moved the position of humans in the universe, but the Darwinian revolution altered our very nature. Previously, we could view ourselves apart from nature, perhaps only a "little lower than the angels," and distinct from other animals. The Darwinian revolution, however, pushed us to see ourselves as part of nature, linked to all organisms, and perhaps only quantitatively different from other animals rather than qualitatively different.

Religious reactions to Darwin's theory were quite mixed – and still are. Consider, however, the comments of Aubrey Moore, an Oxford clergyman, who wrote in 1889:¹²

Science has pushed the deist's God further and further away, and at the moment when it seemed as if he would be thrust out altogether, Darwinism appeared, and, under the disguise of a foe, did the work of a friend. It has conferred upon philosophy and religion an inestimable benefit, by showing us that we may choose between two alternatives. Either God is everywhere present in nature, or he is nowhere.

Saint Bonaventure (the 13th century Franciscan theologian) said that, God is within all things but not enclosed; outside all things, but not excluded; above all things, but not aloof; below all things, but not debased, God is one "whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere."¹³ I believe that we must acknowledge either that God is in all things or we have lost the basis for seeing God in anything.

I believe God created a robust and dynamic universe, capable of evolving and developing in wonderful ways. I believe all life, including humans, evolved as a consequence of God's creative act. I believe the universe is probabilistic and therefore free to evolve, and we are free to make choices. I believe that humans have a special place in creation by virtue of the fact that we have evolved to be rational, sentient beings, capable of moral choice. We are therefore able to enjoy a personal relationship with the creator, and with this privilege comes an obligation to care for creation, and to act on behalf of all creation, offering praise and thanksgiving to God.

Called to Environmental Stewardship:**Developing a conservation ethic**

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1)

"As for our place in the history of life, we are of it, not above it." [Stephen J. Gould, paleogeologist and historian of science, 1995]

God's creation deserves our respect and care. God loves the earth and all its creatures – they have intrinsic value. We should, therefore, find woven into the fabric of every Christian's faith a conservation ethic that honors God and serves humanity. This is part of our calling – to be stewards of the earth. The Gospel calls us to work for the well-being of all people; those close by and those far away, those with whom we are close and those from whom we are estranged, those who are with us now and those who will come after us – we are to love our neighbors.

We broadcast our faith to the world in the way we live our lives, in the choices we make and in the things we value. If we fail to respect and honor God's creation, we fail to honor God. In addition, we will fail as stewards of God's creation, if the earth we pass on to the next generation continues to become more toxic and if species continue to disappear. We will fail as stewards, if we are not using the earth's resources for the well-being of all people.

To the extent that human beings understand the detrimental environmental consequences of our modern, highly resource-dependent life styles, we become responsible for the damage we inflict on various ecosystems. We must live deliberately, ever aware that our actions affect other people and other organisms.

The human species now possesses an unprecedented knowledge of how the natural world works, and this understanding should inform our thinking about the way we relate to and interact with nature. To the world's detriment, however, many people either refuse to listen or chose to ignore certain truths about the way the natural world works – that we are dependent upon the ecosystems in which we live. People callously pursue opulent lifestyles, unaware or unconcerned that luxuries come at a cost to creation. We do not extract and consume the earth's resources without consequences to others, especially the poor of the world.

It is unconscionable for us as Christians to play the role of the rich man to the Lazaruses of the world, satiating our appetites at the expense of others. Yet we fall into this role, when we fed unrestrained on the earth's resources, exploiting and manipulating God's creation, oblivious of the impending dangers to ourselves, to other people, and to our children and grandchildren.

We do so to our spiritual detriment, and at the risk of our physical well-being.

For decades now, the scientific community has sounded the alarm, reminding us that we are inextricably linked to other creatures and to the earth itself. Unfortunately, we are awakening from our stupor to find our home in crisis. It is folly to persist in our current patterns of environmental abuse, but, unless we incorporate an ecologically-based conservation ethic into our thinking and policymaking, we are unlikely to see significant change. We must not allow our communities to continue behaving as though we are masters of the biosphere, unwilling to acknowledge that, like the sorcerer's apprentice, we have lost control of our power. We are not immune to the consequences of shortsighted policies, and it is sinful arrogance to believe otherwise.

The simple fact of the matter is that we in western, industrialized cultures consume an inordinate amount of the earth's resources to support our lifestyles, and, as the world's population continues to increase, and as developing countries aspire to our standards of living, we will soon reach a limiting point. Either we will seek to sustain our own lifestyle, maximizing our standards of living at the expense of others, or we will choose to curtail our resource consumption so that others may increase their standards of living.

Biologists define the 'Carrying Capacity' of a population's environment as the maximum number of individuals that the environment can sustain indefinitely. This concept recognizes that resources will always be limiting, and that a population that has grown too large will eventually harm its environment, bringing about its own decimation by disease and starvation. I propose a parallel concept for Christians, the 'Societal Caring Capacity' – the number of individuals that we are willing and able to sustain at an appropriate standard of living. Unchecked consumption by some and deprivation for others becomes issues of justice and Christian charity.

Those, however, are not the only issues. Our race to get the most for the least, has led us to become wasteful, careless, and shortsighted. We dump pollutants into our water and air because it is cheaper – never mind the fact that the children of the world will pay the price for our greed. We chose to ignore the build up of greenhouse gasses because we fear the economic cost of finding alternatives to fossil fuels, never mind the fact that the children of the world will suffer.

Our Christian faith demands that we learn to exercise our stewardship faithfully, prayerfully with fear and trembling. We have dominion over the earth, but dominion must be rooted in wonder and awe; it must be

humble. Dominion must focus on a just human sharing of creation's resources. Dominion must acknowledge responsibility for both human and nonhuman creatures; we must act as stewards on behalf of all creation, now and in the future.

God, our creator and redeemer: Your world manifests your wisdom, beauty, and love, but we have disfigured it in ignorance, ugliness, and violence. Have mercy upon us, Lord, and grant us a new awareness of our relatedness with the earth and with all living beings; give us the compassion of Jesus and the energy of the Holy Spirit, that the world may be renewed; to the glory of your dear name. Amen (Prayer of Br. Ramon, SSF; an Anglican Franciscan friar).

(Endnotes)

¹ Eliot, T. S. 1949. *The Idea of a Christian Society*. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. p. 62

² Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism influenced many of the Church fathers to view the physical realm as inferior to the spiritual, or to have merely utilitarian value at best.

³ Pope John Paul II named St. Francis the patron saint of ecology in 1980.

⁴ Och, Bernard. 'Creation and redemption: towards a theology of creation', *Judaism*, (Spring 1995).

⁵ Edwards, James R. 'The Jesus Scandal', *Christianity Today* (February 4, 2002).

⁶ Barbour, Ian. *Religion in an Age of Science*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1990).

⁷ Moltman, Jürgen, 1993, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, Fortress Press, pp. 88-89.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 98

⁹ The Committee on Science, Technology and Faith of the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church in the United States of America. 2005. *A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding*. Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. [Available in electronic form: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/19021_58393_ENG_HTM.htm?menupage=58392]

¹⁰ See Gould. Steven J. 1999. *Rocks of Ages*. Ballantine Books. I use the term *magisterim* as was defined by Gould: "a domain where one form of teaching holds the appropriate tools for meaningful discourse and resolution." (p. 5)

¹¹ Thomas Kuhn and others portray the paradigm shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric view of the universe as a great intellectual upheaval, but some historians of science have suggested that the shift was not particularly devastating for most scholars of the period. The shift to a Darwinian paradigm, however, certainly did cause uproar among many Christian groups, and evolution theory remains an intellectual battleground for some Christians even today.

¹² Quoted in Vernon Blackmore, 1989. *Evolution: The Great Debate*. Oxford: Lion Publishing, p. 186.

¹³ St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. 1259. *The Journey of*

the Mind into God. Translated from the Quaracchi Edition of the Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae Vol. V, 1891, p. 310 [Electronic version available: <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/opera/bon05295.html>].

Franciscan Action Network

What is the Franciscan Action Network

Inspired by the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi and the long heritage of men and women who follow in their footsteps as present day disciples of Jesus Christ, the Franciscan Action Network is designed to bring a coordinated and effective voice to matters of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in our world. The particular focus of the Franciscan Action Network's advocacy is the U.S. Government and related Washington, DC- based institutions (e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States...). The advocacy topics will be both international and domestic in scope. In these arenas, the Franciscan Action Network hopes to bring a spirit of healing and reconciliation as they advocate for the transformation of the world, as inspired by the Spirit of God.

Who Is the Franciscan Action Network

The strength of any network dedicated to social transformation is the people and institutions that comprise it. At present, the Franciscan Action Network is made up of recognized Franciscan entities (with clearly elected leadership) based in the U.S. that chose to be associated with the efforts. These entities are both Catholic and Ecumenical, representing the broad reach of the Franciscan message. These entities are congregations and provinces of religious men and religious women, regions of Franciscan seculars, and ecumenical partners, building upon Francis' spirit of crossing "borders" to join in the common invitation of God to transform the world.

How does the Franciscan Action Network function?

The Franciscan Action Network is composed of three interrelated parts, each inspiring and supporting the other in a relational Franciscan style:

Members of the FAN: The backbone of the Network is the friars, sisters, secular Franciscans, TSSF, ecumenical Franciscans and the men and women with whom they minister. At present, membership in the FAN is attained through the leadership entity being a part of it. The members of FAN will seek to animate the grassroots of their ministries and places of service to be advocates of transformation. At the same time, by

nature of the relationships of service to persons who are poor or marginalized, the members have a unique and privileged perspective to share in articulating the change we seek.

Action Commission: this Commission is comprised of a representative body of the FAN membership entities. The Commission serves as a recognized group of leaders who will work to help the larger FAN formulate and focus the issues of advocacy for transformation, as well as to enhance the communication conduits of the Network.

Action Center The Action Center is based in Washington, DC, with staff trained and dedicated to help the FAN achieve its goals of social transformation. The staff of the Center will monitor and advise the course of the strategic decisions of the Network to attain maximum effectiveness. This will necessitate having a Washington, DC presence, but even more importantly, working with the members and the Action Commission of the FAN to help them develop the skills for greater impact in public advocacy.

How is the Franciscan Action Network Supported?

In its inaugural year, the Franciscan Action Network will be supported by donations from the entities of the member communities. In the future, additional means will be sought as the FAN grows and becomes ever more effective.

Goals of the Franciscan Action Network for 2007-2008

- Establish and begin the Network with an operating Action Commission and Action Center
- Finalize the guidelines and process for choosing issues and responses for transformative action
- Host a kick-off gathering for advocacy in the spring of 2008
- Define public plans for training and building the FAN in 2008-2009

Unity Statement of the Franciscan Action Network

We Franciscan brothers and sisters, Religious and Secular, from throughout the United States gathered together in Baltimore, MD to discern the possibility of a unified Franciscan Voice for justice. With great concern for dehumanizing issues in our society, we recognized trends contrary to our calling as followers of Christ. We see that we have the power to effectively advocate for the redistribution of resources, the responsible care for creation, and the healing of relationships within

the Franciscan Family, the Church and society. To these ends, we commit ourselves and call all members of the Family to speak with one Franciscan Voice to effect the transformation of national social policy. By walking with our brothers and sisters who are poor and marginalized, we intend to advocate for peace and to reaffirm the dignity of all creation.

Adopted March 9, 2007, Baltimore, MD

How do I get more Information about the Franciscan Action Network

Contact:

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30 Broad Street
PO Box 2185
New London, CT 06320
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Franciscan Action Network Website: www.franciscan-action.org

Br. John Bankert, RIP

Ed Schneider

I first met Br. John Bankert in August 1998. He was visiting Washington for a toy theater and puppeteering conference. John was a puppeteer, and he often used puppets in his ministry. He had heard about my partner, Rick Shelley, and his miniature theater. John made a pilgrimage to Baltimore to see it.

Rick performed a story in his theater, much to John's delight. We then sat down to lunch, and I had my first opportunity to talk with an Anglican Franciscan. I was still a Lutheran at the time, and I had no idea that there were such things as Anglican Franciscans. I was intrigued, and I peppered him with questions. One of the first things I asked was, "What's the difference between Anglican Franciscans and Roman Catholic Franciscans?" With that characteristic twinkle in his eye and a half smile, he answered, "We don't have to pay any attention to the Pope!" He left his card with us, and one evening I used the URL address on the card to find his web site. He had a link to the 3rd Order's web page, and from there I found out about the Associates. Within a year, I had joined as an Associate of the 3rd Order.

Shortly after September 11, 2001, I went to Little Portion for a retreat. I had just submitted my paperwork to become a postulant in the 3rd Order. I arrived very late, but I got there just as John was returning from a puppet conference in Europe. We sat in the refectory, talking late into the evening. I told him that I was already an Associate, and I hoped to become a 3rd Order Franciscan one day. He shook his head, smiled at me, and said,

"You've got it bad, don't you?"

The last time I saw John was in New Jersey at a North East regional convocation a few years ago. I remember giving him a hug, and reminding him that he played a major part in my coming to the 3rd Order. With modesty, he shrugged off my compliment.

I'll always remember John with much affection and gratitude. God used those few, chance encounters with him to touch my life in a profound way. We didn't meet often, nor did we talk much together; however, I have been deeply enriched and blessed by knowing Br. John Bankert.

Harry Coverston

"While he was sick at home St. Francis used to repeat this prayer in his sleep: "Who are you, Lord, who am I?"

I view the novitiate period as working to discover the answer to St. Francis' prayer for each person."

This is the spirit of Francis, in my view—open to the spirit, resistant to easy answers, equivocal about conventional wisdom, living within a tense relationship with organized religion.

On a good day, the Order is a means of living into that spirit. It is when we forget that we are a means (and one of a number of possible means, at that) and not an end unto ourselves, that we get into trouble.

My life was blessed with having seen John Bankert perform a puppet presentation on the saint of Calcutta. I give thanks for that experience and the life of this brother.

Dropping Titles in the Directory

Lynn Herne, Provincial Secretary—elect and Caroline Benjamin, Provincial Secretary

Recently our Province was privileged to host a gathering of all the Ministers Provincial worldwide. As part of their intercessory prayers, they prayed for the tertiaries of our province using our directory. The MPs of other provinces were all surprised that we include titles in our general listing. It seems that the other provinces simply use a tertiary's name with no Rev., M.D., Ph.D, or any other distinguishing designation. All are brothers and sisters, simply put. That is our common Franciscan identity and that is how they choose to list their membership.

At Chapter, Ken Norian shared this discussion and asked Chapter to reflect on this practice. There was agreement that the use of titles can separate us, no

matter how unintentional. We wish to encourage unity and that includes eliminating any possible sources of division. We are all one in the spirit of both Christ and Francis, each equally a brother or sister. Chapter wishes that the directory become an extension of this unity and sees this as a form of obedience to the Franciscan charism. Therefore, as of the 2008 edition, the TSSF Directory will no longer include titles in the main listing.

There are times when a person's special calling needs to be noted. We will continue to list bishops, priests, deacons, and spiritual directors in the appendix. In the future, there may even be a listing for physicians (especially for medical missions), and other specialties as needed. There are also some rare situations when a person's title is part of their address, e.g. military chaplains living abroad, when an exception will need to be made.

As tertiaries, our identity is that of Franciscans. We all have been gifted and united by God. In the spirit of humility, let us unite simply as brothers and sisters, children of God and our father Francis, in name only.

NOTE: This new practice is not expected to affect any mass mailings. All postal labels will still include whatever titles are in the database.

The New Creation and the TSSF Rule

Lance Renault

As Christians most of us recognize intuitively that we are not all that God would have us be, that we are often lacking in being a vibrant expression of His love. Some of us visualize an impenetrable veil between us and the living God or being in a spiritual slumber that does not allow us to experience the fullness of God. If this is true, how do we awaken to God's glory that already exists in and about us, waiting to be revealed? Paul gives us the good news that we don't have to go far to find it.

I have become its [the Gospel's] servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [Col 1:25-27]

And in 2 Corinthians Paul says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" [2Co 5:17]. In our liturgical confession, we say, "We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed." These words point to our fundamental sin problem. We think, say, and do

things that are not consistent with the character of the New Creation, and they separate us from God. And separation is the essence of sin. Confession restores the relationship, but how can we keep ourselves from always getting in this fix? If bad thoughts, words, and deeds are the trouble-makers, we need help to bring them into harmony with the Christ within.

We can think of our thoughts, words, and deeds as the ground in which the Christ-infused self can take root, grow, and blossom. We all know the parable of the sower and the seed. Do our thoughts, words, and deeds represent the rocky places, the places with thorns, or fertile soil?

To be fertile ground we need to reverse the process that breeds separation and sin and hasten our union in Christ through Godly thoughts, words and deeds. This calls for obedience in all aspects of our life so that the New Creation, Christ in us, can grow and bloom. This is the restored Garden of Eden, the place where we live in the presence of God.

The Third Order Franciscan Rule provides an excellent discipline for shaping our thoughts, words, and deeds into a litany of blessings and love for our Lord and our neighbor. Let's take a look at it

Our Thoughts and Words

Penitence

Regular examination of our obedience to Christ is necessary. To be reconcilers we must first be deeply reconciled to God. We practice daily self-examination and regular use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Observation: This is where our cultivation of the Garden begins. Think of it as pulling out the rocks and thorns.

Personal Prayer

We set aside a definite time for prayer each day to spend time with God, to pray for others, to meditate and to express our thankfulness. Prayer is the root from which our lives and ministries grow and are nourished.

Observation: We can't commune without communication with the owner of the Garden. Prayer will open our eyes, unstop our ears, and loose our tongues for his praise and glory.

Study

We all need to learn more about God and His will for us. Study of the Scriptures and of Franciscan spirituality are important to our Christian growth.

Observation: St. Francis is a model for us, and all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuk-

ing, correcting and training in righteousness, [2Ti 3:16]

Our Deeds

The Holy Eucharist

Since we see the Eucharist as the heart of our prayer, our personal rule would call us to frequent participation in this Sacrament.

Observation: The body and the blood; the bread and the wine. Here is where we encounter the symbols and the reality of God's sacrificial, transforming love. Here is where we find community. Here is our Father's Garden.

Self-Denial

This is the discipline of saying "No" to oneself by putting God first. We are often aware of the places in our lives where additional self-discipline is needed, but our Spiritual Directors should be asked to help in this area. We also focus on eliminating the ways we may manipulate others to our own ends.

Observation: Deny the illusions of the old self and affirm the reality of the New Creation. In God's economy, both cannot occupy the same space at the same time.

Retreat

Silent retreats and quiet days provide an opportunity to rest and grow physically, mentally and spiritually. At least once a year, we participate in organized or private retreats.

Observation: God speaks in a still, small voice. It's hard to hear him in the distractions and stress of normal daily activities. Find times and places where you can give him space in your mind and heart. Find him in the quietness of the Garden.

Simplicity of Living

Simplicity calls us to examine our giving of self as well as the material things over which we have control. Our cluttered lives, our preoccupations with "belonging", can interfere in our relationships with God and our brothers and sisters. We are called to a life of simplicity, eliminating those aspects of ourselves and our lives which prevent our full expression of God's love.

Observation: The Gospel is incredibly simple. God loves me unconditionally.

His son Jesus awaits my invitation for him to transform my life – for him to become the new owner of my soul and clean up the place. Why should we want to complicate things by getting in the way?

Work

Service has always been an important part of the Franciscan vocation. Daily work is one way in which Tertiaries serve God and others; we are often also called to serve God and our brothers and sisters in individual ministries, ranging from prayer to social activism.

Observation: We all have someone for whom we work, someone who we serve - first God, then people in our daily lives - family, our church, a boss, customers. Serve them well with honesty, dedication and humility. This is the only currency that has any value.

Obedience

All Tertiaries are obedient to the decisions of Third Order Chapter. We say the Daily Offices, we support each other by prayer, attendance at Fellowship meetings and a pledge of financial support to the Third Order. We report regularly to the Order on the keeping of our Rule. We have Spiritual Directors whom we see a minimum of twice a year. [Editor's Note. We also renew our vows yearly.]

Observation: We are all accountable for the responsibilities and the gifts that God has allowed us to have, including the gift of time. He expects us to be wise and obedient stewards - wise and obedient Gardeners.

Practiced with a hungry and humble heart, these nine disciplines of thought, word, and deed can help awaken in us a divine inheritance that our Father has prepared for us. But it all begins and ends with Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega. It is because of him that the bonds of the old self can be broken and we can awaken to the New Creation and know the glory of Christ in us. As the apostle says,

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the [thoughts, words, and] deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. [Ro 13:11-12]

Trust in God (as preached at a service for the blessing of animals at St. Timothy's Church, Burnaby, BC)

Gordon Arthur,

Trust doesn't always come easily these days. In a world where we have to contend daily with phishing e-mails, pyramid-marketing scams, home employment opportunities that make money for the employers but not their employees, identity theft and various other kinds of fraud, it's wise to be careful. This is not a new situ-

ation, as our Gospel reading makes clear: the Twelve were told to be as wary as serpents, and as innocent as doves in their dealings with others. In other words, they were to deal honestly and fairly with other people, without risking becoming compromised in the process, but not necessarily to expect others to reciprocate. This doesn't mean we can't trust anyone, however, but that we should be aware that everyone, including ourselves, can have hidden agendas and mixed motives.

A few verses earlier, Jesus had picked out twelve followers for special duties. We know them as the Twelve Apostles, led by Peter, James and John. As our reading began, He sent them out to minister to their needy compatriots. Their message was that the Kingdom of Heaven is approaching; that God's reign has begun, but is not yet fully established. They had received freely, and they were to give freely: they could take no money, no backpack, and no extra clothes with them. In short, they were to trust God to provide whatever they needed, through the gratitude of those to whom they ministered. I suspect that most of us, faced with a challenge like this, would feel distinctly insecure. The Twelve, however, took Jesus at His word, and left everything to follow Him, despite the difficulties they faced.

St Francis of Assisi, the saint we remember today, also took this very literally, giving away all he owned, and on one or two occasions giving away things that belonged to his father as well, so that he had no possessions that could divert his attention away from God. While he described this as choosing Lady Poverty as his bride, his concern was always to place his trust completely in God, and to live out the Gospel lifestyle, as far as that was possible in thirteenth-Century Italy. Poverty was never an end in itself - there is such a thing as being poor at other people's expense - it was at its best an expression of the generosity that gives away everything, and it was always intended as a means to greater faithfulness. By and large the early Franciscans found out that God did provide for their needs, despite the hardships of their lives, which were not easy. Experience suggests that this is still true. Those who trust in God and follow where they are led almost always seem to find the resources they need, even if they arrive at the last minute, or are only just enough to cover the costs of the task in hand. God continues to provide for those who trust Him, although the resulting provision is often less than we might like, frequently involves a substantial amount of work from us, and may leave us well outside our comfort zone.

Of course, if we need a practical example of total trust, we need only look around us this evening. Our furry, scaly, feathered and other friends show a remarkable

ability to forgive and trust us if we treat them well. It's amazing how much affection you can get from pets if they're given protection from predators, a warm place to sleep and a regular supply of food, none of which would be guaranteed in the wild.

I've been forgiven in Burnaby for accidentally standing on a pet's foot while walking backwards: he still trusts me. Elsewhere, I've been forgiven for eating my breakfast before the three resident cats were given theirs. Despite their outraged yowls at the time, they'd have tried to con a second meal from their owners anyway even if I had fed them. As far as I know, they still trust me too – I haven't seen them for more than nine months. However, I did get a smack on the ear from one of those three cats early last year. He presumably didn't think I was paying him enough attention. The facts that he was lying on a table behind me at the time, that I didn't know he was there, and that I don't have eyes in the back of my head didn't appear to make any difference at the time.

The same cat forgave his owner for standing up and walking away on another occasion while he was deeply asleep on her lap – she thought he was lightly dozing and expected him to jump off. He rolled over three times on the wood floor before waking up, amid general merriment, and then stalked off with his tail in the air. Weren't we all sympathetic? He still trusts her. I shouldn't think many humans would be very forgiving or very trusting if someone tried to get them down, but pets can forgive us for even that, and still trust us afterwards. There may be a strong element of cupboard love in our relationships with pets, but their affection and trust does seem to be genuine, and it doesn't have lots of strings attached.

This raises the question of where we put our trust. Our pets put their trust in us to provide for their needs. We meet them as far as we can. The Apostles and Saints put their trust in God and in Jesus to provide for their needs, without worrying about the cost. Their needs

were met. Where does our security lie, and in what or whom will we put our trust? Amen.

The Stigmata Song

Ted Witham

Ted Witham TSSF is the Minister Provincial of the Province of Australia, Papua New Guinea, and Southeast Asia. He is the author of this hymn, which he says was inspired by Moses' experience of the glory of God when he climbed Mt. Sinai. This is described in Exodus 24:12-18 set for the Old Testament reading for the Stigmata (in the Australian Third Order Manual).

1. When Francis our father received the stigmata
He climbed up Alverna and prayed from the heart.
With all his believing, he now is receiving
The marks on his body of being in Christ.
2. So first there is Moses, who on our God closes
By opening his life to the power of the law.
He follows obeying, and does what God's saying:
The marks on his body of being in Christ.
3. And next there is Jesus who brightness releases.
On Carmel he's climbing and shines in the light.
The truth he's revealing, with serving we're sealing
The marks on his body of being in Christ.
4. So when our St. Francis on Alverna dances,
He turns to Our Lord and is won by the Cross.
Obeying and seeing, and turning and freeing
The marks on his body of being in Christ.
5. Now we who are living find joy in thanksgiving.
We seek out a place to pause and to pray.
The love that we're gaining is expressed with pain in
The marks on our body of being in Christ.

Copyright by Ted Witham

The metre of the hymn is 12.11.12.11 and can be sung to the tune of the hymn known to many of us as "We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing." It can also be sung to the "Ash Grove."

Date	Convocation	Location	Contact
January 20-22, 2006	Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad	Pamela Redhead
Feb. 24-Feb. 26, 2006	South Central	Castroville, TX	Francesca Wigle
June 1-4, 2006	OEF	Pallotine Renewal Center; Florissant, MO	
August 4-6, 2006	Western	Mercy Center; Burlingame, CA	Joan Kidd
August 18 – 20, 2006	Northeast	Xavier Center; Convent Station, NJ	Ed Schneider
August 25-27, 2006	Southern California		Wai Wah Hillam

Harlow Russell, RIP

After making it through the formation process, Russell was elected to profession by Chapter on August 14th of this year. On Sept. 7, he had been professed in East Aurora, near Buffalo. He succumbed to pancreatic cancer on the Feast of St. Francis, Oct. 4. At the time of his death, Russell was secretary of the new Vineyard Fellowship, which he was instrumental in forming. He had been a member of the Little Sparrows Fellowship since becoming a postulant in 2003 and except in the foulest winter weather regularly made the 3.5 hour drive from Rochester to Southern Ontario to attend meetings, quiet days and retreats. His contributions of wit, wisdom, and energy enlivened that group immensely and helped keep his Canadian brothers and sisters apprised (and prayerfully mindful) of developments within the Diocese of Rochester and the larger Episcopal Church. Russell (the name by which he preferred to be called) was nearing the end of his training to become a spiritual director when he fell ill.

In November of 2004, an article appeared about him in Living Water, the newspaper for the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester (NY). It was called "Work for Justice, Dance for Joy."

After many years of parenting, Harlow Russell found himself with an empty nest. 'I realized that the fundamental organizing principle of my life was gone!' His question to himself was 'On what trellis do I now grow?' His answer came, but he's is not sure if God dropped a new idea into his lap to answer the question, or dusted off an old one.

Russell's life as an Episcopalian began at the age of 8, when his father had a run in with the minister of the Congregational Church and moved the family to the Episcopal Church around the corner. He was formed in a familiar way—boy's choir, acolyte service, and youth group. Those routine offerings of parish life brought him to a moment he remembers clearly, when he knew 'absolutely and incontrovertibly' that God was always and everywhere present. The experience led him to consider a monastic life, but he left the thought behind, went to college (Harvard) and graduate school (Columbia), married, divorced 24 years later, and presto, the children were grown and gone. And he found himself revisiting the idea of monasticism. And so, about 16 years ago, a new adventure began.

Russell discovered the simplicity and joy of the Franciscans by researching the subject at the Divinity School library. He sent away for information, received a packet with an overview of the formation process for Third Order Franciscans, a request for a brief autobiographical statement, and instructions about writing his own 'rule of life,' which is a guide for living intentionally as a Christian. The baptismal covenant and Forward Day by Day had focused his journey for many years. But his spirit knew it was time to push the edges. He must write a 'rule' that was possible to live with, presented a challenge,

and reflected the principles of the Franciscans....

Russell wrote his rule, but 'got cold feet.' In fact, his feet remained chilly for 12 years, during which time he was very happily testing his rule, without taking that next step towards commitment. He loves puzzles and living the rule was like solving a complex puzzle. For instance, he asked himself what is the difference between 'enough' and 'luxury,' or if you have something left over, is it 'waste'? – questions that Gospel raises for all of us. Living the rule meant being intentional about everything in life in order to become all that God might hope one to be.

Russell met Lynn Sharp just as his journey was loosing its vigor. Over several years they became friends and spiritual companions, a relationship that led her to test a vocation as a Second Order Franciscan (founded by Clare of Assisi, 1200 CE). For his part, he decided it was time to send for a new application.

The right time for all things is God's time. And after many years, in God's time, Russell applied to be a novice, was accepted, and made his first vows on August 28th this past summer [2004]. In two years, or in God's time, he will be eligible to make his profession vows, which, as a Third Order Franciscan, he will do annually with the intention that they are made for life. With those vows he will promise to live in the spirit of poverty, chastity and obedience.

The experience of novicing had a remarkable effect on Russell. Immediately he knew it meant more than he ever imagined it would. But something else was a surprise. He had thought all along that monastic life would be his gift to God, arising from gratitude for endless grace received in his life. But it turns out that it is yet another gift that God has given to him.



Russell's understanding of his call as a Christian has long been to 'work for justice and dance for joy.' His firm conviction is that God wishes all of creation to be all it was intended to be. A just world is one that enables and facilitates that kind of growth and flourishing for each and every human being. 'Justice is that which promotes the robust well-being of everyone in the world. Thus I try at least to anticipate and think about doing things that nurture this. That is working for justice.'

And it follows that if everyone is robustly all they were created to be what else can one do but dance for joy?!

From Lynn Herne: Here is a photo of Russell taken at his profession less than a month before his death. I still am amazed at his timing to go with God with people saying MP on St. Francis' Day!

"Deep"

John Hebenton, Minister Provincial, Province of Aotearoa/ New Zealand and Melanesia (see page 10)

Deep in dark green New Zealand bush
immersed in the cool rotting shadows

I lie on a rock

tired

wet

resting in God's warmth and love

My eyes close to gentle rhythm of rushing stream

cool rapids slipping past

And on my lids

I see the stars of the night before

Not dimmed city stars

where only a few break through the street light glare

But bush stars

millions of suns bright and dim

multilayered and dense

lighting up a deep dark night sky

full of worlds unthought of

each lovingly placed by Creating God

I rest in that same star placing love

surrounded by whispering trees

"I love you"

My eyes wander the green scape

caught not by the majestic and strong

but a lone stand

unknown trees stumping together on a bed of moss

standing very small in a vast bush

each placed with God's intent

I lie back

warm rock scraping my back

basking in the sun placed in love

serenaded by trees birthed with purpose

drawing forth life from the one who made all

The one who loves all

My God and my all.

"Passionate Faith of Old Women and Men"

From the dimly remembered past

Calls the voices of saints

Whose mortal lives have ended

whose lives of faith continue

Men and women

Living lives of great love

Filled with burning passion for you

And all who walk this planet

Who were willing to give all

to go anywhere

for You

Breaking chains of accepted ambition

Walking different paths to their fellow faithful

Living a vision at odds with the views of their time

Driven by love

to lives of compassion

of service and humility

No grand titles

No fanfares and

large safe dwellings

Houses given away

offered for education

Income given to those more in need

Labels worn to work for the powerless

die for the despised

those treated as less than human

In these men and women is found You

For they knew

In those they lived for

You were to be found as well.

Greetings from Your New Fellowship Coordinator

Marla Asson

Pax et bonum! It is good to greet you all, and to introduce myself as the new Fellowship Coordinator for the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis in the Province of the Americas. I am a member of the fellowship 'God's Joyful Fools' in Alabama. It is an honor and privilege to serve you as your fellowship coordinator for the next few years, and I look forward to meeting you all.

It's also a tall order to serve fellowships scattered over two continents and so I ask for your patience as I learn. Joan Verret has been gracious enough to coach me for a year, but it's one thing to assist her and quite another to solo! I can't hope to replace Joan's leadership, but I do want to be a useful resource, so please contact me any time I can be of assistance.

Finally, my brothers and sisters in Christ and in Francis, I commit myself to pray for you, that your fellowships will thrive, and you will grow daily in love and wisdom. Please pray for me that I might carry out my tasks capably and provide you with the support you need in your ministry.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, show His face to you and be merciful to you. My brothers and sisters, may the Lord bless you.

Greetings from Your New Provincial Secretary

Lynn Herne

In this season when we all prepare for the coming of our beloved Babe of Bethlehem, change is coming too within our TSSF community. After ten faithful years of dedicated service, our dear Caroline Benjamin has retired as Provincial Secretary leaving some large shoes to fill. By God's grace, I have been elected to succeed her.

For those who don't know me yet, I am a social worker by profession concentrating on community development. Currently, I manage an inner city ministry concentrating on food service, basic needs and social justice. Within the Order, I have served as Co-Convener for the Mustard Seed Fellowship, Area Chaplain for upstate NY, & Inquirers' Secretary. When our fellowship hosted the Northeast Regional Convocation, I have twice been a part of leading the program. The last time I even tried to portray St. Louis, a favorite of mine. In addition, if you remember the Provincial Convocation in New Orleans, I co-hosted a session on Holy Joy and was in clown gear through it all so you may never have seen my true face. (I come by this naturally; I'm the daughter of a clown!)

As I take on this new role, I ask for lots of help. To keep the lines of communication flowing, it takes all of us together to share information. When you move, change email addresses, become noviced, professed, ordained, etc., let me know. If there are corrections to the directory, let me know. Informa-

tion can only be accurate if I know and I promise to get the word out to all as soon as possible in the wonderful *Hot News* (online monthly or written quarterly) or sometimes in the *Times*.

Some of the mailings will ask for your input. By April 1st, there will be a request for nominations for Minister Provincial (Ken is eligible to run again). In July, any ideas or concerns you may have regarding the Order, its work, operation, etc. will be sought for Chapter discussion and action. When many eyes and brains are working together in seeking God's will, we become stronger and more faithful. Please help this happen.

There are some blessed people who will be helping with various duties. Terrence Goodpasture in CA will be our Literature Distributer. If you need brochures or any of our printed materials, contact Terrence. If there is an inquirer, please direct them to Janet Wakefield or our P.O. Box listed in the directory. Caroline Benjamin has graciously offered to prepare the next edition of the directory that will be printed in January 2008. At that time, I will take over the lead with Marla Asson, our new Fellowship Coordinator, as backup. Many thanks to all these sisters and brother.

God's still, small voice has touched us all throughout our lives. This communication has changed us and will continue to do so. It's the reason I said 'yes' to this new role. May our communication as an Order seek to follow this example uniting us in His Spirit, and may dear Francis be our guide on the way.

Send in your contributions for the Spring issue by March 31

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