



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 ♦

Winter 2007

Br. Justus VanHouten, 1948–2006: Farewells and Reflections

In this 30th year of his profession as a First Order Brother in the Society of Saint Francis, and the 20th year of his ordination as a deacon, on December 13th, Brother Justus was out making a pastoral call to the family of a student on Mount Haggan in Papua New Guinea when he was taken ill. A helicopter was sent to get him to the hospital, but he was dead before it arrived.

As Principal of the Anglican Seminary in Papua New Guinea, Br. Justus wrote this article, "Farewells," on the occasion of another brother leaving, but it describes well the life he was leading.

"Farewells"

Yesterday was the farewell to Brother Clifton from St Francis Church in Koke. Clifton is a Solomon Islander who has been in PNG for quite a few years. The last six he has been serving as the priest at St Francis as well as Regional Minister of SSF for the PNG region. Brother Laurence was elected as Minister, and so Clifton is returning home and then will be going to the UK for a time of sabbatical.

The parish farewell was a simple but moving service. I had the honor of preaching, he presided, and a couple of other priests from the diocese attended the service. Then there was a simple meal with some speeches and presentations.

The simplicity of it was wonderful. Sometimes it seems like so much energy goes into preparing a big kai that everyone is tired by the time it is served. There was plenty of good food at Clifton's farewell but no pig or mou mou that takes a lot of time and effort.

The night before George's graduation we had a kai at the college. This one had a pig and mou mou but was delightful because the community gathered in small groups in various haus wins and while the food was all cooked together, it was divided among the various groups. The smaller groups could talk and share with each other. Even when George and his family weren't

present each group knew why they were there and could tell stories about George and his time at the college.

Don't get me wrong. I enjoy big bung kais especially where there are items presented, but these smaller kais are also community building. The focus is put onto the event rather than onto the meal. We are there to give thanks for the time that Clifton and George spent in the communities. The smaller kais seem more focused.

Another example, I think, of smaller being better than bigger.

"Reflections on Brother Justus"

David Burgdorf

Br. Justus had a generous spirit, as I've learned from people who left SSF after I did, and from those who benefited from his service as Minister Provincial. I'll remember him for a stunning risk he took at the SSF General Chapter at Bishop's Ranch in the early '80s. It left me with a lasting impression of his taste for personal integrity and truth. There used to be a legend of Francis hauling the recently deceased friars up to heaven by their cords. That's how I want to picture this passing. May he rest in peace.

Anita Catron

Justus and I were Ministers at the same time so we shared a lot. What I remember the most is that he was the first friar I ever met years ago. He came to Lakeland FL to lead a retreat at St. David's Church. He had oodles of books and shared a lot of wisdom. He even told the gathered assembly what friars wear under their habits--bermudas, of course. He also shocked me by doing the dishes at my house where he stayed. It never occurred to me in those days that friars or men could or would do the dishes! Justus had a sense of humor and was light-hearted even when challenges arose. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.



Roy W. Mellish

The passing of Bro Justus SSF has shocked and saddened me as well as all our congregation at Trinity Church, Morgan City, Louisiana. He came to us twice for Lenten Retreats, and is well loved and remembered for his kindness, the joy of giving and sharing. He will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace and rise in the glorious presence of Christ, whom he served so well. Peace and Good.

Barbara Baumgarten

I remember that even though he contracted malaria after his initial, and relatively short, ministry there, he said he had never felt more alive than during his time with the Papuans. He, thus, returned to PNG for a long-term assignment that eventuated into his call as Principle of their Anglican seminary.

I was fortunate to have been included on his distribution list for the weekly two-paragraph "Reflections" on his life and faith in PNG. His penultimate reflection was a musing about the inconvenience of lost luggage. He had just returned from a financially promising and restful trip to New Zealand. When his luggage went missing in Port Moresby after a long flight, he commented on the rude awakening of being sweaty without shaving supplies or clean clothes. He said it reminded him of the animal-likeness of our humanity and found it significant that Christ intentionally left Heaven behind to become a human being who sweats and grows beards.

He closed by letting his readers know this was his last reflection for a couple of weeks because he was going to the Jimi Valley for a bit of a break and wouldn't have access to a computer; and bid us all a good Christmas.

Br. Justus was generous and kind and, as David Burgdorf said, lived from a strong sense of personal integrity. Br. Justus understood the scriptures. He realized they were an invitation to creative living and not a yoke of rules and regulations. He knew the power of God as the means to live now and not to count on future preparations based on human effort. He liked to act on dreams of possibility today rather than focus on endless plans.

I, too, like the legend of Saint Francis hauling the recently deceased friars up to heaven by their cords. I can just imagine Francis hauling Br. Justus out of his animal-like body into his angelic one. Before death and now, for all eternity, Brother Justus celebrates the God of the living.

Paddy Kennington

Like so many of us, Brother Justus played a large role in my life as a Franciscan. We talked about Vietnam and he was so real to me. Not speaking from "on high," but like a brother in blood as much as brother in the

cloth. My sorrow be his glory. Justus, we hardly knew ya'. Peace, Joy, and Love and lots of those cords to Francis.

Report of the Minister Provincial, Chapter 2006

Kenneth E. Norian, Minister Provincial

It's hard to imagine that a year has passed. The time has flown by, and I think that is a good sign that I have been enjoying this experience – amidst a large amount of time and energy. I never anticipated the volume of emails that I would be responding to. Masud mentioned that within a day or so of our last Chapter, his volume of email dropped by more than half! In writing this report of the past year, I am reminded of the numerous State of the Union speeches that many of us have seen so many times in the United States. Nearly every president who addresses the country begins by saying something to the effect of "the state of our Union is strong". I am happy to be able to draw a similar parallel – the condition of our secular Franciscan community is growing and healthy.

I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by an experienced, spiritually mature, hard working and fun group of people on Chapter. A part of me thought that my many years on Chapter coupled with management positions would make this role a fairly easy one for me. Certainly, those experiences helped, but this has been a very different experience for me that has been challenging in subtle ways that I had not anticipated.

Some of the major areas of focus in this past year have included planning for the 2007 Provincial Convocation; reception of our sisters and brothers in Brazil into TSSF together with their continuing growth and development; work on and development of Safe Community policy; and much conversation, thought, and prayer around the nature of our relationship between TSSF and ECUSA/TEC. The fallout from General Convention of ECUSA/TEC continues to ripple through the Anglican Communion, the Third Order worldwide, and within the Province of the Americas. I have received many emails and several telephone calls where I have attempted to diffuse most of the concerns that people have had. We are a diverse community generally representing the distribution of thought and opinion of the larger church. I am heartened by the charity and caring shown by the Tertiaries in the Province of the Americas to truly be inclusive. I sense a recognition that we have so much work to do making our Lord known and loved, spreading the spirit of love and harmony while living simply – that difference of opinion

on a multitude of issues are secondary to our primary vocation as Christians and Franciscans.

In reading and reflecting on the various publications of the Third Order since I joined the community in the mid eighties I am struck by an increasing awareness of and sensitivity to issues of peace, justice and the integrity of creation. This moves us from a pious society focused inward to one that recognizes and acts on its Franciscan charism, as our website says...concerned about ecology, the poor and the marginalized; passionate about social justice; striving to be peacemakers; and called not only to contemplation but to action! I hope that in our budgetary discussions we will consider the amount that has been budgeted to JPIC this past year and reflect on ways that we can make this an even more effective and dynamic expression of our Franciscan vocation.

One of the areas that presents a challenge to a Minister Provincial is the amount of travel away from home that is requested. I would like to extend my appreciation to Ann Harris, Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell, Anita Catron and Masud Syedullah who represented TSSF at the CSF Chapter, the OEF Chapter, Brazilian gatherings and the NAECC. This year I was privileged to attend the gathering of the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity, a regional gathering of the OEF, two Standing Committee meetings, the First Order brothers Chapter, the Northeast and Southeast Convocations, two gatherings of Franciscans International, and the European General Chapter at York, UK.

York was an incredible experience for me to see nearly 700 hundred Franciscan Tertiaries in one place at one time. The five main topics of this gathering were Sexuality, Interfaith dialogue, Racial Discrimination, Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation and Mission and Evangelism. I had the opportunity to share extensively with brothers and sisters from Europe, and meet with several other Ministers Provincial and our Minister General. Amidst the differences in cultures and international experiences, I was moved by the sense of a global community of which we are a part. It is so easy to adopt a local, "provincial" view of the Third Order. It was uplifting and encouraging to witness this first hand.

As members of Chapter, we have a responsibility to nurture and care for the internal life of the order - the formation of those in "the process", and the ongoing care and nurturing of the professed. Concerns have been raised around communication and developing a greater sense of community. I hear those concerns and will continue to seek ways to expand existing vehicles and develop new ones. While we attend to our organi-

zational issues, we must maintain an even clearer focus on the idea that our lives as Christians in the spirit of Francis supports us in outreach. Some of this outreach may be done as a community... much of it is done as individuals with the *support* of the community.

The Associates program, transferred to TSSF a year ago, experienced a set back when the Associates Secretary resigned after not having moved the program forward. I wrote a letter to all the Associates in our database indicating that a new Associates Secretary was in place (Yvonne Hook) and I received many emails expressing thanks. I believe that the Associates are an important part of our family, especially for those either in formation or for professed who are seeking a way to have their Franciscan spirituality and identity supported while not living under a Rule within a community.

After many years as webmaster, I've turned over the keyboard to Clint Hagen - who has done and continues to do a wonderful job with our website. I can honestly say that ours is the best of any of the TSSF provinces, and rivals those of most other communities' sites that I've seen.

I would like to extend my thanks to, and appreciation for, the many years of service that Julia Bergstrom has offered in many roles on Chapter—most recently as our Provincial Chaplain. The past several years have been ones of increased focus on the "care and feeding" of the professed. Her efforts have also been significant in identifying those members of TSSF who are no longer following their vows, and gently challenging them to consider if the Third Order vocation is one that they are still committed to following. I wish Julia all the best as she opens another chapter of her life pursuing the Deaconate.

In 2007 the TSSF Ministers Provincial meeting will be held in the United States - right here at Little Portion in September. Yours truly will be hosting them. I'm not exactly sure what we'll be talking about or doing for seven days, but I'm looking forward to it and will certainly share the time with you.

We have much to focus on in the next year:

- The Provincial Convocation planning will gather momentum rapidly, and I look forward to a time of community building and growth in our understanding and expression of our Franciscan spirituality at Endicott.
- The continued development of the Tertiaries in Brazil, with an eye toward the possibility of their establishment as another Province within TSSF.

- Implementation of our Safe Community policy.
- Articulating to those with any concerns about our relationship with TEC the points addressed in our resolution pointing to our standing as a component part of a worldwide religious order.
- Ensuring that the Associates program moves forward with vitality and enthusiasm.
- Ongoing and increasing mission in the area of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.
- Continued focus on effective communications with a goal of community building and support.
- Sensitivity to ways to increase diversity of age and ethnicity
- Establishment of continuity planning to protect data and records in the event of a computer failure or incapacitation of office holders.
- Outreach to other Franciscans through Franciscans International and the Joint Committee for Franciscan Unity.
- Bridge building and reconciliation among members of our community and the wider church who have disagreements around issues of sexuality.

I am filled with hope and expectation when I consider the energy, spirituality, and enthusiasm exhibited in the Third Order. As Susan Pitchford wrote in *Following Francis, the Franciscan Way for Everyone*, "What we all have in common is a deep commitment to following Jesus Christ, with Francis as our guide."

Recognition and listing of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis as a Christian Community by the Standing Committee on Religious Communities of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America

Promulgated by Chapter 2006

Whereas: The Third Order, Society of Saint Francis has been and currently is recognized as a Christian Community by the Standing Committee on Religious Communities of the House of Bishops and listed as such in *The Episcopal Church Annual*.

Whereas: The Standing Committee on Religious Communities (SCORC) of the House of Bishops, out of a

desire to be faithful to Gospel values in all our relationships and in compliance with the requirements of the Church Insurance Company regarding "the need of the Church to be responsible in dealing with issues of potential litigation", has established standards and requirements for being recognized and listed as a Christian Community.

Whereas: The standards and procedures that have been adopted by the SCORC of the House of Bishops are most applicable to relatively small, residential communities and TSSF is an anomaly among religious communities because it is a large, geographically spread, international non-residential community .

Whereas: The Chapter and other members of the Third Order, Province of the Americas, Society of Saint Francis have worked for a number of years to find ways to meet all of these requirements.

Whereas: Chapter has decided, in consultation with SCORC, that given its size and scattered multinational membership, it is impossible for the Third Order, Province of the Americas, Society of Saint Francis, to comply with all of these requirements such as: background checks, medical and psychiatric examinations for all new members of the Province; and an individual meeting by the Bishop Protector or other authorized bishop with each member of the Order every three years.

Whereas: TSSF is a worldwide Order widely recognized as such within the Anglican Communion and by many other denominations and organizations as well. Our accreditation derives first, of course, from God, then by our Rule, and finally by our Constitutional position as one of the four component parts of the worldwide Society of Saint Francis (First Order Brothers, First Order Sisters, Third Order and the Poor Clares).

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)

Please Note:

The TSSF Directory is not to be used for solicitations of any kind that are unrelated to Third Order, Province of the Americas, issues.

Whereas: The Third Order, Province of the Americas, Society of Saint Francis, wishes to establish policies and procedures for making it a safe community for all of its members and for leading to conflict resolution based on the *Principles* of the Order and Franciscan charisms.

Therefore: Be it resolved that the Third Order, Province of the Americas, Society of Saint Francis:

1. Not seek to be recognized by the SCORC of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church USA as a Christian Community,
2. Work diligently to implement policies and procedures we have adopted to make it a safe healthy community for all of the members of the Order in the Province of the Americas. These policies and procedures will be adequate to protect all members and provide effective ways for dealing with problems and conflict. These policies are to be based on the Order's *Principles*, particularly that of chastity and stated in Day Eight of *Living With The Principles of the Order 2005*: "Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus. This can only be achieved in a spirit of chastity, which sees others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfillment".

Safe Community and Conflict Transformation Policy

October 2006

For Trial Use for Two Years with review at Chapter 2007

The Third Order, Province of the Americas, Society of Saint Francis endeavors to ensure that all activities and work in which it is engaged uphold the Christian values of love, truth, justice and forgiveness. We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God. We are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God. We live apart from God and out of harmony with creation when, as human beings, we misuse our freedom and make wrong choices.

Our profession vows as Franciscans call us to community founded upon a Rule of Life that echoes these values and the fundamental call of our common baptism to recognize the dignity and worth of every human being. Destructive behavior regardless of its form comes from choices that cause us to live apart from God's will and, unfortunately, is not new within the Church. What is relatively new is the realization that it must be brought out into the open, acknowledged, and addressed. This more open stance opens the way for understanding, Christian love, and care to replace the secrecy, silence, and ignorance of the past. In the spirit

of Francis and Clare, we are called to be reformers of the Church and society.

Within our Order, it is our intention to work toward a climate free of abuse, harassment, exploitation and any boundary violations which compromise our Christian witness as individuals and as a community. It is also our intention, when any such misconduct surfaces, to deal with it fairly and promptly, working toward healing with justice. It is our intent to show compassion for both the complainant and the accused. The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members. The ministers of the Church are laypersons, bishops, priests, and deacons.

All relationships within the Order are avenues of God's love and are vitally important to the overall health of our community. Those in positions of leadership—lay or ordained—hold additional responsibilities of power and trust. People often turn to pastoral leaders at vulnerable times in life, especially during the formation process, seeking affirmation, support, and guidance. In the care of souls, a pastoral leader enters into a trusting relationship, characterized by openness, nurture and grace. Ideally this pastoral relationship personifies Christ's message of love and healing. It may often be intensely personal. It is the responsibility of the entire Order to maintain the integrity of this pastoral relationship at all times, and to protect those who come for help — emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

We understand that any misconduct or allegation of misconduct can seriously impact the work of the Society and so we, the members of the Society, solemnly commit ourselves to creating a safe community.

Definitions: (Please refer to local civil law for further clarification of definitions. Nothing defined below should be construed to be contrary to local laws or local diocesan canons or policy.)

1) Inappropriate Conduct

This includes any behavior that disrupts the spirit of Gospel love and harmony within the Community.

2) Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is defined as a pattern of behavior that attacks a person's emotional well-being or development. It could include name-calling, put-downs, terrorization, isolation, humiliation, corruption or systematically ignoring the person, whether adult, adolescent, or child.

3) Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may be defined as the physical injury of maltreatment of any person by another regardless of age, gender or social position.

4) Sexual Misconduct

For the purposes of this Policy sexual misconduct is defined as non-consensual activity, including sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or sexual assault (commonly called sexual abuse). See appendix for further clarifications of definitions.

Raising a Complaint and the Response to that Complaint:

When a complaint is made, it is received, evaluated and addressed as quickly as possible. Those involved are supported in a manner consistent with the gospel values of dignity, compassion and justice.

Initiating a Complaint:

An official complaint may first be made as an oral complaint to the Minister Provincial (MP). If no response is received in ten working days, the complainant is free to contact the Bishop Protector.

If the complaint involves inappropriate conduct, the MP will consult with appropriate officers and respond to the complaint in a timely and pastoral manner.

If alleged emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual misconduct or illegal activity is involved, the following process is applicable.

1. Upon receipt of an oral complaint, the MP will request a written complaint and consult with the Bishop Protector and the Standing Committee of the Order. If appropriate the Standing Committee will appoint a Response Team who will begin an immediate preliminary investigation. If appropriate, legal counsel will be consulted. If an investigation is initiated, its purpose is to determine the merit of the complaint and does not imply that the accused is guilty. If the complaint is credible the accused will be required to relinquish all official duties and responsibilities within the order until the investigation has been completed and a final decision has been made.

If the accused is the Minister Provincial, the complainant should contact the Bishop Protector who will delegate a proxy for the Minister Provincial for this process.

2. Written complaint:

The written complaint, to the MP, and signed by the complainant, should include: complainant's name, address, and telephone number, a statement of the specifics of the misconduct with date, location and time, and the name and title of the accused. All signed complaints will be investigated by the Response Team. The RT

conducts interviews, writes a summary report of the findings and submits that report to the MP. A judgment regarding innocence or guilt is not part of the report. If the complainant refuses to submit a signed complaint, the MP may, nevertheless, determine that a full investigation should commence and the complainant will be informed of the oral allegations. If the leader is clergy then the complaint will also be forwarded to the Bishop of the diocese where the alleged abuse occurred.

3. Reporting to Civil Authorities:

If the complaint includes allegations of child abuse or elder abuse, appropriate authorities and or the police will be notified within 24 hours by the MP.

4. Support for complainant:

The complainant is encouraged to have someone not impacted by the alleged misconduct, who can stand with them during the course of the investigation and the adjudication. The MP or Chaplain of the Order can assist in identifying this person. This support person may be present when the complainant talks with the MP or the Response team, and can assist in the preparation of the written statement and is the communication link between the complainant and the MP (hearing of progress, asking questions for the complainant, taking questions for the complainant).

5. Support for the accused:

The accused is told of the complaint by the MP. The accused is encouraged to have someone not impacted by the alleged misconduct, who can stand with them during the course of the investigation and the adjudication. The MP or the Chaplain of the Order can assist in identifying this person. This person may be present when the accused talks with the MP and is the communication link with the MP (hearing of progress, asking questions for the accused, and taking questions for the accused).

6. Privacy:

The privacy of all individuals is held in high regard and is maintained, to the extent possible, during the entire process. Because of the necessity of discovering facts and gathering corroborating information, complete confidentiality is not possible. Only persons directly involved in the case are contacted and, in most

cases, names are disclosed only with permission.

Individual needs regarding the extent of privacy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

7. Actions in response to a complaint:

The MP communicates with the complainant and accused separately to discuss the complaint, any discrepancies between what each has reported, and any relevant findings of the Response Team.

The MP then communicates with Chapter for discussion and decision. The accused and the complainant will then be informed of the final decision orally and in writing within 48 hours of the decision having been made—including any disciplinary action being taken and possible steps toward healing and reconciliation. The MP, with the advice of the Standing Committee, will decide if, when, how, and to what extent information needs to be shared with other members of the Order who, for pastoral reasons, may be negatively impacted by any action taken by the MP and Standing Committee.

If allegations are found to be without substance, the investigation will be closed. If requested, an appropriate statement of exoneration may be made by the MP to the accused, the local fellowship (where appropriate) and all who may have been involved. Should anyone make an accusation of abuse of a physical, sexual, or emotional nature against a member of the Order that is later found to be false and malicious, then disciplinary action will be taken against the complainant, which may result in release from vows.

Policy Implementation

- (1) All pastoral leaders within the Order (including MP, Chaplain, Assistant Chaplains, Formation Director, Assistant Formation Directors, Formation Counselors, Fellowship Convenor and Area Chaplains) will be required to have taken an abuse prevention/boundary awareness class sufficient for the diocese in which they are canonically resident. This requirement shall be met within one year of the ratification of this policy. The above referenced Pastoral Leaders, as a condition for holding that office, will return to the Minister Provincial a signed Safe Community and Conflict Transformation Policy agreement.

- (2) Formation materials will be revised to include a section on understanding abuse prevention from a Franciscan perspective and to increase awareness of the healthy boundaries.
- (3) Importance of avoiding potentially compromising situations in which an allegation of abuse could be made will be delivered at fellowship meetings, regional, and provincial convocations.
- (4) All members will be made aware of the necessity of reporting any illegal incident covered by this policy to the appropriate Officer whether or not they are directly involved.
- (5) All members should be aware of the importance of avoiding potentially compromising situations in which an allegation of abuse could be made.
- (6) All members should be aware that all TSSF sponsored meetings including children or youth have special policies in place such as the mandatory attendance of the child’s parent or guardian.
- (7) Every application for Postulancy will include this Safe Community and Conflict Transformation Policy.

Safe Community and Conflict Transformation Policy Agreement

Name: *(print)* _____

Title: *(print)* _____

Please initial each of the three lines below:

_____ I hereby acknowledge receipt of this policy.

_____ I have read and understood the policy.

_____ I understand that to serve the Society I must adhere to this policy.

Signature: _____

Date

(This signed form will be kept in a confidential file created for that purpose).

(continued on page 8)

INCIDENT REPORT

Name of Complainant:

Title:

Address:

Date:

Details of the complaint:

I have received a copy of Safe Community and Conflict Transformation Policy and have read and understand it. I understand that the accused will have copies of this complaint made available to them.

Signature of complainant:

Appendix**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment is engaging in comment or conduct that is known, or reasonably ought to be known, to be unwelcome. Sexual harassment is a behavior that has the effect of undermining, coercing, intimidating, humiliating or demeaning an individual on the basis of gender. Such behavior may be a single incident or several incidents over a period of time. Sexual harassment is not limited to a work-related activity.

Examples

- threats or verbal abuse
- unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunting about a person's body or sexual orientation.
- distribution by mail, fax, or other electronic means of material of a sexual nature that potentially could be offensive.
- displaying sexist, pornographic or derogatory pictures.
- unwelcome invitations or requests or sexually suggestive remarks.
- leering or other sexual gestures
- unnecessary physical contact, such as patting or pinching.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is any form of sexual contact or invitation to sexual contact with an adult by someone who is in a position of authority, trust or power over that adult whether or not there is consent from that individual. Sexual exploitation refers to the act of taking advantage of the vulnerability of an adult, with whom there is a fiduciary relationship, for one's own pleasure or gain.

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault, commonly known as sexual abuse, is any intentional use of force or threat of use of force and involving some form of sexual activity, including, but not limited to, the examples listed below, against another person without his/her consent. Sexual assault is normally criminal in nature as defined by either state or federal laws.

Examples

- kissing, sexual contact, fondling or sexual intercourse
- bodily harm or threats to harm, assault with a weapon
- incest, bestiality and gross indecency
- sexual offences against young children, such as sexual interference, invitation to
- touching, sexual exploitation of a young person, exposing genitals to a child,
- juvenile prostitution, corrupting children, indecent acts.

Consent

Consent is understood as non-coercive. Consent has not been given if an individual agrees to any sexual activity under threat, or if consent is obtained through fraud or through the influence of a person with authority over that person. In many jurisdictions, children under the age of 18 cannot give consent. Under specific circumstances between peers, for children age 12-14 and with young persons age 14-18 consent is not valid if the accused was in a position of authority over them. Specific ages may vary depending upon applicable law. Meaningful consent for sexual activity may not be possible in a fiduciary relationship in which one party has more power or authority, regardless of the ages of those involved.

Pastoral Relationship

A pastoral relationship is a fiduciary relationship in which a power differential exists between a member of the Order and any person who provides pastoral care, spiritual direction or spiritual guidance or hears confessions or receives confidential or privileged information. Examples of leaders within the Order include all Chapter members, Assistant Formation Directors, Formation Counselors, Assistant Chaplains, Area Chaplains, Conveners, and any other person holding a position of authority.

26th Northeastern Regional Convocation

Alice Bangs (Delmarva Seesaw Fellowship), Terry Doyle and John Rebstock (D.C. Fellowship)

Xavier Retreat Center on the campus of St. Elizabeth College near Morristown, N.J. was the site of the 26th Northeast Regional Convocation, held August 18-20, 2006. Attendees came from as far as upstate New York, Massachusetts, Pittsburgh, Pa., and southern Virginia. Standing Committee members, present for a meeting immediately following convocation, came from even farther afield. As always, a common refrain was, "Finally, I can put a face and voice to your name in the Directory!"

Washington, D.C. Fellowship hosted the gathering, with Delmarva Seesaw Fellowship putting on the program, which was led by Russ Bohner. The theme was "Conversations With Br. Francis and Sr. Clare." Engaging with excerpts from the original writings of Francis and Clare, we explored in conversation how we, as Third Order Franciscans in the third millennium, understand and implement the intentions and instructions of Francis and Clare, the founders of our Order. The purpose was to reflect on our vocation as Third Order Franciscans and to encounter Francis, Clare, ourselves, and each other in the light and grace of God's Holy Spirit.

Our opening conversation on Friday evening invited us to examine our growth as tertiaries, to reflect on the impact that Francis and Clare have had on our spirituality, and how we live out our vocations within the Order. On Saturday, we held further dialogues around the writings of Francis and Clare. For our morning conversation, Francis's "Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance" (ie. tertiaries in the Order since 1220) challenged us to examine his thirteenth century advice on fasting, revering clergy, and dealing with our bodies in light of our calling to live simply, humbly, and responsively to the Great Commandment to love one another. Our Saturday evening



conversation centered on Clare's first letter to Agnes, with its focus on how purity of heart marks the life of a member of the Order. For each of the three conversations, we met as a group, then divided into small groups (different each time), then returned to the full group for shared reflection.

If you would like to have an email copy of the "Conversations" handouts, please contact Russ Bohner at russbohner@mac.com.

We also came together for Morning Prayer, Holy Eucharist with healing, Evening Prayer, Compline, and the Saturday night party. Saturday afternoon was left open as "free time." Optional gatherings were held during that period for those interested in meeting with Chapter members, and listening to those who attended IPTOC 2005 in Canterbury and the European Provincial Convocation 2006 in York, England. Present



(Left) Russ Bohner from Delaware organized the presentations. (Right) You might have thought a Birkenstock sandal convention was also meeting.

were our Provincial Minister--Ken Norian, Fellowship Coordinator--Joan Verret, Chaplain--Julia Bergstrom, Formation Director--Bill Breedlove, Bursar--Ann Harris, and Terry Rogers who attended the EPC in York.

Quite a few people renewed their vows, and Walt Szymanski (huzza, huzza!) from Pittsburgh, Pa. was professed.

For a weekend of Franciscan fellowship and support, sharing gifts of insight, experience, laughter, music, and tears--Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

Guyana Needs

Our tertiary priests in the interior of Guyana have very little in the way of vestments. Two boxes of donated vestments were sent this year, and more are needed. Also requested are home communion sets, as these priests frequently travel to isolated communities with just a backpack. If you or your parishes have such items to give, please mail them to Terry Rogers, 54 East First St. #2A, NY NY, 10003. For those outside the USA, email Terry at terryr@pocketmail.com to see about the best way to send items.

The Franciscan Times
is a publication of The Third Order
Province of the Americas, Society of St. Francis

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Tertiary Honored as “Humanitarian of the Year”

The Rev. Dr. Hunt (George) Peacock (Four Corners Fellowship) was awarded the Humanitarian of the Year award by the Farmington (New Mexico) Chamber of Commerce. According to the media release, Dr. Peacock is known for his compassion and medical care for alcoholics and drug addicts in the community. He has worked tirelessly to develop community resources for this population and is the only board certified addictionologist in the area. He has been known to pay for medications for people who are unable to pay themselves. He works behind the scenes in many situations to minister to those who are in the most need.

The Humanitarian of the Year is someone who is devoted to promoting the welfare of humanity, especially through the elimination of pain and suffering.



Lindsay Pierce/The Daily Times
Dr. G. Hunt Peacock hugs a friend after he was announced as the 2005 Humanitarian of the Year during the Farmington Chamber of Commerce Banquet on Friday evening.

Southern California Convocation

Elizabeth Chiarine

The Serra Retreat site in Malibu, California has improved on many levels. The main level is built around a very large plaza with fountains, small shrines, flowers and much-appreciated large shade trees. Throughout the Retreat site there are a variety of wonderful hand-made California tiles of a variety of sizes and designs. The main improvements are two semi-circular wings that include guest and staff rooms, offices, meeting rooms, gift shop and lobby. On the west side of the plaza is the kitchen and dining hall where we were served some very good meals three times a day. On a lower level of the site to the west is found a Way of the Cross with each station marked with the appropriate half life-size sculptures. Beyond that is a prayer labyrinth marked out with rows of native stone. To the northwest of the plaza at the highest point of the site is the Family Chapel. This building is notable for great views of the entire area visible through the windows encircling the lovely interior.

Our accommodations were spartan in nature but were very comfortable. We were assigned Rindge Room for our meetings. It is a large, well-lit room with very comfortable well-upholstered chairs. There was a snack area with refrigerator at one end of the room. We all brought snacks and drinks to share.

Our meeting started on Friday afternoon with registration and orientation. It was such a pleasure to greet our brothers and sisters and we continued to socialize at our 6 PM dinner. At 8PM we had our first address by Father Tom Johnson. We were asked to think about the many evils existing on a local, national and worldwide level that affect peace and justice. This session was spent in discussing these problems. We closed this meeting with Compline during which we remembered our beloved St. Clare.

We started Saturday with Morning Prayer at 7:30 AM and breakfast at 8AM. This was followed by our second session with Father Tom. The problems of poverty, discrimination, environmental abuse, corporate greed, an industrial/military complex run amok and lack of universal medical and psychiatric care among others were discussed. At 11AM, we went to the chapel for the

Eucharist and renewal of vows presided over by Father David Bergdorf.

Lunch at 12:30 was followed by a free afternoon. Silence, meditation and contemplation were not the only options available. Father Tom showed a movie, *The Passion of St. Joan of Arc*. A copy of this silent film made in the 1920's, I believe, was found in very good condition in somebody's closet. It was remastered and accompanied with an oratorio written expressly for the purpose of putting the words of the trial of St. Joan by the English into a musical form. This was a memorable experience. One of the friends of our Third Order group, Jeanine Sofra (who is a massage instructor), gave massages as a thanksgiving offering to the convocation. She set up her massage chair under a large shade tree off to the side of the plaza and many of our groups were able to partake of this activity.

At 5:30 we said Evening Prayer and went to dinner. Father Tom presented an interesting take on solutions to the problems of peace and justice. We were told to envision a huge hedge between our world and a peek through the hedge into our view of a perfect world beyond. We talked about this vision and there were many different "perfect worlds." Then Father Tom asked us to write down on a piece of paper the thing(s) we as individuals promised to do to bring about this desired outcome. He collected all our offered remedies and told us this was our offering at our final Eucharist. We closed with Compline.

On Sunday morning, a brief business meeting of the group followed Morning Prayer and breakfast. Eucharist at 10AM included our offerings toward the formation of a world in which peace and justice will prevail. Our final meeting was at lunch that was followed by our reluctant farewells to the beautiful Sierra Retreat and to each other.

RIP: Merriman, Merryman, and Weidenbacker

Through information she gained on her visit to Guyana, Pamela Redhead has discovered that Derrick Merriman died a while back. No one knows the date. May he rest in peace.

Rheta Weidenbacker, a pillar of the Philadelphia Fellowship for many years, and a former Area Chaplain, died from a rare lung disease on 11/15/06.

Wiley Merryman, whom all knew as Jack Merryman, died on September 10 at the age of 86 in Manhattan after a lengthy illness. He was professed in TSSF for one month less than 40 years.

Terry Rogers's recollection of Jack:

I first met Jack after he had retired from full-time ministry. He started coming to our NYC fellowship meetings each October for the renewal of vows. A small-boned elderly man, he was always dressed to kill (could it have been a tuxedo?). "I can only stay for the Eucharist," he'd say, "because I'm an usher at the Metropolitan Opera."

I got to know him much better in the last four or five years of his life, when he was in two different nursing homes. His last one was across the street from the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and twice he was able to join us there for our Francistide renewal of vows.

During nursing home visits I got to hear more about his earlier life. He was a "people person" and seemed to have made connections everywhere. He was chaplain to the Episcopal Actors Guild in NYC and was taken on informally as a chaplain at his neighborhood fire station. He made many friends with Roman Catholic friars at St. Francis of Assisi Church in midtown Manhattan. All this was while he served parishes or worked as a hospital chaplain.

When asked what drew him to TSSF, he always said, "the community at Little Portion." I believe he had originally thought of a vocation to the First Order, but when he died he'd been professed in TSSF for one month less than 40 years.

He spoke so warmly of all the nursing staff and had far more words of thankfulness than of complaint, in which respect he was a real witness to me. Only once did his sense of "uselessness" bring him to tears in my presence.

I can just hear him welcoming me, in his Virginia accent, when I'd peep my head in the door of his room. "Come right on in, dahlin.' "

He was courtly and eccentric, a lover of beauty and patient with loss. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

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

Meditations on a Pew

Ian Randall (excerpted from the Francistide and Advent 2006 issue of the *Australian Province Newsletter*)

I wonder if you have heard it said "be in the moment." We Westerners are commonly criticized as never being aware of the present. We are either thinking about where we have just been or working through where we are meant to be next. We seem not to be able to focus on what is happening around us. At school the moment a bell rings you are no longer meant to be where you are so we are forever rushing on to catch up with ourselves. Today I want you to be, in this moment, to be still within yourselves, to think and to ponder with me.

We are all people of body, flesh & matter but we are also of spirit. If you consider yourself a Christian or perhaps even 'spiritual' I trust that this mediation or reflection will also have meaning for you.

Why a pew?

You sit in a pew each week and I bet you never give them a moments thought.

Pews have been on my mind recently. Several weeks ago I received a phone call from my brother, who attends a particular Anglican church on Broadway asking if I wanted to buy a pew as his church was getting rid of them all and replacing them with individual plastic chairs.

For some reason I felt sad that the church was doing this. I had seen old photographs of this Church filled with people cramming into its pews. Perhaps some of your grandparents sat in those pews listening to life changing sermons and powerful verses of scripture. It seemed their pews were getting too old, chipped, needed new varnish, cornices were breaking off, they were too uncomfortable for delicate modern bottoms, impractical, they could not get them out the way if they needed to, took up so much space, and gave an out dated feel to the church.

But the very people wanting them out of their church were lining up to get their hands on one for themselves.

Meditation on a Pew.

Do you ever go into a place, where you are withdrawn from the world?

Where you are alone with your thoughts. Where you let your mind move from the manic moment into still remembrances. Where your deep feelings find words and are transformed into prayer? Prayer in the silence of our mind seems to be one of the things that we all share. We all yearn for this quiet space, this timelessness. I have often found this upon a pew in a quiet church. For a time in a place you are still while the world goes rushing on by

Rows upon rows that stretch out in that silent space.

Lines of perspective going off into the distance, as each pew gets smaller and smaller. The aged wood reflects beautifully the colored light coming in through the stained glass windows.

They are made simply from expansive lengths of timber from the tallest of trees. The ageless trees, whose roots dug deep and drew cool waters from the earth. Birds sheltered in their branches, from nest to egg to feather to flight. Part of earth's great cycle of life. The spring, the winter. Life & Death & Life.

Cut down by muscle & axe, milled with sweat, toil and labor, crafted and carved by the carpenter. Christ was a carpenter, like his father Joseph. His hands were calloused by years of work, with the saw and hammer. Jesus felt the pain of the splinter, the strike of the hammer upon the thumb, became tired and thirsty. He would have crafted with care and built with love. I wonder if Jesus ever made a pew?

I have seen my own children playing games of chasing after church, running in and out of the rows, weaving over and under, like a labyrinth or a maze, but never getting lost.

They are designed to fit as many people in the smallest amount of space. I have mainly seen pews where followers of Christ have gathered. From small stone country churches to large city cathedrals. In some places in the world pews are hundreds of years old. In many places they have remained unmoved for year upon year. The lives of people come and go like the grass of the fields. They are never alone. Always together. And like God's people they are never quite lined up straight. They are present with their prayers, their songs and their lives.

In a pew, your presence is always welcome. Although the feel is cold to the touch it always warms up. You belong wherever you sit. An object in time that many others have occupied before you. What of the people who sat here? Consider them, you, a street person, the accountant, tradesman, widow, child, the happy, the sad, the lonely, the lost & me. The tears that were shed, the prayers that were offered. Or the schoolboy who etched his name in that timeless place.

Many who lived their lives are no longer here. Their days are spent. They too have shared your troubles and have also called out to the Lord for comfort and strength. The countless numbers of people have sat where you are and the many more will follow you. The pew has become a seat among the saints.

I have seen old church pews in many other places too. In cafés, antique shops, kitchens, on verandahs, in hallways. Their new owners lovingly restore them. A pew

always adds a certain touch class, an historical aesthetic to a room. I recommend you find one for your home. See if you can find a church throwing them away; they don't want them or need them anymore. A pew away from its purpose, its people, its prayer, its place, seems sad to me. It tells me of an age that is no longer here.

We don't seem to be like Tolkin's elves . . . where their history seemed to stretch back before memory. Where everything that was made to last for centuries, where everything was beautiful and was always loved. Not our age. We see the world to be consumed. Did you know that PC stands for plastic computer? We take, we use and we throw away. The world is groaning with the weight of our waste and the scars from all that we take. A mobile phone is old in two years. Mine doesn't even have a camera and the company that sold me it has changed its name to a number. No wonder we of our generation are so confused?

We like things new & modern and especially plastic. Is your Church going for that special plastic look? A plastic Jesus with a nice cheesy grin. I wonder will happen to the plastic chair? Will it be lovingly repaired and its scratches removed and placed in the hallways of the future? I doubt it. No the plastic chair will also be thrown away, along with everything else we make in our generation. But we are not satisfied. Our generation is madly searching for God, for a real life, a real existence, for the real Jesus, for real peace, & for real love.

My Jesus seems a little more real, a little more earthy, a little more human. When he washed the disciples feet I see him washing off real dirt, not stinking executive sweat. He spent his days with common people, and did not seek the acclaim of the rich and important. He loved the poor, the widow, and the nobody of any importance. He loved the person that the world walked on by. He understood their lives, our lives; he was living a life himself. So do not worry about your troubles, look at the birds and how I care for them. You are far more valuable than they.

When you sit in a pew perhaps feeling like you are nobody special, not up the front in a place where everybody can see your importance, know you are loved by God, most valuable, most important. Just as you are – Just like you are. Mediate on the world, see the marvels of creation, find a quiet place in your own lives and let your soul sing the praises of the Lord.

I hope you can consider some of these things the next time you sit down on a pew.



Ken Norian, Minister Provincial with newly elected Provincial Chaplain Barbara Leonard

New Provincial Chaplain, Barbara Leonard

I am honored to serve as your Chaplain for the next three years. Julia Bergstrom is a dear friend and a very "hard act to follow."

Julia brought me to Francis in the early 80's when she and David Burgdorf gave a Lenten series on the rule at my church in St. Paul.

On a personal note, I live in a rural area about 30 miles northeast of the Twin Cities. My husband and I attend The Church of the Ascension in Stillwater MN where we are active in a healing ministry. This January I will begin a part-time position as a spiritual director with Loyola, a spirituality center in St. Paul, MN. In their 30-year history, I will be their first non-Roman Catholic director.

(Editor's Note. Barbara is beginning her part-time position as a spiritual director only after retiring from 34 years as a professor in Nursing at the University of Minnesota. For the last eleven years she was Division Head of the School of Nursing, and her specialization has been Maternal and Child Health. In 1995 she won the Public Service Award, University of Minnesota School of Nursing Alumna, and in 1989 she received the Academic Leadership in Maternal and Child Health Award by the Association of Teachers of Maternal and Child Health. She has also been on the U of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing. She has a long-term interest in childhood chronic illness and studied the connections of spiritual and psychological adjustment in children and adolescents with diabetes.)

One of my hopes is to strengthen communication with the professed through Area Chaplains having witnessed its benefits while serving as your assistant chaplain for the past 18 months. We all need encouragement and support on our Franciscan journeys not only in Fellowships but also from Area Chaplains. I know how blessed I've been over the years by my fellow Franciscans, Area Chaplains and fellowship conveners.

Sanctuary

Frank Romanowicz

The subject of "sanctuary" has been heavy on my mind and heavy in the news for some time. It arises in conjunction with all that I hear and read in the immigration debates and news, as well as in my church congregation here in Birmingham, Alabama. I recall from the recesses of my mind that "sanctuary", to be found in a church or other safe refuge, was a protective place that someone could go to and remain in for some duration, and no legal entity could trespass into the church and remove the person from that holy venue. Or so I once thought, or so it once was!

And then I went on-line and learned a lot more about the concept of "sanctuary". You see, I thought that perhaps a resolution could be crafted for our Diocesan convention early next year. And the Deacon at our church was going to talk to our Diocesan bishop about designating our church as a "sanctuary" if that was officially do-able, legally or ecclesiastically (other than the sanctuary that it is already!). After the disappointing revelations in my on-line "sanctuary" search, I have begun to wonder if the resolution and the "sanctuary" designation proposal are at all do-able, viable.

The word "sanctuary" comes from Middle English, from Old French "sanctuarie", from Late Latin "sanctuarium", and from the Latin "sanctus", sacred! it is defined variously, but for the sake of our discussions here, as a sacred place, such as a church, temple, or mosque; also, as a sacred place, such as a church, in which fugitives (illegal immigrants???) formerly were immune to arrest, and a place of refuge or asylum. Briefly, Christian churches were given the right of sanctuary by Emperor Constantine the First. However, to my surprise, modern penal codes no longer recognize the right of sanctuary (because the right was abused!)

So, what can be done to recreate "sanctuary", to create a sustainable environment of sanctuary, so that in these perilous times for our Hispanic brothers and sisters, they might find a safe place and a haven while the rhetoric of mass deportations swirls around indiscriminately, without regard to how things got to be so, and without regard to individual and familial circumstances, history, length of residency, etc. If you are here illegally, GET OUT! At the risk of sounding trite, is that what Jesus would do?

Do we create Hispanic interest coalitions in our communities, collaborative churches? Do we link up ecumenically surrounding this ministry? Do we begin "clericus" discussions about how to respond, reach out, take in—guided by our Baptismal Covenant, the Beatitudes, and of course, Matthew 25?

Do we craft awareness-raising resolutions for upcoming Diocesan conventions? Might we offer workshops at Diocesan levels to demonstrate creative options of outreach? Do we invite immigration specialists/lawyers to help us navigate the legal labyrinth? Might there be some jeopardy to our respective 501(c) 3 tax status?

Does Chapter need to create a position statement on this with practical applications consistent with our Daily Obedience readings? Or do we simply need to just listen to our own hearts about how we welcome, treat, and provide refuge to the Hispanic stranger among us, illegal or legal? The challenge of the immigration issue that captures the headlines and the political soundbytes these days is not just around our borders or in local workplaces, but in our churches too. I experienced a real-life illustration of such in my church family, when the mother of one of our members succumbed in Mexico. It tore her heart out since she could not go home and bury her mother, without running the risk of never seeing her four children and husband again because she might never be able to get back into the country again.

Our Presiding Bishop has spoken to this issue, as has the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. We are called to extend our helping hands and embracing arms to the culturally and linguistically isolated. We are called to work to prevent exploitation and discrimination which all too frequently happens because of legal status and language barriers

I am the grandson of Polish immigrants, and I recall the horror stories they told me, and I for one do not want to be part of the evils or the silence which have come about because of our inadequate immigration system, porous borders, and employer needs and greed. I do not want to contribute to divisive words or actions generated by those realities. Would you join me in committing to being people of good will, and not contribute to polarizing rhetoric and positions? Will you commit, personally and in fellowship, to get yourself and others beyond anger, fear, stereotyping and polarization?

Finally, Roman Catholic Bishop Nicholas DiMarzo wrote recently: "Human beings share in God's creation through their work and individuals have a basic right to support themselves and their families to have decent and fair wages, health care and time off, etc., and those basic human and economic rights are not invalidated or relinquished when one crosses a border."

Amen, brother, Amen.

Franciscan AID – “Charitable Trust of the Third Order SSF”

Origins

For some twenty years, from 1965 to 1985 attempts were made to establish communities of black African brothers, first in Zambia and later in Tanzania. Sadly neither of these attempts resulted in vocations to the First Order, but Br Geoffrey, Minister General SSF, had begun to build up the Third Order presence in the Continent and later helped Africans to create their own style of religious life in Zimbabwe and the Community of the Divine Compassion (CDC) was begun in 1986.

While CDC survived (currently with three professed and one Novice brother), the Tertiaries thrived and became a separate Province of the Third Order with Geoffrey as their first Provincial Guardian.

Geoffrey was driven by much of the poverty he saw to set up a charitable trust so that funds could be channelled to the needy in that part of Africa. In August 1982, Geoffrey, with the (then) Provincial Guardian and Provincial Treasurer of the Third Order in the UK, became the first Trustees of Franciscan Aid.

Present position

In the beginning the funds were directed solely to work in Zimbabwe but over the past 24 years the work of Franciscan Aid has become worldwide in its scope. At first the work was linked to places where First Order brothers worked, but more recently the scope of the work has extended through Third Order members or those with whom Tertiaries are in close touch.

The Charity Commission in the UK, which has expanded the number of Trustees to a maximum of 12, including both the First and Third Order Ministers General and the European Third Order Minister Provincial as ex-officio Trustees, has accepted a recent memorandum; all the rest are members of the Third Order.

The number of Trustees has grown through inviting those with experience of working in developing countries to join the trust. We now have first hand experience of work in the Middle East (Israel/Palestine), Melanesia and S E Asia, Russia and Namibia as well as South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Our recently retired secretary, Faith Cairns, had worked for over 30 years in Zambia and with her husband James, still has oversight of work there and through the CDC brothers in Zimbabwe.

Through Third Order members in the Province of the Americas we have begun work in S. America (Brazil) and are currently considering the possibility of assisting work in Sierra Leone and Uganda.

Projects are brought to the attention of the Trustees – who meet three times a year – in a variety of ways, most recently via the Internet and our Provincial Administrator.

We would welcome the opportunity to receive requests from any First or Third Order members in any/all of the Provinces, who have a definite link with the potential project and are in a position to monitor the work and verify (usually indirectly through receipts, photographs and written testimony from recipients of grants) that funds have indeed been spent as granted. For requests to the Province of the Americas, please contact Carol Tookey.

Our charitable objects are: “to relieve poverty and advance education of deprived people from Third World Countries whose needs may not be covered by other agencies and those with whom the Franciscans are in contact and whose needs are known so that they can be aided quickly and precisely.”

We have interpreted this to exclude the use of funds to pay for travel to first world (developed) countries whether for educational or other purposes and normally, for activities of members of the Third Order per se. The scope of our work is limited both by the limitation in the objects and the size of our funds—annual turnover being of the order of £40,000 (\$75,000 at current rates of exchange).

Examples of People and Places: Lesotho

Bokako family (a wonderful example of how a family of orphaned children have begun to support each other with some financial input)

National University of Lesotho

January 29th 2005

Please find enclosed, copies of Delphine Bokaako's computer school graduation certificates.

With this training behind her, Delphine is now employed as receptionist and computer operator at the Mbeya Healthcare Clinic. From this month she has been contributing to the expenses of the Bokaako household - specifically to the school fees and transport costs of the two youngest children.

I should point out how pleased I am that the whole family (eight children) remain such a coherent and mutually supportive unit. Of the eldest, for example (the twins Paseka and Lekholoa), Paseka is now married and a part-time student at the university, while his wife graduated last year and has been employed as an accountant since November; they are self-supporting and help the family out with incidental expenses. Lekholoa is the farmer in the family; direct use or sale of the milk and other produce from the farm cover most of the

children's food needs.

Two of the other children are awaiting school leavers' results. Two have just begun secondary school.

With many thanks for your assistance to the Bokaako family.

Chris Dunton

Georgia (former state of USSR)

From: Malkhaz Songulashvili (Bishop Malkhaz is a professed member of TSSF)

Subject: Emergency situation in Georgia

Date: 27 January 2006

All of you have heard about the difficulties with gas supply from Russia to Georgia.

It happened 5 ago. Two gas pipelines were blown up on the Georgian Russian border, everybody is sure in Georgia that the explosion had clearly political character even though Russian authorities keep insisting that it was a terrorist attack.

The Russian authorities do not hurry to restore the blown pipelines. We are once again punished for our independence and pro Western orientation. Entire population of Georgia has been left without gas heating: hospitals, schools, and blocks of flats.

Last few days have been particularly difficult since we are having extremely cold winter and such a heavy snow that we had never had for last 30 years. I can remember we used to have such snow only in my childhood. Snow, frost, and wind all together this is something we are not accustomed to in this country. City council does not even have any necessary machinery to deal with the snow and frost.

The situation is worsening daily. Yesterday our receptionist, Mr. Alex Orjinikidze came to our office almost frozen. In his bedroom they had had minus 4 degree. He had failed to buy the ceresin since the price on fuel has tripled. There are long ceresin lines for those people who can afford 3 Lary for one litter of ceresin (1.5 euros). Gas supply at the Betheli Center has also been cut off. Our elderly have been left without heating. During the day they come together in one room where we have a fireplace and worm themselves up.

The only creatures that enjoy this winter are children and dogs who had never seen such snow and enjoy themselves playing in snow. People in the countryside villages are also doing better since they have never been dependent on Russian gas. It is the population of Tbilisi and other cities that are suffering most. Once again the poorest are victimized by the political games.

Please do pray for us so that all those who are in authority both in Georgia and Russia come to agreement so that the

poorest do not suffer and die in cold.

Brazil

From Anita Catron

As of 1/1/2006 there have been 3 funded Franciscan Aid grants. The one in the south (Diocese of Sul Occidente) is well run and productive with a garden and soap-making. The 6-month report from the monitor was received, and the garden project is on-going.

The seed and jewelry project in Belem, sponsored by Ruth de Barros, is going well although because of her diagnosis of lung cancer, I have not gotten any recent reports.

The final one in Rio, reported on earlier, has succeeded in that our seed money has generated other monies to continue the community newspaper in the slum area of Cristo Rei, Rio de Janeiro. Papers continue to be produced, the software was purchased and our money helped them buy a new computer with appropriate publishing software.

All the local sponsors and I deeply appreciate the grants that have been given. The money has helped stimulate small cottage industries and promote self-worth.

I will be requesting another grant from Franciscan Aid for a group in Porto Alegre, Brazil, shortly.

I wish to thank the Franciscan Aid Committee in general, its Chair and Committee members for their gracious response to the needs of the Franciscans in Brazil.

Zambia

For at least six months the value of the Zambia kwacha has been rising which is causing many problems for organizations that receive funding in sterling and US dollars.

A year ago when the Trust last made grants to Zambia the exchange of the pound sterling for the kwacha was £1 to ZK 8,936. On the 21st January 2006 the rate was £1 to ZK 5,766. This is a fall of 35.5%.

This affects our grants to Zambia very greatly, particularly for those people receiving grants for their tuition fees.

The first place that this showed up was in the grant to the St Clare's Club for Widows in Chingola, run by Chikaya Kayamba. There was delay in his receiving the £785 sent by the Trust for the hairdressing salon; they hoped to set up in the market place. By the time the funds reached the account, there was insufficient to buy all the equipment for which we had received quotes. Chikaya took his problem to the local TSSF group and they are to discuss it further at their next meeting at the end of this month.

During 2005 including this grant (FC 6) we sent the following grants to Zambia

FB1 £600 on two occasions to Fr Bohan, who visits the

Maximum Security Prison in Kabwe. These funds are used to buy drugs for the Pharmacy there which means that all the prisoners benefit by our donation. I have received a request from Br Bohan for ZK 5,000,000 (i.e.: £865) for a specified project. I have answered with some questions, and will bring his reply to the meeting if I have received it.

FC2: £400 to pay £200 to each of two nurses so they could enter Midwifery training at St Francis' Hospital, Katete. At present the total cost of one student is ZK 2,160,000 because of an increase in the fees, in addition to the change in exchange rate. At the current rate of exchange this is £374 for a single student.

FC3 £1200 sent for the third year of a distance-learning course for B. Theol for Fr James Phiri. Originally we were asked for this grant for three years, but this was an error. Having written to Fr Phiri and have spoken to his bishop I understand that it is almost impossible to complete this distance learning course in under four years. Fr Phiri was stationed in a very remote parish. He possessed neither a typewriter, nor computer (A friend has now passed on her laptop). He was 20 miles from the nearest point where he could get the work typed and transport there is not easy. To write his exam he had to travel to Lusaka, 1 ½ day's journey in often unreliable buses.

His bishop who visited us recently has a high regard for him and has appointed him Dean of the Cathedral in the Eastern Diocese. This is still a long way into the bush, though communications in terms of telephone and some electricity are better.

FC4 £1640 sent for the tuition fees for two Rwandese refugees, who followed their secondary education in a refuge camp in Zambia, to become Clinical Officers, training at the State run College of Health at Chainama Hills in Lusaka. I have had the following exchange of Emails with Bp John Osmer, retired living in Lusaka and helping out in the Diocese of Lusaka, who put this project up in the first place.

Tanzania

Subject: Re: Water-harvesting

Date: 09 March 2006

The rains here were very late coming but then came with a vengeance, filled all the cisterns and tanks and destroyed the road! You can't win! The situation is much improved on what it was when I first came here, but there is still a lot to do. My aim is to provide a tank or cistern for every roof and there are still about ten roofs where the water runs off into the ground. It pains me to see so much free water running away!

Of course the problem will grow year by year as the school grows. We now have 110 students, and will have more next year, all of them very thirsty boys who like washing!

So if there are any extra funds, we could certainly use them. A big 5000 litre plastic tank costs about 300 pounds for example, and building a foundation and putting in the gutters would be another 100 I reckon. Anything very gratefully received.

All best wishes

Br James Anthony at St Cyprian's College Liuli

In the Pacific: (projects sponsored by Trustee Brian Macdonald Milne TSSF)

Solomon Islands

1. The provision of a keyboard for the 'Aiabu S S Youth Group': £250

2. Assistance in completing a priest's house on Auki : £500 - £1000

Both have the endorsement of the Bishop of Malaita - Terry Brown - who writes:

"Keyboards have become very common with youth groups for outside events - festivals, fund-raising etc. They provide more variety than guitars. Many villages now have generators.

Learning to play is the aspiration of many. Our Diocesan Treasurer, Austin Ata, leads the Aibu group. I have interviewed the organiser and Parish Priest and I endorse the request for Aibu SS for 3000* SI dollars for a keyboard. The cost is 4000 and they have raised 1000.

[*At an exchange rate of approx. 13 SI dollars/£1 this amounts to around £230, so Brian is suggesting £250].

"I request help for the Auki priest's house. This is important, as Auki is the gateway to the diocese and island of Malaita. So far building has been going on for a year with voluntary labour and local fund raising; the roof is up. Would £500 - £1000 be possible?"

Papua New Guinea

A request for school fees that came from Br Smith Tovebae SSF (in Haruro) for the support of two orphans for which he is 'caretaker for their education.' It was agreed that this should be referred to Br Clifton Henry (at Koke) the Regional Minister SSF for PNG. The 2 children concerned are Mary Joyce Giriri (a year 12 student) and Misi Maino (year 10).

Br Clifton Henry writes:

"Their school fees, amounting to K710 for Misi and K2,310 for Mary, have to be paid to the school administration to obtain their final year school certificates.

In this matter of concern I am kindly seeking your assistance to help these two unfortunate children to have their certifi-

cates released on time to either seek employment or continue their studies.

I hope it will require a total of \$800 for both the Kids (sic)". (approx £600 @ 5Kina / £1).

A Book Review: Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale by Ian Morgan Cron (NavPress, 252 pages, paperback)

Rolf Pedersen, TSSF

For anybody on the edge of faith—and that, surely, includes a great many North Americans—this book offers a remarkably subtle but compelling invitation to the full, inward plunge. It's not a plunge into the warm waters of religious sentimentality. It's theology: a learned and beautifully written discourse on Franciscan spirituality and the broad, Catholic faith tradition in general. But *Chasing Francis*, like the wisdom writings of the Bible, is theology unpacked in story form, thereby leading the reader gently by the imagination through an engrossing tale. It's about a conservative, New England Protestant pastor who, while outwardly successful, has stumbled on the terrifying truth that what he has been preaching to his upper middle class congregation is not authentic, soul-gripping gospel. Try as he might to discover what's missing, he's at a loss. He's done all the right things for mainly the right reasons. And yet his ministry feels rootless and he faces emotional and spiritual burnout.

Enlightenment of a sort emerges when he takes a forced leave of absence from pastoral duties. He is persuaded to visit his wayward uncle, now a Franciscan friar and priest based in Florence. Sympathetic Uncle Kenny leads his skeptical nephew, Chase Falson, on a pilgrimage with stops at significant Italian sites in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. Along the way, they bump into three other Franciscans and assorted other characters. The reluctant Falson is given both a scholarly earful and a practical dose of the Franciscan way. He slowly discovers in this intensive immersion course that there is nothing at all dead about the 13th century saint and his way of thinking and living an abundant life of thanksgiving.

"He (Francis) believed everything we see in creation is a reflection of the Creator, just as we are. Francis treated everything in creation as if it were his brother or sister, because we all have the same Parent. He was not a pantheist. A pantheist is someone who believes that God and the creation are one and the same thing. Francis didn't worship God as [ital] creation -- he worshipped God through [ital] creation. For him the world was a prayer book where the *Vestigia Dei*, the footprints of God, could be found." That's the characters, Uncle Kenny and Br. Peter, doing the talking. And the

book is full of such seemingly conversational observations. Sometimes, as in the above, they are presented in the form of casual dialogue. At other times they are proclaimed in the form of reflective entries in Falson's journal. But they do get proclaimed and so does the assumption -- certainly not the author's alone -- that the church of Francis's age bears more than a passing resemblance to the church of our age. Then, as now, it was hemorrhaging credibility; it was widely regarded as hypocritical, untrustworthy and irrelevant. Sermons were either so academic that people couldn't understand them or they were canned.

Throughout the pages of this remarkable novel and study guide, Cron proposes a radical antidote to individual, institutional and even cultural stagnation. It is to literally follow in the spiritual footsteps of the Poor Man of Assisi. That does not mean bashing the institutional church. Nor does it mean doing church the way it has always been done. It means rising above those two alternatives, keeping your mouth shut and performing the overhaul simply by doing church better -- with at least one eye fixed resolutely on Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

For Francis, doing it better meant completely rejecting consumerism and materialism. It involved giving up his wealth and sometimes the shirt off his back to let others know that Jesus really was enough. And it worked wonders: aristocrats from all over Europe flocked to his Order. For Falson, the hero of Cron's novel, a renewed faith meant starting again from scratch by making dignity for all the guiding ideal of a renewed life. Pursuing that ideal would mean fighting against anything in the community that robs people of their dignity -- things like racism, sexism, addictions, injustice and poverty.

Cron is realistic enough not to write a happily-ever-after conclusion to his pilgrim's tale. Indeed, he makes it clear that there is significant risk in stepping out and away from the comfort and familiarity of established ideas and careers and into the darkness of the unknown and unfamiliar. He does not pretend it is easy, but he does make it clear that if the church -- if life itself -- is ever to be an authentic expression and magnifier of God's love, something has to give, and that something is the worship of the gods of rationality, structure and security. Finally, it is important to note that while Cron rejects the suggestion that his novel is autobiographical in any way, he happens to be senior pastor at Trinity Church, a Protestant congregation in Greenwich, Connecticut. His own courageous pilgrimage into the depths of theological thought is itself an exemplary plunge in the direction of a unified, all-embracing, post-Modernist Christianity.

In Love with Assisi 11/25/2006*Francesca Wigle*

It was all such a gift from God... just happening to visit my friend Cindy and her telling me about her upcoming trip to Assisi; me calling my supervisor at school to ask if I might take a week off to go on a pilgrimage to Assisi... her blessing me by saying, "Oh, Francesca, you give so much to your students! Of course you should take the week off and go to Assisi."

Two weeks later Cindy and I descended the steps of the train that had brought us from Florence to the little train station in the valley below Assisi. We had some Euros and we knew that a bus was nearby which could carry us up the mountain. It was dark as we stood at the bus stop, wondering about bus tickets and exactly where to get off the bus, hoping we were at the right bus stop.

Suddenly a voice asked, "Do you need some help?" We turned around to see a delightful smiling face welcoming us. We were soon to learn that it was the voice of Rosemary Alabaster, a British citizen who lives in Assisi. When the bus suddenly drove up, she exclaimed, "Let's hop on board. Let me talk with the bus driver. I speak Italian!" Luckily she had some extra bus tickets, and we sat together as the bus wound its way up the hill. "You know, there's an American priest here who will be doing a mass in English at the tomb of St. Francis at 8:00am. Would you like to come? It will be very special and there won't be very many of us." Our hearts jumped in anticipation of the upcoming mass. When the bus stopped, we jumped off with our bags and headed to the Catholic convent where we were staying.

The next morning church bells called us up the winding cobblestone streets to the Basilica of St. Francis. The sunrise filled our spirits with the essence of Brother Sun, and we found our way to the sacred tomb of our beloved Brother Francis. The mass was beautiful as Father Stephen Morris sang it. His face radiated the love and joy he was experiencing to celebrate in this sacred place.

Afterwards Rosemary introduced us and then said, 'By the way, we are heading over to Brother Thomas Anthony's place for tea. Would you like to join us? I promised him that I would bring Father Stephen over so they could meet one another.'" Cindy and I eagerly accepted the invitation, and we found ourselves walking up the hilly cobblestone streets and stopping at a large wooden door. Brother Tom opened the door and invited us into his apartment. "By the way, I am an Anglican Franciscan," he said.

I stopped in amazement, and looked at him. "You mean an Anglican Franciscan like Brothers Robert Hugh and Derek?"

"Why, yes", he replied, looking surprised.

"You mean Society of St. Francis!" I said.

"Oh, yes", he replied.

"Well, I'm a Third Order Franciscan in the same Order!" I replied. "We are sister and brother! I had no idea you were here!"

"Well, here I am", he said.

We shared coffee and toast and visited for a while. Cindy, and I asked him if we could get together with him the next day. We asked if he would say a mass for the mother of one of our TSSF brothers in the Heart of Texas Fellowship. He said that he would be happy to say the mass. The service at the Church of San Leonardo the next day was beautiful and meaningful. It was a real blessing.

Later Cindy and I walked with Rosemary through groves of olive trees (as they were being harvested), and we tromped through some hilly fields to San Damiano. Afterwards, we met for dinner with Father Stephen and Brother Tom at the Catholic convent where Cindy and I were staying. I believe that Assisi is my favorite place in the world!

Over the next few days, I learned that, in the early 70's, Brother Angelo, SSF was in Assisi. Ever since, SSF had wanted a presence there. Looking at the brochure (which Brother Thomas Anthony gave us), it was so meaningful to read about "The Society of Saint Francis in Assisi, the Spiritual Home of all Franciscans."

How amazing that Brother Tom and I had happened to meet. Suddenly, it occurred to me that we should write an article and share with all our sisters and brothers that Brother Tom is here! Tom was happy to recount how it had all come about. The Diocese of Europe was looking for a permanent chaplaincy and that is why they had asked SSF to come. The task of the chaplaincy is, first of all to represent Anglican Franciscans among the many other Franciscan groups present, and secondly to be involved with CEFID (Centro Internazionale per il Dialogo), run by the Conventual Friars (OFM Conv), in its work of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue.

In October 2005, Brother Tom had come to Assisi and stayed at CEFID. Later, he had found an apartment near the Basilica of St. Francis. As the brochure states, "Thousands of people come to Assisi every year, for many different reasons: whether they come for the

medieval atmosphere, for the architecture and frescoes, or with a more directly religious purpose of visiting the Franciscan shrines, all are pilgrims of one kind or another. They all want to know who and what inspired the buildings and thereby enrich their pilgrimage. The chaplaincy hopes to be available to provide some background history and information, directing people to the many places of interest, leading informal walking tours, and by helping to find accommodation."

In addition to the hospitality, support, and resources for pilgrims, the chaplaincy also ministers to Anglicans and Episcopalians who live in the area. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Assisi had given permission for Anglican services to be held at the Church of San Leonardo.

Brother Tom is an absolute delight!

When I asked him why he had been chosen to come to Assisi, he replied, "I'm a maverick, often going off on my own. They knew I wouldn't say, "No", and they would have me on a shorter leash!"

He continued, "I have an extra bedroom in my apartment with two beds and could accommodate a married couple or one or two men. Unfortunately, society in Assisi would look down on one or two females staying with me. Larger groups, men and women, can stay on the top floor of CEFID. I love the excitement of actually being in Assisi and being able to visit all these places whenever I feel like it. But, in the middle of winter, when it can be bitterly cold, and there are no visitors here, it can be very lonely. It has been great having so many people come to visit. I also look forward to groups of younger people experiencing Assisi for the first time."

Later we made the three-minute walk over to CEFID. I wanted to see where we could stay and I wanted to take some pictures.

What a beautiful and reasonably priced place to stay! They ask for a donation of 15 Euros per day for each visitor who comes to stay, either at CEFID or with Brother Tom. There is a wonderful dining room/meeting room, an excellent kitchen, nice bedrooms and a full rooftop patio where folks can sit, relax and share meals while taking in the beauty of Assisi.

There are even places nearby who will cater food for groups. I immediately thought that the Heart of Texas Fellowship might want to come and spend some time in Assisi together. Imagine getting to spend quality time in Assisi with your beloved sisters and brothers!

I also think that it is important for all of us in TSSF to help support this wondrous ministry. If anyone wants

to email me at fwigle@gmail.com], I will be happy to send you a brochure (in the U.S.). If you want to write directly to Brother Tom, here is his address: Thomas Anthony SSF, Via San Giacomo 1, 06081 Assisi PG, tel. +39 075 816887 Email: thomasanthonyssf@franciscans.org.uk

My week in Assisi surpassed any expectations I had had. It was literally life changing for me. Time spent in each of the sacred places where Francis spent his life, deepened my own spiritual life in a profound way. I understand now how deeply I am called to live in the presence of Jesus.

Francis has always been there to point the way and help me when I have stumbled and fallen. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be there and for the blessing of meeting Brother Tom. Pace e bene.

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.

Is there such a thing as a Franciscan diocese?

Bishop Jim Kelsey

I was sitting in a meeting with the Judicatory Heads. That's what we call those of us who are bishops or district superintendents or executive presbyters or whatever each denomination calls its minister provincial (shall we say)... [Sometimes I think the name "Judicatory Heads" sounds more like a punk rock band than it does a collection of ecclesiastical leaders - but there you have it...]

Anyway, as we talked over lunch, most everyone in the group was bemoaning the poverty of the Christian Church in this part of the world (the Upper Peninsula of Michigan). And indeed it is true. This is a patch in God's creation where the winters are long and hard, and ever since the natural mineral deposits were all but mined out, and the natural virgin white pine was

all but clear-cut by past generations of lumberjacks, and the growing season is too short for farming, and the area is too remote for any large scale industry, the economy is crumbling and the population is declining. The only two growing industries, we say (almost) facetiously, are prisons and casinos. And our most valuable export, we say, is our youth - who must leave the area to find work adequate to support themselves and their young families.

Of course, it's not as depressing as it may sound. It is an absolutely spectacular gem of God's creation up here, with natural vistas that can take your breath away, and we do indeed have many visitors, including tourists in all four seasons of the year. But still, it is a place with a diminishing economic base, and a shrinking and aging resident population. And one really does have a sense of meagerness - or at least smallness. Perhaps, dare I say, humility? Well, maybe on our better days...

The Episcopal Church in this area has always been small in number. The miners and lumberjacks who flooded the area during our boon days a century and a half ago were mostly Lutherans from Scandinavia and Roman Catholics from southern Europe. Some of the owners and managers of the mines were Episcopalians (or Anglicans from Cornwall, who came to oversee the copper mines along the Keweenaw Peninsula), but we have always been a minority church in these parts, and once the mines were closed following the Second Great War, many or most Episcopalians moved away, and it has now been several generations since our congregations were filled with young families and bustling with lively choirs and ECW's and guilds and various ministries. Of course, most of the older members can remember those days, and have witnessed and suffered a slow decline, numerically, over the past several decades.

This is especially true of the Episcopal Church up here, but also of the other denominations as well, each of us within our own scale, given our relative size and cultural status in the general population. And so it was that at this particular luncheon meeting of the Judiciary Heads of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, the conversation circled around the overall decline in numbers and financial vitality of our faith communities. Some in our group blamed the cultural wars, the loss of youth in our congregations, the competition we face with (demon) hockey (since children's leagues often have their "ice time" on Sunday mornings, and sports coaches are so strict as to penalize their players when they miss practice even for church activities...), the loss of employment, the rising costs of health insurance for clergy, the near impossibility of finding employment for the spouses and partners of clergy who serve in our

small towns and villages, and the list goes on and on.

And in the midst of this rather desperate conversation, I asked the question: do you think it's possible that our vocation in this place and in this generation, is not to achieve institutional prowess for the church, but rather a clarity of mission: that we might be those (even if few in number) who are called to carry a Word which has the power to transform the world? Even as a minority within our present day culture, we might bear a nobility of vocation...?

As a novice in the Third Order, I have been doing a bit of reading and thinking and praying about my own Franciscan vocation, and I find myself wondering from time to time whether there is such a thing as a Franciscan diocese. And if so, could it look something like the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan, where we are few in number, but fiercely faithful? Where we are deeply committed to Church, but not so much to the hierarchical trappings of ecclesiology? It's not very often you see clerics around here wearing clericals. It's not very often people are referred to by their titles ("Father" or "Mother" or "Deacon" or "Bishop"), but most often by our baptized names (Jim and Kevin and Gwen and Tom and Jane...) We are a small, poor diocese, with diminishing financial assets, yet our members are exceedingly generous with their time and talent, and leadership in most congregations is shared and indigenous, with Ministry Support Teams sharing equally to support the ministry of all of the baptized in their daily lives. And our priests and deacons and preachers are mostly indigenous members of the local community rather than imported from outside. And they are gracious and generous and hospitable with visitors. And we use what few resources we have to reach out to those in need - the poor, those in prison and their families, those without health insurance, the elderly, those in hospital, and shut ins, and so forth. And the joy! There is a warmth and love, and truly a joy in our company when we gather and as we go forth as God's wandering minstrels along these roads and in the tiny towns and villages throughout the Peninsula.

I don't mean to exaggerate or to paint an fanciful picture of what the few members of our small and scattered congregations have been able to offer of themselves and their gifts and their time. I don't want to overstate the point. But I do want to affirm that we are small and humble, hopefully in spirit, but certainly in the scope of most institutional measurements. And it would be possible to feel depressed or defeatist about it, if your measurement for success in the Church always had to do with numerical growth in attendance and financial statistics.

Could it be that this is a Franciscan diocese? ...in which we seek to be faithful, and loving and humble and joyful, even with the hard cold experience and, hopefully, the spiritual disciplines of relinquishment and diminishment? In the spirit of the little brother . . . ?

Sometimes in this age of worship of the god of Church Growth, I wonder if I and this diocese with which my family and I have lived now for 17 plus years are failing, or if we are faithful as we travel down this lowly path of life in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. God help me, I love it. Even, and maybe especially because of its smallness, I feel at home, and I feel deeply connected to this little community, and I feel profoundly in the presence of God's Love and the magnificence of God's Creation. And together we know how dependent we are upon God's care and compassion in the face of our vulnerability.

Could this be a Franciscan diocese?

**Review: Compromise and Courage:
Anglicans in Johannesburg 1864-1999:
a Divided Church in Search of Integrity
by Peter Lee (Cluster Publications,
Pietermaritzburg, 2005)**

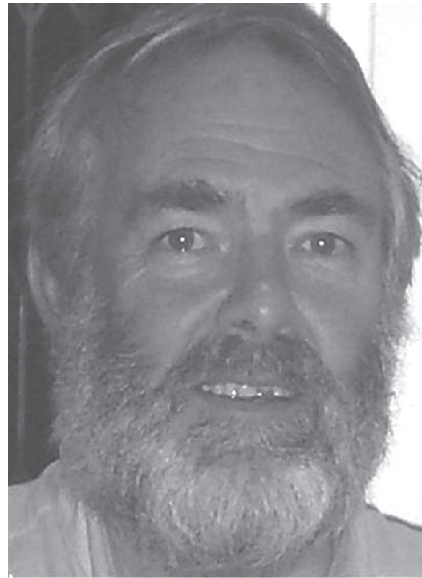
David Bertram, Newly Elected Minister Provincial of African Province (excerpted from Pax et Bonum, the newsletter of the African Province)

This book is the story of the Diocese of Johannesburg based around the ministry of six bishops, from Arthur Karney (1920 -1934) to Desmond Tutu (1985 – 1999). The author is the bishop of the Diocese of Christ the King, one of the three formed by the division of the Diocese of Johannesburg in 1990. It is the story of the way that the Anglican Church in South Africa dealt with, or declined to deal with, theology in the light of ethnicity and social diversity leading up to the era of the Nationalist regime and its crumbling in 1994. Johannesburg was seen as the second most important see in the Anglican Communion, because it was the arena for the theology of liberation to be played out in the face of apartheid. Many other vitally important issues were worked out in other provinces of the Anglican Communion during this time, but in none of them was the church so resolutely opposed to a government that claimed to be Christian as in Johannesburg. The author shows how initially the church was reluctant to engage with the demands of social justice, hence the 'compromise' in the title. But the time came when the issue had to be faced and the church, in the person of the bishop of Johannesburg, had to take the risk of persecution in order to be faithful to the doctrines it claimed to

uphold. This was the 'courage' of the title.

I found the book quite hard going to start with. But in recounting the ministry of the last three bishops, Stradling, Bavin and Tutu, it came alive. I suppose that part of the reason is the author himself became involved in the issues of those times and was able to write from personal experience, although his focus is on the bishop of the day. I found myself caught up in the drama as personalities like the Dean Gonville French-Beytagh and Bishop Timothy Bavin took risks in support of victims of government policies. The author recognizes Archbishop Desmond Tutu's prophetic leadership.

This book is compulsory reading for thinking Anglicans who want to understand the past so as to make a better future. If you get bogged down in the early chapters, persevere: that is what the church did. While reading this book I was made aware of the poverty of my own response to the suffering of other people. Being deaf to the prophetic voice of the church may seem



The Rev. David Bertram, Newly Elected Minister Provincial of African Province

Editorial

Harold Macdonald (from the Canadian TSSF newsletter Thaw, November Issue)

When I was in civic politics I came across a saying, whose obscenity was outweighed by its wisdom. In reference to a marginal person who was troublesome to the caucus one would hear: "Better to have him inside the tent peeing out than outside the tent peeing in".

Now I offer heartfelt remorse to any who are offended, but you have to admit, the saying has a point. And it applies to the Church, today. There are many who are standing outside the tent and you know what they're doing. There are not so many inside the tent, aiming their contributions to the outside, not as many as there should be.

In this November issue of "Thaw" I find myself inside the tent, to my surprise. And I examine one prominent writer who is outside the tent, doing you know what.

S. Francis was a prominent Inside-The-Tent-er. In all things he was obedient to the Holy Father. He was super-critical, of course. But he was loyal. Other reformers, his contemporaries, with a similar love of poverty stepped outside the tent and, in a short time, disappeared from history. Their message by its direction as much as by its content, turned into an attack on the Body of Christ and not a loyal act of reformation.

That may tell us something about staying in the Anglican community during the intensifying struggle over same sex relationships. We have endured difficult circumstances in the past.

Belonging does not mean, of course, conforming. In the Anglican tradition, it has meant common worship and ardent communication, but not necessarily agreement. *Lex orari, lex credendi*. "As I pray, so will I believe." The problem becomes more difficult if contestants refuse to come to the altar with their opponents, due to something they call "impaired communion". Such an affront tends to terminate the Anglican way.

The primacy of liturgy, our touchstone for obedience, is delightfully stated in this quotation from Stanley Hawerwas:

"One reason why we Christians argue so much about which hymn to sing, which liturgy to follow, which way to worship, is that the commandments teach us to believe that bad liturgy eventually leads to bad ethics. You begin by singing some sappy, sentimental hymn, then you pray some pointless prayer, and the next thing you know you have murdered your best friend".

One writer outside the tent is Tom Harpur, popular religious deviant, whose book *The Pagan Christ* promises to be as sensational as it is short-lived.

The Pagan Christ by Tom Harpur

Tom Harpur is to the Christian Church as a comet is to the solar system. Like the Church, Jesus Christ fascinates him. Jesus is the sun whom we all orbit.

But Tom has his own plane of rotation. He is an individual performer, with a tale that brightens the religious sky momentarily. The rest of us rotate in our different orbits on the same plane, some hotter than others, arguing who is closest to the sun but we are all of the same family.

So the first thing to say about Tom Harpur, or rather about the Gospel and Harpur, is that Jesus draws all and sundry. In a plethora of ways, Jesus is the centre of

people who so differ in their apprehension of Him that they often fall upon one another with swords. Harpur, bearing many cuts and scars, is no mean swords man, himself. Large is his following.

On the other hand, there is the question of his deviant plane and orbit, the Harpur who wishes to stand outside the tent and is wetting our shoes.

The first word that applies to him is the word "myth". For Harpur a myth is a truth-bearing story that doesn't have to be rooted in history. A myth can be an alternative to history. Thus if Jesus is a myth, then it's not necessary to say that Jesus ever existed in the flesh. It means that Jesus is the "Christ myth" which you will find played out under different names in all religions and which actually states explicitly what is deep in the unconscious of the human soul. Myths, he says, express the deepest truths about being human. The crucifixion, for instance expresses the pain, the agony and death in each of us. The resurrection expresses the opposite. But, as events in history, Harpur has discovered that Jesus Christ is not one of them.

Indeed the Christian story is really a cleverly crafted but bogus biography devised by early Biblical writers, incorporating many, if not all, the truths in myths from pre-existing Egyptian mystery religions. He implies there existed scholars in the first 100 years or so with sufficient literary skill and religious information to put together a biography, a creation of the infant Church, which compelled people to look not at the myths of self understanding but at the fabricated, (and false) life of an historical Jesus.

Harpur does not use the term "myth" in another more common way - a story that gives meaning to the events of history without replacing them. But Harpur, himself, is a player in another myth that helps explain the plane of his true orbit.

To put it simply, Harpur is a romantic. The romantic myth says that the good dwindled in the course of history. It existed supremely long ago in the natural state of creation (Eden). But humankind has been going downhill ever since.

Note that Cain, the first murderer, was also the builder of cities. Never mind that the story of salvation starts in a garden (Genesis) and ends in a city (Revelation). Think only of nature being the vestige of Eden and the summer traffic jams of people heading out to the lake to be refreshed by nature. "One impulse from the vernal wood...." wrote Wordsworth, one of the romantic poets of the late 19th century.

Tom Harpur thinks that we got it right in the early centuries of Christian history but then created the Jesus

story and defended it with murders and repression with the result that, for centuries, the Christian Churches sat in darkness.

Until...when? Well, until he, Tom Harpur, found the light and began a movement of reform to recover that lost light.

He's not the only one to make use of the myth of history as a story of human decline. The Mormons used it. The Church was in darkness after the apostolic age, they said, until the Book of Mormon fell from the sky. Dan Brown in the *Da Vinci Code* uses the same mythic devise. The true story of Jesus was suppressed by Opus Dei and other extremist Roman Catholic prelates. Until?

Well, now! Dan was the one, (like Tom) to get it right. Every romantic reformer has to say that civilization became increasingly corrupt so that the same reformer can proclaim the better way, the truth, and start the revolution. Jean Jacques Rousseau was the father of history as decline.

Harpur's weakness is two-fold. He asks us to believe first that everyone was wrong for thousands of years, without intelligence, courage and faith. That's a bit hard to swallow. Then he asks us to believe that he, or his principal source, has got it right. After all these centuries! Even harder to swallow.

I would be more impressed with *The Pagan Christ* if, in the end history had no place. But the book fritters away its argument. In the end, so long as we don't think of Christ as the human-divine Jesus, but as a cosmic and pagan myth, then we can have it all. Almost. The Bible, the sacraments, the life of prayer, meditation, transformation.

Almost. Something's lost. It was an original insight for the Church fathers to have seen that God became incarnate in a human person. There was scandal of particularity it was called. Personally, I am happy to have a God who is the man Jesus Christ, rather than a God who is an archetype defined by Karl Jung or a myth floating in the mind of meaning. It was a courageous and bold thing to proclaim that our little lives were and are the scene of divine coming or that the beautiful Bethlehem story points to a real historical event, a real coming, a real union of God and humankind.

Not Animals But People

Mary Louise Maroney

*Not animals, but people
are dumb. (And didn't Francis know this?)*

Balaam's donkey SAW the angel.

Blind Balaam's blows

could not budge his reverent hoof an inch.

Wise, wise open-eyed

soul: anima.

Animals live in prayer.

Talking and listening to God,

they clearly see the angels

our Lord sends here to stand in paths

with fiery swords, barring our way.

Unseeing, stumbling, trespassing

people, we're led along by dreams

of phantom glory in our heads, too dumb

to speak prayer to the Lord,

whose will of peace had sent us forth!

Animals bow

to angels we never see

and sing in tones we cannot hear

their canticles to God.

Their lives praise Him. And people?

We simply need to learn from souls

We've labeled dumb.

Provincial Convocation of the Americas, 2007 - Save the Date!

From June 26th to the 30th 2007, the Province of the Americas will hold its Provincial Convocation.

The next Convocation will be held at Endicott College (www.endicott.edu). Beautifully situated on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, the campus offers a private setting only twenty miles north of Boston. Their 200-acre, oceanfront campus featuring woods, open lawns and unique facilities is naturally conducive to providing a comfortable and reflective environment.

Imagine the smell of the salt air as you approach the campus, consider the sound of the waves breaking on the sand, envision the sun reflecting off of the blue ocean... enjoy meeting Tertiaries from Canada to Brazil!

In the upcoming months, you will be receiving more details regarding all aspects of this gathering. In the interim, please be sure to make a note of the dates and plan to keep your schedule free to attend.

Two TSSFers Speak at Swanee: Water For Life: Conserving Water for People & Nature: March 8-9, 2007 Sewanee

Joyce Wilding

ENTREAT Spring 2007 Conference, a science and religion program at Sewanee University of The South, will focus on ways to preserve our watersheds and water. ENTREAT explores the implications of the Christian idea of human stewardship of creation, and its impact on a spiritual, social and ecological transformation. Its multi-disciplinary programs support vital public policy and conservation practices. The roles of activism for people of faith with science backgrounds are promoted. Many issues at the religion/science interface do not impact the way people live their lives. What happens to the natural landscape, to the animal and plant life living in it and the quality of the water they drink affects them deeply. Thus people need to learn more about the scientific and ethical principles that govern decisions about environmental issues especially about decisions that are based on a dynamic water ethic.

On Thursday, Jeff J Gollhofer will be giving an afternoon talk on "Water Crisis & Sustainable Development," and Bishop Mark MacDonald will give an evening talk on "Water & Spirit: Wisdom for Thirsty World." Canon Jeff Gollhofer, Ph.D., is Priest-in-Charge at St. John's Memorial Episcopal Church in Ellenville, New York. Previously, he was Canon for Environmental Justice and Community Development at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan. He is Program Associate for the Environment and Sustainable Development with the Office of the Anglican Observer at the United Nations. (More about Bishop MacDonald below.)

From Joyce (joycewilding@comcast.net)—This Sewanee ENTREAT LSI Spring Conference is free and open to the public. See <http://www.sewanee.edu/ENTREAT/> to learn more about the ENTREAT Science and Religion program at Sewanee. I can work out the free meal tickets for guests and some discount housing on campus (Wed Mar 6 and Thursday Mar 7). Please let me know when you will arrive and depart. If you can be on campus on Thursday AM for a pre-conference meeting, I will organize some time for us to meet with the guest speakers. During this time, we can share ideas and information about how a parish and diocese can support environmental stewardship: care for all creation! The conference begins after lunch on Thursday, March 8, and closes with Eucharist at the School of Theology (SOT) chapel on Friday at noon.

And in a related development (Episcopal News Service, January 4, 2007, "Alaska bishop named Canadian National Indig-

enous Bishop MacDonald will remain assisting bishop in Navajoland")

Mark L. MacDonald, the seventh Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of Alaska, hopes that his new ministry as the Anglican Church of Canada's first National Indigenous Bishop will both transform the way people think about the church and move Anglicans into deeper communion with each other.

Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, announced his appointment of MacDonald. MacDonald, 52, becomes a rarity in Anglican tradition -- a bishop who is pastor to a group of people irrespective of where they live, rather than to residents of a geographic diocese. As well as crossing Canadian diocesan jurisdictions, MacDonald, in his new position, will straddle national and ecclesiastical boundaries as well. Although he has resigned as Bishop of Alaska, he is due to remain assisting bishop of Navajoland Area Mission with the Episcopal Church.

MacDonald told ENS after the news conference that "the most important thing to remember is that aboriginal authority and identity is based on a living relationship with the land. It is that relationship that is the hallmark of what we might call catholic jurisdiction," he said. "It's that distinction which makes this quite a bit different than simply saying 'well, we'd like to do it better our way' or 'we have an ideological concern we want to give expression to.'"

More on Mark MacDonald—a portion of his letter to the Diocese of Alaska

My task over the next few years is to mid-wife the creation of a Native Jurisdiction within the Canadian Church. Being offered this position is both a great honor and an enormous challenge.

...I have spoken quite often of the importance I attach to this work by the Canadian Church. We have been involved as partners at many levels. Though this is very similar to the experience of the Church in New Zealand and the Maori people and, to a great extent, takes its inspiration from it, this is a unique event in the life of the Anglican Communion. It is an amazing fulfillment of the work of many Native people and their friends for decades. It is an amazing unfolding of the Gospel promise to First Nations People in Canada. In my opinion, it is the most important work that anyone could do in the Church at this day and hour. As many people have said, it will bring transformation to the whole Church.

During the last few months, we have worked out many of the details that will make this possible. I have received the Presiding Bishop's support for this move, and I will remain a part of the American House of

Bishops, at least for the next few years. Not the least part of this is the great amount of prayer and discussion that took place between my family and close spiritual advisers. At present, the tentative date for my assumption of my Canadian duties is March 1. My family will move later. With me, they are looking forward to this opportunity.

...

Alaska has meant so much to me. I feel much has been accomplished, but in many things I feel I have just scratched the surface. It is my hope and expectation that much of what I have sought for in this position can only truly be achieved in the work I am now called to do.

There are a number of things I wish that I could have accomplished and that causes some regret. It is my hope and prayer that the initiatives begun in the past several years will by the grace of God, continue and flourish. I trust in the Grace of God that has been my help and companion throughout, often operating both through events and through many of you. It is hard to put into words how grateful I am to all who have made such an impact on my life and ministry. Thanks be to God for his goodness. May God bless you.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald

Send in your contributions for the Spring issue by March 14

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