



# The Franciscan Times

A 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.

Summer 2010

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## O Ministério na Rua do Rio de Janeiro.

*Dom Celso Franco de Oliveira Rio de Janeiro Brazil*

Nossa Missão é restaurar a face de Deus mutilada no rosto do irmão.

Tudo começa em 2004 quando me fiz presente na Convenção Geral da Igreja Episcopal, realizada na cidade de Columbus, Ohio. Naquela ocasião tomei conhecimento do Ministério "Ecclesia Ministries" através da Reverenda Debbie Little, clériga da diocese de Massachusetts. O testemunho da Debbie e como ela desenvolvia seu Ministério entre os homeless na cidade de Boston, me fez pensar na cidade do Rio de Janeiro, cujo centro, vem sendo tomada por uma enorme população de sem tetos, famintos, sujos, desrespeitados na sua dignidade como seres humanos, muitos deles alcoolizados, doentes mentais, drogados, outros foragidos da policia, mães cercadas de crianças, algumas delas tendo de dar a luz no meio da rua, por faltar-lhes alguém que as encaminhem a uma maternidade.

Voltando ao Brasil, senti-me profundamente tocado pela situação dessas pessoas no centro da chamada "Cidade maravilhosa" "Wonderful City". É assim que o Rio de Janeiro é conhecido no mundo inteiro. "Cidade maravilhosa", "maravilhosa, porém, feia, exibindo no seu centro uns dos retratos humanos mais chocantes. Decidi, então, iniciar uma "Pastoral de Rua" entre os street dwellers. Como Bispo Diocesano, deixei aos domingos a Catedral com a Deã Inamar de Souza, e eu mesmo, iniciei uma peregrinação entre as centenas de moradores de rua no centro da cidade. Assim todos os domingos por cerca de três meses eu deixava a

## Street MASS Ministry, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Our mission is to restore the face of God in the crippled look of our brothers [and sisters].

It all began in 2004 when I was at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, held in Columbus, Ohio. At that time I learned of the "Ecclesia Ministries" of the Rev. Debbie Little, cleric of the Diocese of Massachusetts. The witness of Debbie and how she developed her ministry among the homeless in Boston made me think of Rio de Janeiro, whose city center has been taken over by a large population of homeless, hungry, dirty individuals, whose dignity as human beings has been taken away. Many of them are alcoholics, mentally ill, drug addicts; other are fugitives running from the police, mothers surrounded by children, some having to give birth on the street for lack of someone to take them to a hospital.

Returning to Brazil, I felt deeply touched by the situation of these people in the center of the City which is called a "Marvelous City," "Wonderful City". This is how Rio de Janeiro is known worldwide. "Beautiful City", "beautiful" but ugly

at its center exhibiting one of the most shocking human portraits. So I decided to start a street pilgrimage (Pastoral de Rua) among the street dwellers. As Diocesan Bishop, I left the Cathedral services on Sundays to the Rev Inamar de Souza, Dean, and, by myself, I began a pilgrimage with the hundreds of homeless people downtown. So every Sunday for about three months I left the Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle, and I went through the streets, where I sat down with the homeless on the sidewalks trying to get to know them better.

Over the three months, I sat down with them, listening to their problems and getting to know them by





Catedral São Paulo Apóstolo, e me dirigia as ruas, onde me sentava com eles nas calçadas tentando conhecê-los em profundidade.

Ao longo dos três meses, sentando-me com eles, ouvindo suas dificuldades e conhecendo-os pelos nomes, como também as razões pelas quais chegaram àquela situação de completo abandono. Passei a convidar outras pessoas da diocese a cooperar com aquele Ministério. Juntos, observando que alguns moradores não usavam álcool nem droga, sendo pessoas mais responsáveis, passamos a nos reunir com esse grupo todas às quartas-feiras, e essa reunião se realizava num bar no centro da cidade. Ali, fazíamos uma breve refeição juntos e sempre terminávamos aquela pequena reunião com a oração do PAI NOSSO. Certo dia, após a oração do Pai Nosso, um dos moradores presentes, sugeriu-me que organizássemos uma missa na rua. Era o ano de 2006, e estávamos prestes ao Natal. A sugestão daquele morador de rua foi inteiramente acolhida por todo o grupo de forma que passamos a nos organizar para uma grande Celebração Natalina na rua. Entramos, então, em contato com várias paróquias da diocese, cada uma oferecendo frango assado, outras refrigerantes, outras rabanadas, e assim, inauguramos no dia 25 de dezembro de 2006, a primeira celebração eucarística na rua bem no centro da cidade. O Altar da Eucaristia foi feito de caixotes de madeira que os moradores usavam no seu dia, para a Mesa da comunhão foi utilizada uma taboia que um deles usava como cama, e a cruz foi também construída por um deles, sendo o material retirado de restos de madeira encontrado na rua.

name, but also knowing the reasons why they arrived at that situation of complete abandonment. I started to invite other people in the Diocese to take part in that ministry. Together we noted that some residents did not use alcohol or drugs, some people being more responsible. We began to meet with this group every Wednesday, and this gathering was held in a locale in the center of the city. There we had a quick meal together and we always finished that little reunion with the Lord's Prayer.

One day after the Lord's Prayer, one of the residents present suggested to me that we organize a mass [Eucharist] in the street. The year was 2006, and it was almost Christmas. The suggestion that homeless person made was fully accepted by the whole group such that we started to organize a big Christmas

celebration on the street. Then, we got in touch with several parishes of the Diocese, some parishes offering roasted chicken, other parishes soft drinks, others sandwiches, and thus we inaugurated the Street Mass December 25, 2006, the first Eucharistic celebration in the street in the city center. The altar for the Eucharist was made of simple wooden crates that residents were using in their daily lives. For the communion table we used a board that one of the street dwellers used as a bed, and the cross was also built by one of them. The material was retrieved from the remains of wood found on the street.

This ministry, which was inaugurated with the celebration on Christmas in 2006, continues without interruption and happens every Saturday in the Plaza Sao Francisco de Paula in the city center, where we celebrate the Eucharist. We also distribute a simple meal for 100 street people as well as give them clothes, simple remedies, soaps, and toothpaste.





Este ministério, que foi inaugurado com essa celebração no Natal de 2006, continua acontecer sem interrupção todos os sábados na Praça São Francisco de Paula no centro da cidade, onde, celebramos a eucaristia e distribuímos uma breve alimentação para 100 pessoas de rua, além de oferecer-lhes roupas, remédios, sabonetes, e pasta de dente.

Durante todo esse tempo ministrando entre os moradores de rua no centro da Cidade do Rio, tínhamos sempre a idéia de conseguirmos um imóvel que servisse de Centro de Convivência, onde os "homeless" pudessem se encontrar para tomar banho, cortar o cabelo, escovar os dentes, trocar de roupa e uma xícara de café. Assim, fomos bater na porta da Prefeitura, de amigos, deputados e vereadores, mas infelizmente, não conseguimos. No ano passado, a Associação São Martinho (Carmelites), entidade que há mais de 20 anos desenvolve um belo trabalho com os meninos de rua (street children) conhecendo o nosso desejo em adquirir um imóvel para atender a população de rua, ofereceu-nos, em comodato, uma boa casa de três andares não muito longe de onde acontece as nossas celebrações na rua. Esta casa, foi batizada com o nome de "Centro de Convivência Monte Alverne" (Monte Alverne, local onde São Francisco recebeu os seus estigmas) que já está totalmente legalizada e será o local onde os moradores de rua, principalmente os que freqüentam as celebrações na rua, terão um espaço, para aprender a "CONVIVER", resgatando ali a sua dignidade, resgatando o seu direito de ser pessoa. Inicialmente, eles terão banho, escovarão os dentes, e trocarão de roupa. Estamos nesse momento estamos em contato com a Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro no sentido de cooperação mútua.

É propósito da Equipe do Centro de Convivência, recrutar em breve, psicólogos, advogados e profissionais de Serviço Social. Teremos também no Centro de Convivência uma Biblioteca e uma Capela que será dedicada a São Francisco. Neste momento, ainda em processo de instalação, o Centro de Convivência, através de sua Equipe Administrativa, procura elaborar projetos para fins de "fund raising" buscando a sustentação do projeto.

Termino esse artigo pedindo as orações de todos para que este Centro de Convivência seja uma Bênção, e que recupere a Face de Deus Perdida No Rosto do Irmão.

During all the time that we have been ministering among the homeless in downtown Rio, we always had the idea we could get a property that would serve as a welcoming center where the "homeless" could meet to bathe, cut their hair, brush their teeth, change clothes and get a cup of coffee. Thus, we began knocking on the door of City Hall, friends, legislators and aldermen, but unfortunately we could not get anywhere. Last year the Association of Sao Martinho (Carmelites), an entity that for over 20 years has developed a fine ministry with street children, knowing our desire to acquire a building to serve the homeless population, extended to us the use of a good three-story house not far from where our celebrations on the street are held. We named this house the "Mount Alverne Welcoming Center," (La Verna, where St. Francis received the stigmata), that is already fully registered with the City and is the place where the homeless, especially those attending the celebrations on the street, will have a space to learn to "live" regaining their dignity and restoring their right to be human beings. Initially they will shower there, brush their teeth, and change their clothing. We are at this moment in touch with the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro to ask for mutual cooperation.

It is the goal of the governing Board of the Welcoming Center to recruit psychologists, lawyers and social service professionals soon. We will also have at the Center a library and a chapel to be dedicated to Saint Francisco. At this point, it is still in the process of being totally organized. The Center, through its Management Team, aims to put together projects for the purpose of "raising funds" and seeking long-term support for the project.

I end this article asking for everyone's prayers for the "Convivencia Center" to be a blessing, and to recover the lost face of God in the face of our brothers and sisters.



## Surrounding People with Love, Prayers in Difficult Times

Joan Powers (from *The Patriot Ledger*, May 1, Massachusetts)

I have a deep faith in God and believe in the healing powers of Jesus. I belong to St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scituate, where we have a healing service with laying on of hands at



noontime. We have seen many healings, sometimes physical and sometimes spiritual. After the healing service we knit prayer shawls to give to people who need to know we are surrounding them with our love and prayers in their difficult times.

I have experienced the healing powers, especially when my priest-husband was in an automobile ac-

cident and in a coma for more than a month and was not sure he would survive. I felt the presence and peace of the Lord and knew whatever the outcome I would be able to deal with it. This happened 20 years ago, and my husband is disabled but doing OK.

I am a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and have a rule of life that includes daily prayer. This definitely helps me during the day. I am able to leave my husband and do volunteer work, especially with the elderly and Meals on Wheels. I think we serve our Lord when we serve others, especially the out-cast, the homeless and those with problems.

(above) "Made with Love by St. Luke's" (right) Joan and Her Knitter Compatriots



## Days before Profession

*Sue Liapis from Lent issue of TAU (Aotearoa, New Zealand, & Polynesia with Melanesia)*

My first enquiring of the TSSF, I sat thinking this is just great. I can learn more about God after Church. I held onto my seat, ready to go into the wilderness. My focus and attention turned more toward God, and less on me. Good things happened, new experiences and dreams. Wow, can't wait for more truth and good behavior, of prayer, praising and confession.

I was ready to adjust, when I became a Novice, all things are new, 1. Being convicted and 2. Exposed, gently, lovingly and justly. A time of the wonderful teachings, of fun and joy that come from the 3rd Order meetings. Day 17 of the Community Obedience, shone a new way forward for me, and it is this: Jn 17.3 "this is eternal life to know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you sent" –True knowledge is the knowledge of God...less of me, more of God.

Spending time in the word of God, well there is no greater insight to an unseen God than in His word. My God scale heads right off into the atmosphere and beyond. Talking with the Lord, sometimes, I can't stop laughing, clapping, and singing to the Lord.

Francis taught me to pray simply and fervently, asking for one thing, in praise, and to pray continually, and when upset for any reason whatsoever, to go immediately, (not after a quick tidy, or making a quick cup of coffee to enjoy the moment,) but immediately rise up in Prayer, and remain in the presence of God for as long as it takes for Him to restore the joy of His salvation. This is good, very good, supremely good.

Do others get carpet burn?

There have been many times of trials in learning. I have put pressure on myself, to do more for God, in family, work and Church. But through failure, I found out much about myself. I am no longer of this 'world'. And in truth, I felt sorry for myself, letting the world go bit by bit, I wanted to cry, but I could not. Pity had no hold. Thanks be to the Prince of Peace, but instead found myself praying, and listening well to my Novice Counselor.

The day of my Profession, I was filled with joy and scary anticipation. Some cocktail. What is God going to do with me now? Silly, foolish me, for as I looked around at all those gathered, I shivered, and regained strength in their witness, and love, such are the people of God. To my Novice Counselor, my love and gratitude for your precious time, and wise council. To my Spiritual Counselor, such is my affection of your prompting to go on.

Thanking God for his great love and His Grace.



## Through the Eye of the Needle

*Hilary Singleton (from Australian Province Newsletter, Easter 2010)*

A novice at her first conference.

It was with great excitement that I traveled to Sydney to take part in the Third Order of St Francis General Chapter, July 16-19, 2009. I was warmly welcomed and embraced as part of the family for this is what the gathering over four days felt like. It was more than a conference. It was belonging to a loving family, like-minded (in most things!), sharing experiences, and learning from our excellent speakers, but above all living in God's grace.

As we approached the Altar for Holy Communion I reflected that through the eyes of the world this small group had very little to offer. Not lithe and beautiful, living as students and sharing bathrooms, using public transport for our excursions and making our own entertainment. The eyes of the world, at a casual glance, would fail to see the sparkling diamond held in the midst of this ordinary group of people. Our Trinitarian God was reflected in myriad facets as the diamond flashed peace, hope, joy, humility, love, service, justice, worship, acceptance, generosity and an openness to learn more. The charisma of St. Francis and St. Clare was truly present as we lived in intentional community and joined with the greater community of Franciscan saints. The worship at Morning Prayer, daily Eucharist and Compline was a joy and nurtured my spirit.

All the speakers were excellent and I will comment particularly on Dianne Langham on the topic of reconciliation. Dianne is chaplain to the Maitland jail and spoke to us about her work with indigenous prisoners.

By forming practical relationships of understanding and support she has the respect and trust of her people. She is known as Auntie Dianne by all staff, residents and their families because the title 'Auntie is one of acceptance and respect.

Restoring spiritual identity and connectedness to the land restores hope, purpose, dignity and belonging. One of the ways she achieves this is to take the young men to significant sites in the nearby country

Auntie Dianne told us the story of Tidalik the frog who was so greedy that he drank up all the water in the rivers, lakes and billabongs and caused a terrible drought. Using traditional stories like this helps to connect her young men to their problems and behaviors that have caused them to be sent to jail. But these are not simply stories about morals; they are spiritual dreaming from which many indigenous peoples have become disconnected.

The dreaming then becomes present in a spiritual experience through bush walking to the 'frog' rock, caves and traditional rock paintings in the area. God is present, depicted in the paintings and landscape. God becomes real to the young men as their spirit is awakened. It is a long path and not always successful as generational problems are difficult to overcome. I was impressed by her ability to share her love of God within the indigenous heritage; a heritage that we all share. Yet she is also very practical and has her own family struggles to deal with. I wondered how she fitted it all in!

She embodies one of the aspects of Franciscan spirituality that draws me; the all embracing, incarnational love of God present in all creation and expressed in every person who is the image of God and loved by God. With Auntie Dianne's work there is hope for reconciliation even though it may appear to be as difficult as passing a camel through the eye of a needle.

It was a great blessing to meet Tertiaries that I only knew as names in our prayer cycle, especially those from Papua New Guinea who made our virtual community very real.

At the end of the conference my thought was that I would like to stay another week with this group in order to get to know my fellow Tertiaries better. I am saving for Melbourne in three years.

## The Bus Trip

*Dianne Aid*

Part of my personal rule is to strive for one day a week during which I will not use my car. I have thought of expanding that to taking public transportation on another day and perhaps two. Well, I keep thinking about that and have not moved it into action, so I think God may have gently moved it along some.

Many of you know I move around in a power wheel chair, and my ten year old van is the only private automobile I can drive, I cannot afford to replace it, so I have to take care of it when things go wrong - as they did about a week ago.

My car was in the shop, I had just returned from almost a week in Washington DC the night before and was pretty tired, but I needed to get to two meetings in Seattle - "ok, I can do this, I can take the bus". I called King County Metro to get my routes, making sure that the bus stops were wheelchair accessible, and I was assured they were - directions in hand, out the door I went on my "bus trip(s)".

My first stop was at "Spokane Street and Bus Way", then I was to roll two blocks east and a block south to my meeting location, which was located directly behind the bus stop I would need to be at to catch the buses to my next meeting. Heading east - no sidewalks! Dangerous for anyone, but the traffic under the Spokane Street Bridge is rather light, so I could dodge it. I was dumped out onto Airport Way, a rather busy road - especially at rush hour. There were sidewalks, but no ramps to get up onto them. I was stuck in oncoming traffic! Some construction workers who were working near by came to the rescue - they stopped traffic while a "scout" looked for a place I could get up out of the traffic - a driveway about a block away was the option - so, up I was and no way to get down and on to my meeting (I could see the building one block away). The construction workers called the Seattle Police Department to come to the rescue. I called friends of mine who were in the meeting - they tried to come to my rescue (planning to escort me between two cars), but the construction workers would not allow it. While we were waiting for the police, a homeless man with a pit bull approached us and wanted to be helpful. I know my wheelchair can make dogs anxious, and I certainly did not want to upset the pit bull!

The police showed up about 45 minutes later. The officer left on a scouting trip to find the best way for me to go. I was left under the watchful eye of angel #1 the man and his pit bull. The officer returned, and instructed me to come back down the driveway, follow his patrol car across the street and back into on coming traffic. Now the game plan was for me to follow the lighted police car in my wheel chair and off I went sailing south bound on Airport Way, and gracefully and fashionably late, arrived at my meeting to plan Seattle's upcoming Immigration Reform Rally.

Bus trip two was uneventful and involved a transfer. I now felt like an expert!

The long trip home began at 8:45 PM - I had to roll about four blocks to the bus stop which was in an area populated by many homeless folks. I had seen them many times, sitting against walls, searching in dumpsters - part of the scene. Now I was alone, my friends from the New Sanctuary Movement who followed me to the bus stop had left. I had about 20 minutes to wait for the bus. The village came alive around me. A man approached me and offered me a bus transfer so I would not have to pay for the bus trip - one of the homeless - one very kind gentleman.

The bus came, and down Jackson we went - I was to catch a southbound bus in the "tunnels" under the streets of Seattle. Midway down Jackson a group of men just coming from a community dinner boarded the bus, a few overheard my conversation with the bus driver about how to get to the right side of the tracks in "the tunnels" to get the bus to Kent. The men chimed in, telling me exactly which way to go. We arrive at the transfer stop - I am the last one off because the bus driver had to put the lift down. I got off the bus, and three more angels (among the passengers from the community dinner) were waiting to guide me to the bay in the tunnel to wait.

Several years back, our brother Mark MacDonald preached a sermon in which he used the image of seeing the world through Gospel eyes. I saw the streets of Seattle with these Gospel eyes. The man with the pit bull, the man who gave me the bus pass and the guides - all people with powerful ministries to the newcomer to the streets.

### **RIP: Two Former Provincial Ministers**

#### **The Ven. Richard (Dick) Bird Former Minister Provincial of the European Province**

*reprinted from Third Order Online Newsletter, European Province*

The Ven. Richard (Dick) Bird who was Minister Provincial of the European Province from October 2002 to October 2008 died on June 3 and will be buried from St Edmundsbury Cathedral on Friday June 11. As Minister Provincial of the European Province, he succeeded Carolin Clapperton and was, in turn, succeeded by Joanna Coney.

When he was considered for Minister Provincial in 2002, this is how he described himself in his profile:

*I have been a member of the Third Order for almost 30*

*years and a priest since 1959. I am married to Valerie, a painter, also a Tertiary and we have three grown up children. I was a parish priest for 30 years both in South Africa (for 12 years) and in the Diocese of Southwark in country and inner-city parishes. I was Archdeacon of Lambeth for almost 12 years. I am retired and have plenty of time and energy. If elected I would want first to listen. Initially I would listen to the Provincial Chapter and would arrange an early meeting with Link Tertiaries. I would respond to invitations from Area Ministers around the country and in Sweden and would hope to stay overnight to meet as many members of the Order as possible.*

*I have great enthusiasm for the proclamation of the Gospel and would focus on Franciscan priorities, for instance on the poor and marginalized. I am deeply committed to racial justice and also to other issues of justice and peace. I have considerable experience as a Christian pastor, preacher/speaker, retreat giver and administrator, which I offer to the Order. I hope there will not be any more major changes in the running of the Order for a few years but would be happy to work with all that has been achieved recently. After discussion, I would want to encourage the production of at least part of the new Manual in a truly handy form. I would enjoy working creatively with First and Second Order sisters and brothers. It was Cambridge brothers who first introduced me to Francis.*

Soon after becoming Minister Provincial he wrote in the newsletter of the European Province:

*You will read this long before I take office on 1 January 2003 but I want to greet you now, to tell you that I pray for you, and to say how much I look forward to meeting you in the years ahead. Like me you will probably just have renewed your Franciscan tertiary pledge. Again I was struck by the words I had to say. They set out very clearly, didn't they, what we are about as Christians who follow Francis. In my time as your Minister I hope very much that we can look in the face of our Franciscan calling. It is not an easy one, and it is challenging to consider afresh what it is to walk the Jesus way with a specifically Franciscan focus. That is how I like to think about my own life as a tertiary. It is a way of living as a Christian. No more than that. Others will seek to follow the Benedictine way, others the way shown by the Sisters of the Love of God. Others of course will see no need for any special focus. Just at the moment I have a few particular concerns. One is the continuing care and love for elderly tertiaries, specially those who really just cannot get to meetings. I want the Order to honour you and to do all we can to enable you to stay happily in the Order right to the end. Another concern is for you married tertiaries with children. I am thinking of your difficulty in getting to meetings and trying to live the life of a young and growing family using the insights and teaching of the little poor*

man. But my main focus at the moment is on justice and peace and specifically on racial justice. I believe the Order has a great deal to offer to God both in the Church and in his wonderful but broken world.

In October 2005, IPTOC (Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter) elected Dorothy Brooker from New Zealand as the TSSF Minister General, and she appointed the Ven. Bird as her assistant. At the Lambeth Conference 2008 when TSSF had a daily prayerful presence, the Ven. Bird played in crucial role in organizing our effort.

*Getting Ready for Stations of the Cross: Second from the Left and Holding the Cross: Dick Bird, Minister Provincial of the European Province; In sunglasses in center: Dorothy Brooker, Minister General of the Order; and In dark shirt — Bishop Keith Slater from Australia, former Minister General of the Order.*



## Margaret Butters: Former Provincial Minister of Australian Province

*(from Australian Province Newsletter, Easter 2010)*  
**Born 1930 Professed tssf 1965 Born to Eternal Life 2009**

### Excerpts from her Eulogy

At the top of her list was Margaret's strength: the fact that at the age of thirty she was helping to run a mission station in New Guinea in very primitive conditions, with three young children. One of the many visitors to our house there, Howard Johnson, records in his book, *Global Odyssey*, a glimpse of those years. He remembers returning late one night, at a time when Bob was sick. These are his words: On entering the ... darkened house, I nearly tripped over a human figure lying prone on the floor. That afternoon the dormitory of the girl's school, perched on stilts, had gently subsided to the ground and then collapsed altogether. Thus Margaret had on her hands not only a sick husband and their small children, but also a bishop and his servant, and a visiting canon, and a missionary couple in transit, and twenty-seven adolescent girls asleep on the

floor. Quite a household—and in such an inadequate house! She had neither electricity nor running water to help her. But she took it all with total calm. I thought to myself: The day of the pioneer woman is not over. Mum and dad had met each other at an Australian Board of Missions summer school. For her, the years in New Guinea were an exhilarating challenge, and part of a vocation shared with him.

She was president of the St Stephen's, Mount Waverley, Mothers' Union, and was also the Area Deanery President. In Melbourne she was secretary of the Clergy Wives Association and Diocesan President of the ABM auxiliary. Later she was Provincial Minister of the Franciscan Third Order. Her leadership qualities were obvious; like her own mother, Mim, she could organise anything and anyone—in the most delightful way.

### Passion

Also prominent throughout Margaret's life has been her energy and her passion. Dayspring at Stroud was an absurdly ambitious idea. But somehow she pieced together the finance, and—out of the clay soil, hard labour, and her own imagination—sculpted beautiful mud-brick buildings in a beautiful bush setting.

### Love

And she loved people. After church, or at parish functions, or at parties, she would be disappointed if she hadn't talked to every person who was there. She had an easy ability to find what was important in their lives. She made sure everyone felt included. At one point, mum was in England on Franciscan business, and Mary Hillard, with whom she stayed briefly, wrote to dad about her effect on people. The letter began: I can only say it has been the greatest joy and privilege to meet Margaret and have her in our home the last few days.... She has captivated everyone whom she has met here, and a friend of Barbara Frith, with whom she stayed when she just arrived, said that "God really shines out of her" and this expressed beautifully what we have all found. She has taught us much of Franciscan joy and simplicity.

### People

As you would all know, wherever Margaret went, people were drawn to her: at Frankston, Essendon, Camberwell, Lara, Popondetta, Pascoe Vale, Surrey Hills, Mount Waverley, Sydney, Brisbane, Canterbury, in the eighty parishes of the Eastern region in the diocese of



Melbourne, in Stroud, and— though perhaps less of her has been present here—in Taree too.

### Faith

Running through Margaret's life, informing everything, is, of course, her deep belief and her deeply ethical way of being-in-the-world that flowed from that. Her faith and values underpinned her strength and her passions and her relationships with people. Mum's enjoyment of stillness was part of her appreciation of the creation. That stillness could also be more explicitly devotional: staying with them, you might catch the murmur as mum and dad quietly said morning and evening prayers, a ritual that gave a daily rhythm to their life together. Not surprisingly, Margaret flourished in the roles that went with the vicarage, or the deanery at St John's, Brisbane, or with being a bishop's wife. If anyone was a daughter of the vicarage, she and Elizabeth were: their father, Philip, and both their grandfathers—George Sproule and Archdeacon Reginald Hayman—were priests in the diocese of Melbourne.

### Bob

At the centre of mum's life—again informing everything else—has been her love for dad: they've been married for more than fifty years, and there was a long engagement before that. Mum adored him, and sometimes while she watched him, you could see that in her radiant expression. In Sydney, half-way through their marriage, she'd go to Cheltenham railway station to meet him after work, and they'd walk home holding hands.

During the last few years, many of us here have been moved by the beautiful and all-encompassing care that dad has given her—and by radiant expressions on his face.

### “Were Beauty Water” (a poem)

*Rick Bellows*

During the thirty days of November 2009 I participated in a fundraising event: “30 Poems in 30 Days,” organized by the Poet Laureate of Northampton to benefit the Family Literacy Project of the Center for New Americans in Northampton, Massachusetts. My poems raised \$375 and over all the event raised over \$12,000.

This is one of the poems I wrote. It is one of four in a series, one for each of the classic Greek elements: water, air, fire, and earth.

#### Were Beauty Water

Were beauty water,  
We would dig deep,  
Deeper, the more dry it be,  
We would look up to watch it form out of thin air.

I wonder: would we kneel before clouds?  
Or oceans?  
Or ice?

Were beauty water,  
It would sing to us from mountain streams,  
And on its way down from the heights  
It would shape the landscape of our souls,  
Shifting sands here and there,  
Cutting canyons through scab and scar  
So old wounds could soften, soothed.  
It would slowly meander by fields,  
And linger long in our gardens,  
But eventually, it would head home to the sea,  
The inexorable flow a persistent invitation in.  
When we would follow,  
It would bathe us then wash us up on shore,  
Baptized,  
True missionaries,  
Healers who open eyes and ears,  
Prophets confronting ugliness in the world,  
Artists.

Beauty is water,  
And I strip naked before it,  
Dive in,  
Drink deep,  
And speak poetry.

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### Franciscans and Money: An Overview

*Compiled by John Fox in 2009 under the aegis of TSSF Study and Prayer (from the European Province)*

The stimulus for this booklet arose from contemplation during a private retreat at St Michael's Convent, Ham Common in February 2009, at the height of the financial crisis. In the recent book 'My God, My All – A Friar's Journey' about Brother Bernard, SSF, attention is drawn to seven priority issues that Bernard felt would spread the Franciscan charism today. One of these reads:

*‘Creative and detailed studies of world development and the search for realistic alternatives to offset the motivation of gain which drives capitalism to expansionism and consumerism, at whatever cost to non-replaceable resources, pollution, recognition of human rights. The earth cannot sustain an ever-increasing population at the current Western level, even if that was desirable. The Franciscan witness to the rich world points to the motivation to ‘live simply, that others may simply live’.*

2009 has been a year for reflection on the implications of the global financial crisis that has shaken the founda-



tions of society, and jolted many into reappraising their life priorities. As Franciscans we may have been as directly affected as others, but have perhaps been able to take a more compassionate, philosophical and independent view of the various outcomes of this crisis. Indeed, one contributor has positively welcomed the crisis as an opportunity for people to change their ways; a fresh perspective on 'wealth' has been perceived by many, whether affected personally or not. Tertiary Franciscans have generally had an ongoing problem with money, wondering whether this or that indulgence were reasonable or luxurious. Consequently this crisis has tended to focus the mind for Franciscans, and to draw attention to determining personal, corporate and political priorities.

Various written offerings have been received in a request for relevant contributions on the topic, and they tend to fall into the following categories:

**Section A The Global Economy**

- Economic overview – Nigel Herriott
- Is sustainable capitalism possible? – Nancy Adams
- The wisdom of Francis and Clare in economic hard times – Jeff Gollither

**Section B Corporate Culture**

- A perspective on interest/usury and moneymaking – David Swain
- Be close to the poor – write-up by John Fox
- The value of principles in today's business world – Jackie Nelson
- Ethics and finance – John Fox

**Section C Individual Behavior**

- The theology of enough – John Fox
- Paying taxes in a recession – Steve Hackett
- Francis poor and lowly enters heaven rich – write-up by John Fox

**Section D Capitalism through to Franciscan Charity**

- The spirit of poverty and the credit crunch – John Franks
- Money, the market, and people in need – John Franks

These articles provide us with some fascinating insights as to how Christians, and specifically Franciscans, see the implications for themselves personally, for

*(continued on page 10)*

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

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## Consecration Reflections

*Eileen "Tina" Marie Ferriot*

This morning as I read the Daily Office, I was struck by the first reading from Ecclesiastes, "For everything there is a season". I had had a fitful night's rest in deciding whether or not to write something about my public vow of celibacy to the Single Life as a Third Order Franciscan. I was reminded of the last article I submitted to the Franciscan Times in writing about the connection between Cursillo and my journey as a Third Order Franciscan. The time since writing that article, I was honored to have the Rt. Rev. Barry L. Beisner, Bishop of the Diocese of Northern California, lay hands upon me and consecrate me to the Single Consecrated Life as a vowed celibate as a member of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis.

Two Franciscan ideals that have continued to motivate my journey are obedience and perseverance. I am eternally grateful for the wisdom and discernment of my brothers and sisters in Christ who spent time in prayer and conversation with me to bring forth my vocational call after talking with the Area Chaplain five years ago. In listening for God's call, I realized that the most important desire of prayer is to persevere in the obedience in one's relationship to God. Both my Spiritual Director and the Bishop encouraged me to persevere and be obedient but with a patient heart. And so, the date of April 17, 2010 was, I am convinced, in God's time.

Everything about the day spoke to me of God's Love and Grace through His Son, His people, and His Creatures. I was honored by the presence of so many of my friends, some family members, and our Franciscan brother Fr. Tom Johnson, our Franciscan sisters Susan Johnson, Rebecca Goldberg, Sr. Pamela Clare, and Sr. Maggie. I also felt the prayers and presence of all those who let me know they were unable to attend. A new model of the Consecration Service was modeled after a Third Order Franciscan brother's Consecration to the Single Life performed in the European Province.

The Holy Eucharist Service Rite II was a wonderful Franciscan witness for many of those who attended. Many of the guests didn't realize that the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion have Religious Orders. They thought that it is only the Roman Catholic Church that has these Religious Orders. I also had some people say, "I've never been to this kind of Consecration Service and my response was then we will experience it together. I explained that the only Consecration Service I have attended is that of Bishop Barry Beisner's consecration. The amazing thing about writing up the Consecration Service Bulletin was the intense time of prayer spent with Christ.



*Top—Consecration by Bishop Beisner.*

*Middle—Sr. Pamela (Prayers of the People) and Area Chaplain Becky Goldberg as reader.*

*Bottom—Bursar Tom Johnson as reader.*

After the Bishop's approval on the service bulletin, I was informed by the Rector the same afternoon that our time for finalizing everything for print was the next morning instead of two days later than scheduled. My prayer vigil lasted from 6:00pm Wednesday until 4:00am Thursday morning, and I met with the Rector on Thursday morning at 9:00am for coffee at Starbucks. I have spent some pretty awe inspiring moments with Christ; but this particular night I embraced the mystery of that saying, "I will write all these things on your heart". I thank God for that time of prayer so that when time came for the Consecration I felt the powerful fire of the Holy Spirit in Christ's Love in the laying on of hands.

In my finalizing the bulletin with the Rector, I was asked if there would be an offering collected during the service. I mentioned at the time that I had spoken with Sister Pamela Clare a few days prior and heard of a serious need for support for The Family Link ministry. I had said no to the offering collection during the service but asked if it would be appropriate to have a free will donation basket at the reception that followed the Consecration. The Rector thought this would be fitting for the Third Order Franciscan display table at the reception. It was a wonderful end to the day to know that so many people generously donated funds of \$260.00 to this Franciscan ministry in the city of San Francisco, California.

My Franciscan formation journey and discernment process have given me a variety of experiences in order to become the instrument God wants me to be in following in the way of St. Francis. My prayer is that I will continue to live an obedient and persevering life in fellowship with my brothers and sisters in the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis. God's Joy and Peace!



*Top—Tina talking with Best Friend with Sr. Maggie across aisle.*

*Middle—Tina ever ready to show forth TSSF Poster*

*Bottom—"Yes, Francis, I really did it."*



## Photos and Prose Poems

*Rick Bellows*

St. Stephen's Church, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, from mid-April through mid May, exhibited 29 photographs and written reflections by Rick Bellows, TSSF. In his introduction to the exhibit, Rick explained,

*I am a Christian after the example of St. Francis who saw God in the world—in creation, in people, and in community. I see the Son of God through whom all things were made, reflected in the beauty of the world and the beauty of ideas.*

*God is the source of the beauty and all the blessings that flow from it. Through my photographs I help others see the beauty; through my reflections I help the mind's eye see it, too. I think of myself as one who opens windows into heaven by sharing windows into the world.*



*I pray that these photographs and thoughts will help you perceive the gift of beauty in the world, sensitize you to the healing power of God conveyed by the beauty, and challenge you to find ways to share it, inspiring joy and hope!*

Saint Stephen's Church is the second church to exhibit Rick's artwork. The 29 photos and reflections included in the exhibit were selected from a growing collection of cards and notes sent to people who need healing. The collection now numbers about 75.

For this issue, "August — The Truth About Beige" and "June: God's Brain—Left and Right" are included here, and we hope to publish more in future issues.

### "August — The Truth About Beige"

A friend once lied to me when I asked her favorite color. "Blue," she said. A couple of years later she confessed she really liked beige. She had lied, afraid that I would think she were boring if she told the truth.

Color dazzles me. I love to look in my kitchen cabinet full of over twenty place settings, each a different color. My wardrobe includes lots of color, too, and color is my garden's specialty.

Yet this scene of sand, shaped by a walking woman and waves retreating around a rock, reveals the truth—beige is beautiful, and blessed be the eyes that see that beauty.



### “June: God’s Brain—Left and Right”

A memory is not the experience. A map is not the route on the ground. An architect’s plan is not the building. We rely on simplifications of all sorts to help us take in reality in a useful way.

I had fun yesterday with one such oversimplification: the notion that our right brains control our creativity, and our left brains control our orderliness, and one or the other side is dominant. I wondered if this oversimplification could give me insights about God.

In Genesis 1:1-2:4a God creates in very orderly fashion, by logical progression. It is presented as a left brain exercise. How surprising—I don’t think of left brain exercises as creative in themselves!

The Spirit hovering over the deep—there is the Right Brain initiating the creative stance. Before this there was nothing. The Spirit hovers and there is a deep. The rest is, as they say, history. The Left Brain took charge and called creation forth, tidied things up, categorized it, evaluated or judged it, in this case judging creation to be very good. Then God needed rest. This is understandable: To stay creative I need rest.

Jesus challenged the religious leaders that overemphasized the Left Brain of God—the legalistic settled, unchanging mind of God. And so he speaks of the wind that blows where it wills unexpectedly and unpredictably.

Jesus drew a distinction between forgivable sin and unforgivable sin, blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus doesn’t explain what that distinction really is, but I think this Right/Left Brain oversimplification opens up a way to make sense of it. We might categorize forgivable sin as offenses against the orderliness of God, offending God’s Left Brain. But somehow we are undone by our denigration of the Right Brain of God.

Jesus promised he would send the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. I don’t see this as a Left Brain exer-



cise—a logical progression of categorizing and formulating knowledge. I see it as a right brain exercise—of stirring things up, looking at them in fresh ways, and developing wisdom.

My love for the Left Brain of God is like intellectual appreciation. I love the Right Brain of God with passion that resonates with the creative impulse.

Jesus promised to send the comforter. Are we comforted by the unchanging orderliness of God—the Left Brain of God, or the God that loves us into being through creative forces that overwhelm even death—the Right Brain of God?

I suppose I find both comforting when I need a rest, but when I want to restart—when I want new life, I find the unpredictable creative side of God most refreshing, and therefore most comforting.

You know what is best of all? Both dimensions of God are available to comfort us however we need to be comforted—by orderliness or by creativity.

I really don’t think God is or has a right brain or a left brain, anymore than I think the map shows me the real route, or my memory captures the whole experience. Nonetheless, this has been an insightful exercise.





their employing organizations, for their families and for their world – it is a heady mix.

In mulling over the causes of the crisis and attempting to learn lessons for the future, the material does seem to highlight the following aspects:

### **The Love of Money**

One of the most striking inputs came from Paul Moore, the HBOS Whistleblower, who, in telling his story, claims that *'The love of money, with its pride and vanity, blinds good people'*. If you think about it, the working material within financial institutions is money; it is the commodity with which banking employees are consistently dealing, and money figures persistently in everyone's mind. From the perspective of an engineer who became a management consultant in various process or manufacturing situations, including a long spell in the City, there has always been some discomfort about working in a financial institution where there was no tangible end product, and where the service aspect seemed to be secondary to the money content involved. Though a personal perception, people working in banks are surely more prone to loving money disproportionately, and this love really could seem potentially 'evil' in that it might lead people to distorted judgments and catastrophic actions.

### **Ambition and Success**

Ambition and achieving success are virtues that we all hope to realize in our chosen careers, family and social relationships, personal or church lives. However, ambition and success have their darker shadow side, which is when the balance is tipped over from prudence to greed, and you can unwittingly become overwhelmed. I believe that, when further success beckons and everyone else applauds the achievements made, there comes a point when the next step could represent greed, even fraud, or aggressive bullying within an organization. That additional achievement, when everyone will fall back with admiration at your boldness, and the superiority you demonstrate, is just too tempting. A typical example is the foolhardiness of lenders who provided 125% home loans, and then, to minimize risk, sliced and diced them into composite packages and sold them on. The application of Christian values is so desperately important in this context.

### **Simplicity**

It is considered by many that the complexity of the fringe financial products offered by banks contributed to the financial crisis, in that the directors responsible just didn't appreciate the implications or current status at any one time. Stephen Green, Chairman of HSBC and an Anglican priest, has said *'The complexity and*

*opacity of certain financial instruments reached a point where even senior and experienced bankers had trouble understanding them, let alone investors. This meant that people were selling and buying assets whose risks they had not properly assessed.'* If financial institutions had stuck to simpler, less risky products and practices they would not be in the mess in which they found themselves. Simplicity is a Franciscan virtue that is undoubtedly not applied or appreciated sufficiently widely, and which should be at the heart of our Franciscan commitment.

### **The Shadow Side of Capitalism**

In a recent play by David Hare about the credit crunch, *'The Power of Yes'*, one of the participants makes the trenchant comment *'Capitalism only works well when greed is balanced by fear'*. This is a fascinating observation, as it so well describes the situation regarding the emergence of self-certification for mortgage loans; there was no evidence of ability to pay required, so sub-prime loans were created without difficulty. Greed overtook fear in a big way, and the world is still suffering the consequences.

### **Salt and Light**

A major implication for us as Christians, and Franciscans, is that we are called to be 'salt and light' in whatever situation we may find ourselves, particularly in relation to organizational behavior, where we could have the opportunity of influencing significant decisions. This is consistent with our TSSF aim *'to spread a spirit of love and harmony'*, and to counter prejudice and seek justice (Principles Days 7, 8 & 9). This aspect is so relevant at a time of crisis, when there tends to be a general atmosphere of fear and panic.

### **Humility**

Humility seems to be feature that has been absent in the financial sector following the crisis, and there are few visible signs of repentance or intentions of changing the mode of operation. Bankers appear to be rushing headlong to reestablish operations exactly the same as before, with high levels of pay and bonuses, and extravagant lifestyles. One would have hoped for a suitable gesture, such as a reduction in total pay levels, to demonstrate a willingness to undergo some 'sacrifice' in the wake of the traumas that their clients and customers have been facing.

### **The Value and Privilege of Work and Money**

In John Frank's powerful paper on *'Money, the market and people in need'* he highlights the incredible privilege of having a job and earning sufficient money to be comfortable or well-off. He demonstrates starkly



that each time we spend money we are making a moral choice, eg tiling his hall at a cost of £700 could imply that 14 less children in a poor African country would be educated for one year, at £50 per child – similarly with a new car, TV or kitchen. This financial crisis has heightened an awareness of the value of money, and it behoves us, as Franciscans, to be diligently considerate in the disbursement of our earnings.

So there is much to consider further, and the topic of 'Franciscans and Money' will continue to be debated at Local Group and Area levels for many years to come. We believe, that through the gift of the life and witness of Francis and Clare, we are blessed by being able to view money in a realistic perspective.

*The full version of this booklet may be accessed through the TSSF website [www.tssf.org.uk](http://www.tssf.org.uk).*

## From the Bursar

*"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High."*

*Tom Johnson, Provincial Bursar*

Those of us in the Anglican tradition hear these words so often that they may become obscured by familiarity. However, I would point out that for us in the Third Order, they are doubly important—not only as a reminder of our Baptismal vows, but also of our profession vows.

One of our tertiaries recently wrote: "I am totally without understanding how anyone can be a member of the Order and not support it financially, even if it's just \$20 to cover all the postage and printing we receive. Sure it's a slow time economically but let's talk "sacrificial," and let's remember vows. Surely everyone could have soup at home and skip a fast food or even a nice dinner out once in a while. A movie and popcorn for two runs \$20. IHOP senior dinners for two, again \$20, for example, and no one gets away from McDonalds for less than \$5. Plus, we all waste money one way or another.

We are called to tithe our wealth, whatever that means to each of us. To me it means setting a percent and dividing that among my church, the Order, and other needs in the community. I challenge each member to look into his/her heart and ask why he/she is not supporting one of the most important things in his/her life—TSSF."

There is a glimmer of good news. In response to the reminders in the winter issue of the Franciscan Times, we received some 35 or 40 new pledges/contributions for the current year. But, **over 50% of our number has still not pledged or contributed this year!**



For the first eight months of our fiscal year, income is running almost 16% **below** the level of last year. In fact our income is currently at the lowest level since the 2006-2007 fiscal year. As a purely volunteer organization, there are no employees to layoff. But, we will have to scrutinize our expenses very

carefully over the next few months to avoid ending up the year in the red. If you have not yet contributed to the Third Order this year, please do so now.

*"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High."*

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## **Compton Durville CSF Convent Closing**

*(from the European Province online newsletter)*

After nearly 50 years the sisters of CSF are to leave their house at Compton Durville. Sr Helen Julian, Minister Provincial, said, "For almost two years now we've been reflecting on our future as a community, and seeking to discern the way forward. In the course of this process, which has involved all the sisters, it's become clear that the house at Compton Durville has become too large and physically demanding for us to manage. We explored a number of options, including that of continuing in only part of the plant, but the Number 1 Trust, which owns the buildings, did not feel able to let us do that.

We also explored options with a number of dioceses, and visited several properties. One of them seemed to fit our requirements almost perfectly, and we are now negotiating its purchase. It's in a diocese which has at present no religious communities, and a part of the country where CSF has never lived, so along with our sadness at leaving Compton Durville and the Diocese of Bath and Wells is excitement at the prospect of bringing the Franciscan religious life to a new part of the country. We know that many Tertiaries will be very sorry to hear this news, but we hope that they will understand our decision, and continue to support us and make use of us in our other houses."

CSF's existing houses in Birmingham, Leicester and London will continue their present ministries. Nearly every house will see a change in those living in it, as the sisters presently at Compton Durville are dispersed around the Province and a new group begins life in the new house.

**RIP: Kermit Marshall Bailey**

(from Greensboro NC News Record)

Deacon Kermit Marshall Bailey, 74, passed away Friday, May 28, 2010. He had been professed for 16 years.

Mr. Bailey was born April 13, 1936 in Davie County, and was a graduate of Guilford College. He retired from IBM Corp. and was the founder, and executive director of the Triad Disability Advocates Inc. He will be remembered for his tireless advocacy for the less fortunate.

*At Church of the Ascension  
(Advance, North Carolina)  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*

**Funeral Sermon  
Preached at St. Andrew's,  
Greensboro  
(North Carolina) for  
Kermit Bailey**

Rev. Charles Hawes

*"In my Father's house  
there are many dwelling  
places. If it were not so,  
would I have told you that*

*I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare  
a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to  
myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."*

"So," Kermit said to me in the last talk we had, "this duck walks into a bar, waddles up to the bar and says, "Hey, can one of you guys spare me a condom?"

The story went on from there, of course, but not, for your ears now and not from this pulpit. Ask me later if you want (and I have the feeling I just might get a few takers on the offer). Anyway, Kermit finished his tale and it was salacious and maybe a little politically incorrect and to my way of thinking absolutely fall-on-the-ground-roll-around-and-kick-your-heels hilarious.

"Kermit was no saint," one of our mutual friends cautioned later about my making this sermon. "Just remember that Kermit was no saint." And by that I guess he meant Kermit wasn't above telling a dirty joke now and then and maybe enjoying good food a little too much and being famously impulsive and notoriously opinionated and every now and then stepping clumsily all over some people's personal and social feet. But I've got a problem here. Because I believe Kermit was a saint, is a saint. And that's the only way I know how to go on and say about him the things I want to say.

You remember all those rooms John's Jesus talks about

in the Gospel Kermit's old friend, Deacon Paul Valdez, just read to us, all those rooms, all those abiding places in the Father's House, the Father's abode, the Father's own place of abiding? All those good places Jesus has gone to now to get them ready for the rest of us? Well, Kermit believed there are a lot of rooms in that place. I mean a whole lot, a humongous number, an infinite amount. So it follows he lived and breathed that there's room enough for everyone, and I mean everyone, no one left out, in the same place.

I know we proudly march under the banner of THE EPISCOPAL, CHURCH WELCOMES YOU, but let's

face it; it's our ideal, not strictly the facts. It makes us feel better to believe this about ourselves so we hang it on our walls and advertise it and study up on the latest books about "radical hospitality" and some of us even give it a good old college try. But when push comes to shove the truth is it's very hard to accommodate ourselves and our ways, beautiful and tasteful as we try to make both, to ill-schooled souls who wear rags and haven't had a bath for days and have rotten teeth and smell bad, who are out of work

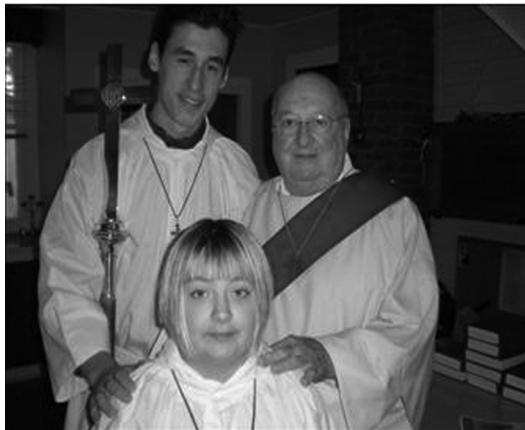
and on the dole and beg with cardboard signs at major intersections, who with no insurance are old and sick before their time, who snort blow up their nose, shoot crank in their arm, and swill Wild Irish Rose down their gullet, who sell their bodies on street corners and their souls to whoever will cough up the scratch for a quick fix or a mostly dry place to lay their head on a cold, rainy night.

To folks—right?—who are not, generally speaking, our kind of folks. Well, see, the thing is Kermit welcomed them. He really welcomed them.

He was such an embarrassing fundamentalist when it came to loving his neighbor, wasn't he?

I mean, for Christ's sake he welcomed them, threw his arms around them and kissed them, knew a staggering number by name and was known to them by his name. When he first came to work at St. Mary's House, he walked in the door, looked around, looked at all the scruffy street people cluttering up the porch and grounds and started glad-handing. I'd never seen him on Tate Street before but all the Tate Street "irregulars" (as we called them then), the fortified wine and crack crew, knew him and were glad to see him there.

And my God, he was such an embarrassingly fundamentalist deacon, wasn't he?



I mean, deacons are supposed to read the Bible and try to live by what they read, make Christ and his redeeming love known by word and personal example to everyone. They're supposed to help the Church see and acknowledge the "needs, concerns, and hopes of the world." They're supposed to help bishops and priests in public worship (which maybe too often becomes the tail that wags the deacons' dog). At all times, they're supposed to show Christ's people "that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself."

"As your Son came not to be served but to serve, may this deacon share in Christ's service," the bishop who ordained Kermit prayed over his head.

Zot! Shazam! Never has there been a prayer said that was so well answered. It's enough to make a person think prayer works, isn't it? Ask all the local halt and lame he helped through his invention and operation of Triad Disability Advocates, his tireless work done in the love of Jesus for the little people Jesus loves best.

Let's face it, finally Kermit was an embarrassingly fundamentalist Franciscan.

He loved being a Franciscan, seemed born to be a Franciscan, "To make our Lord known and loved everywhere," the first of the Third Order's Aims. "To spread the spirit of fellowship (by working happily with people of different race, color, creed, education and opportunity, break(ing) down the divisions in the world, (trying) to live in the spirit of St. Francis' prayer: 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.'" And finally "To live simply (by acknowledging everything belongs to God and so by being good stewards of the earth and striving never to forget the needs of others)."

Kermit embodied the Franciscan spirit. He even looked the part. He was the spitting image I hold in my mind's eye of my favorite childhood friar, Friar Tuck. Like Tuck he sometimes swung the flat side of a broadsword in the ongoing battle for a more perfect justice and a greater decency among people. He could and did sting people now and then, and once in a while even into a larger awareness of who in Christ they—we—are supposed to be.

Simply put. Kermit was a lover, a great, big roly-poly lover. Of his blood family first, his adored wife, Joyce, and his children, Emma and Robert, the partners they married, and his grandchildren, Emily, Leslie, and Sarah. He loved them and bragged on them and fussed over them endlessly in my knowing him over the years. And he loved the people of his hometown, Fork. Any visitors here from Fork today? Understand I've never set foot in Fork, but through Kermit I feel like I know half your town.

And he loved his Church that, very frankly sometimes wasn't very loving of him.

John's Jesus said:

*"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."*

And Kermit, who spent most of his life trying to get people to believe that one of those abiding places is reserved for each one of us, has gone with Jesus now to claim his own.

And maybe there to share with Jesus a story about a duck going into a bar and waddling up to the bar and saying, "Hey, can one of you guys spare me a condom?"

There's a miraculous little book titled *Salvation Scenes from the life of St Francis*, written by Valerie Martin, that tells a story I can and will share now from this pulpit. In one chapter, the author describes Francis's last journey home. Known everywhere as a holy man, the cities of Assisi and Siena vied for the honor of having Francis die behind their walls because then that ground would become holy ground. Assisi, it turned out to be.

Francis on a litter is carried in a great procession into the city, accompanied by his brothers, of course, and also by an honor guard of soldiers and archers, "their shields glittering like jewels in the morning sun, the banners streaming out over the foot soldiers, the horses black and proud, tossing their heads and stamping their hooves, the knight's saddles white and their mantles colorful and embroidered."

It is a triumphant procession.

"As they enter the city gates, the people are shoving and shouting, "Il Santo, Il Santo. "

"They will be welcomed at the stone portals of the bishop's palace, the guards will take their posts, the brothers will not be eating bread and turnips tonight but delicacies from the bishop's table: salted fish, pheasants stuffed with raisins, hares in fennel sauce, quinces, almonds, and fine wine. The beggars will the lords and the Lord of the beggars will be the Lord of all. All will be it should be, which is what (his friend and brother) reads in Francis's smile." (Op. cit., pp.18-24)

And I think what I read in your smile, Kermie, my Santo, my Santo, I love you as I love our Lord.

Pray for us.



## Convocations

**Western Convocation-Aug. 6–8;** Dumas Bay Retreat Center in Federal Way, Washington (very close to Sea-Tac airport). We will be getting information out about themes and more details within the next week or so. One little hint, The First Nations Committee of the Diocese of Olympia will be guiding some of our worship. Contact Dianne Aid [sanmateo921@yahoo.com](mailto:sanmateo921@yahoo.com)

**Northeast Convocation-Aug. 20–22;** Xavier Center, Convent Station, New Jersey; Cost: \$195 per person; Topic: Contemplation and Resistance: Being Franciscan in Today's World; Contact: Ed Schneider, registrar. For more information about the Northeast Regional Convocation of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis, check out: <http://nerc29tssf.weebly.com>.

**Southern California Convocation:** Aug. 27–29. Echo Park Retreat Center at the Diocese of Los Angeles. Cost: \$180.00 (single occupancy), \$165.00 (double occupancy). A First Order brother will lead the program. Contact and Questions: Wai-Wah Hillam, Email: [waiwah\\_3@roadrunner.com](mailto:waiwah_3@roadrunner.com)

## Why Don't You Contribute?

*John Brockmann*

For years at Chapter we have racked our brains as to why professed members of the Third Order, Province of the Americas do not give any kind of financial contribution. Tom Johnson our Bursar observes that we have almost achieved a historical high of 50% over the last quarter. Yet that's still 50% that don't financially contribute.

If this were the Australian or European Province, a failure to contribute would mean that you were dropped from the rolls. We have not done that.

So you tell us why you have not contributed—send your answers by post or e-mail and I promise I will not print any names. But you need to tell us to help us make sense of your profession in an Order that has three marks: annual report, annual renewal, and financial contribution.

Let me provide you with some possible answers:

1. I don't have very much money. Yet, the Order has no minimum contribution. Your widow's mite is as powerful as a large contribution if it is "all you can afford." We had a professed member who would pick up bottles and cans along the road, turn them in for the deposit pennies and then send those pennies as her contribution. Can you send less than that?
2. I already give plenty to my parish and to the United Way. That's commendable, but you

are also a professed member of a religious Order that requires your support. Again, it's the thought that counts, and like your parish and your area's United Way we need your help to do the ministry we have been called to do.

3. I forget. I have even known the Provincial Minister to forget for a time so perhaps we need some kind of monthly dunning notice? We could somewhat easily arrange this via e-mail since it would not cost very much, but postage might indeed gobble up the amount then contributed. However, where there is a will, there is a way so let us know if a dunning notice would help you remember to contribute.

Please let us know why else you do not contribute, and I will let Chapter know what we don't know now.

## Continuing Formation for the Professed Study Group

*John Brockmann*

In the last issue of the *Franciscan Times*, Pamela Redhead, a Chapter member from Trinidad, wrote an open call for volunteers to come up with options or even a specialized ministry in this area.

So far there are just a few of us, but here are some thoughts we have come up with so far—if you have any or comments on the ones listed below, please send them by post or e-mail to either Pamela or myself.

- Repeated pilgrimages beyond a retreat and not just a religious tourist jaunt. Every so often (every seven years a sabbatical) one should go somewhere and do something that is as completely disconcerting and confounding of their knowledge and familiar surroundings so that one opens up to God in new ways and from new voices. It can be planned or it can be a re-defined experience (e.g., I have been unemployed for a year, but I could redefine it as a God-given opportunity for pilgrimage).
- Sit at the feet of the abbas (like Kermit Bailey) and or ammas (like Margaret Butters) of the Third Order—those who have been professed for more than 20 years to learn of the wisdom of their experience—hopefully such words or stories of wisdom can be collected and printed at some time in the future—but we all need to acknowledge our elders in this tradition and take the time and opportunity to learn from them.
- Write your spiritual autobiography since your profession—or in the future since you last wrote up your spiritual autobiography—the unexamined life is not worth living nor is it a good spiritual practice.

**Minister's Musings***Ken Norian*

Ecumenism... it's a word we hear about a lot, talk about a lot, but too seldom experience.

Among the things that Franciscans are known for is a spirit of openness to others. In a spiritual context this translates to ecumenism. I have had the opportunity recently to experience this among brothers and sisters in Christ and Francis.

Members of the communities of the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscan Order (SFO), The Third Order Society of Saint Francis (TSSF) and the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF) came together in Chicago to share in the second Joint Franciscan Conference sponsored by the Joint Committee for Franciscan Unity. Amidst the varied theological perspectives, religious experiences, and diverse backgrounds, we enjoyed a rich time of sharing and fellowship; focusing not on what divides us, but on the Franciscan charism that binds us together. One of the things that drew me to Franciscan spirituality was the ability to focus on the message of the Gospel as Francis did, and not get overly involved with words, positions, theology, and all those things that we as human beings so often gravitate to. This feeling was reinforced decades later by the shared vision and journeys that we in our different communities experience.

A few weeks later I attended a seminar facilitated by Franciscan International, and partially sponsored by TSSF. Amidst a predominantly Roman Catholic group, they and I discovered the same sense of fellowship.

Recently, I attended the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans' annual Chapter/Convocation. This is an unimaginably diverse group of Christians and Franciscans, yet again, there was that same sense of togetherness and shared vision among people from dozens of church affiliations.

These three recent experiences have made me reflect on a particular aspect of what it means to be a Franciscan. Francis was inclusive. He held strong beliefs about things, but was open to listening to others, and sharing in a way that was not confrontational. Like Jesus, he neither ran from disagreement nor approached it in a way that would cause others to be defensive. He acted in a spirit of love and Christian charity.

We live in a culture that is increasingly polarized—politically, economically and spiritually. A gift we have to offer to the church and the world is a spirit of reconciliation. We speak in our Principles of "seeking reconciliation with those with whom we have little natural affinity", being "on guard against anything that might injure this love".

I pray that we all might be examples of the kind of love that Jesus was and that Francis reflected.... that, as Gandhi said, "you must be the change you want to see in the world."

Send in your contributions for the Fall issue by October 4

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