



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 2012

Peacemaking in Palestine

Chris Cowan

As a peacemaker immersed in the anguish of Palestine, I want to show you pictures and tell you stories that may take hold of your soul, enough to want to learn more, enough to want to help make a difference.

On the Franciscans International website, the vision of Francis is summarized in the vision of the organization:

A global community built on Franciscan values, in which the dignity of every person is respected; resources are shared equitably; the environment is sustained; and nations and peoples live in peace.

Our own website encourages us to become peacemakers, and being a peacemaker involves prayer, study and work, just as our rule encourages us in these three modes of being.

Peacemaking doesn't begin by understanding politics. It begins by being with people.

That's how God began, with a model of accompaniment, by sending God-with-us, Emmanuel, Jesus, to live with us, to laugh and cry with us, to rejoice and to suffer with us. Francis, when he left his earthly father's wealth behind in order to embrace Lady Poverty, became an heir to his Father's wealth, and God measures God's wealth in people. Francis knew that Jesus had become poor and had demonstrated in his life the fact that God stands with and cares for the poor and oppressed. Not only did Francis become poor, but he also extended his love and care to those outside the Christian camp. Adrian House, in his book, *Francis of Assisi, a Revolutionary Life*, describes Francis and his brothers working with the wounded and the sick in the 5th Crusade in Damietta (pp. 208-215 of House's book cite records by Jacques de Vitry, a historian, who was also there). Significantly, by entering into interreligious dialog with the Sultan, Francis extended himself in friendship in a time of conflict.

So Francis would have really loved being where I was, because then as now, God's work is all about the

people God loves and cherishes, being with them in a ministry of presence, and that means everyone. And Francis would have wept with the people, because he would have seen how conflict is taking away their dignity and in some cases maiming their souls, causing dramatic inequality in how resources of land and water are shared, damaging the environment, and creating scenarios where populations live in continual fear.

For three months in the Fall of 2011, I lived in Yatta, a city of 100,000 Moslems a half hour's drive south of Hebron. There I was serving as an EA, an Ecumenical Accompanier for the World Council of Churches. I lived and worked with three other EAs: Jan from Canada, Bosse from Sweden, and Matti from Finland. Together, every day we visited Palestinian and Bedouin villages where poverty was the norm, and where people struggled every day just to live.

So now that I'm home, I want to tell you stories from the South Hebron Hills, in the West Bank. I want to tell you about the people.

Wadi J'Hesh

Wadi J'Hesh is a very little village, just two extended families living in large tents, raising a few sheep on their land. Their village had been attacked in the past, at night and on weekends, by masked Israeli ideological settlers living at the nearby settlement, and the Israeli military doesn't help protect the villagers. In fact, they harass them in many ways. So EAs often sleep overnight in the family tent, providing a visible, international protective presence, in hopes of preventing vandalism and physical attacks from occurring.

The village has a cistern, right next to the entrance to the tent. Palestinians are not allowed to dig wells and access the underground aquifer; the government of Israel has taken control of it. Instead, the villagers dig cisterns to store water that they buy and bring to the village by tank truck, or by water tanks pulled by tractors.



In this desert place, where rainfall can be expected only for about three months a year, water is expensive, but water is life. Bringing water to the village is often difficult because the Israeli military has closed the only road into the village by bulldozing it. In Wadi J'Hesh, settlers intimidate the villagers by driving up to the cistern and opening it. (This is not idle intimidation. In the nearby Palestinian village of Susiya, a cistern was recently made unusable by putting car parts into it in the night. Locking the cistern does not help, because it only takes a determined vandal to break into the lock.)

Chris in Wadi J'Hesh

Thus far Wadi J'Hesh's cistern is safe. Just before sunset, we EAs walk into the hills behind the tents to be visible to the families and to look around. As the sheep came home from the hills, I would watch 12-year-old Zahrah draw water from the cistern. She did this in much the same way that people in the time of Jesus drew water; drawing up the water with a rope and bucket, and pouring the water into the trough. It was the end of the long summer season, when there usually is no rain, moreover, there was little for the sheep to eat in the hills since their grazing land had been drastically reduced by the establishment of an illegal settlement. Yet they shepherded their sheep, gave the sheep water and fodder when they came back home.

Zahrah would also draw water for cooking, and for handwashing. As the sun set, we joined her, her mother Alia and the rest of the family for a time of relaxation. We had few words in common, but we found that we shared other things. We played with the toddler, Marah, blowing up balloons for her and laughingly playing catch with them. The children were easily entertained since they had no toys. We drew pictures together by flashlight because the village had only a little electricity from the wind generator and solar panel; just

enough to power an incubator for hatching chicks and a single light bulb. The family managed to charge cell phones and to watch a little TV news and sports for an hour or so. Zahrah enjoyed painting my fingernails bright red with shocking pink polka dots; we laughed together at the dramatic results. Sometimes we would look over her English lesson.

After offering us the traditional village welcome of fire tea with mint, Alia would make us food in an adjoining tent: eggs from her hens, diced potatoes, olives, sliced tomatoes, and bread freshly baked in the oven fueled by sheep dung. The breadmaking was a mystery to me, and I longed to participate, so before sleep I asked Alia to wake me so I could help with the baking. Farm families sleep easily once the dark comes since they rise early. Alia

spread out the sleeping mats for us, and we lay our sleeping bags on top. Because the night would be cold, Alia covered each of us with thick wool blankets tucking us in for the night with the love of God.

One sleeps lightly when one is providing protective presence, especially when one is expecting someone to wake them. It seemed to me that every couple of hours or so, I would hear the Moslem chant that calls people to prayer. In *The Little Flowers*, on of Francis's companions, Brother Giles, wrote, "Prayer is the beginning, the middle and the end of all good; prayer illuminates the Soul." Like many Christians, Moslems pray at fixed hours, and Alia and her family are devout. With no mosque nearby, the family had programmed the call to prayer on their phone ringtone, and used it as an alarm to wake them up so they could pray the night prayers. When I opened my eyes in the dark, at 4 AM, I saw Alia and others in the family rise, bow and prostrate to God.

When I heard the call to prayer watching from the warmth of my sleeping bag, I too prayed. I thought of Francis. Usually we think of being Franciscan as giving up things. But I noticed that Alia had set her phone to go off, not only to pray, but also as a reminder to check on the new lambs and the chicks in the incubator, to start the oven, and to begin making the bread dough. It seemed to me that she was up half the night, each time awakened by the call to prayer, so that all of life also became a prayer. The division between the sacred and the secular faded away. I realized that all this was holy: the drawing of the water, the eating together, the playing together, the sleeping in the tent with the people, the baking, and the breaking of the bread.

Susiya

Susiya, just a hilltop away, is another Palestinian village with a history of vandalism and violence against its people, and thus EAs and other internationals also sleep there overnight. Mohammed, a village elder, remembers how his village used to be located in the natural caves just across the road. There, in a cave dwelling, he and his wife began their family as was the custom; his wife gave birth to his first son, Jihad, there, and, thereafter, he became known as Abu Jihad, Father of Struggle. It wasn't an inappropriate name for a man whose life is itself a struggle. Not long afterwards, the Israeli army drove all of the people in the village away because the government of Israel wanted to lay claim to some Roman-era ruins in the area. The entire village population was relocated by force several times, and now some of the people have built a life in a tent village across the road from their original village.

In the meantime, Israel created a theme park where the cave village used to be, complete with a Welcome Center, admission tickets, and a movie portraying Jewish life in the caves in Roman times. When Abu Jihad and his son Nasser bought tickets and went into the area, they were driven away by the Army even though they had purchased tickets like anyone else. Palestinians are not allowed to enter. Abu Jihad's son Abed says: "My mother bore me in a cave near here, but I have never seen it." At night Abed took us to a hilltop where we could see the site. He pointed it out. "You think I don't want to go and see where I was born? It is my history. But I cannot. The Army took it." (Because of the pressure of illegal Israeli settlement expansion, the village of Susiya is now facing a mass demolition order, and its people are threatened with displacement yet again.)



Part of Susiya under Demolition Order

A'Seefer

As we walked the children home to A'Seefer from school in Imnezil, we always heard, "Go to home???" In their little bit of English, they were asking us to come and see how their family was living. They wanted visitors...badly.

These children live in the Seam Zone, a small area

between the Green Line, internationally recognized as the border between Israel and the West Bank, and the actual border fence and checkpoint. Israeli decision-makers decided to move the separation barrier here in order to include an illegal West Bank settlement, Mezadot Yehuda, on the Israeli side of the barrier. But Palestinian families living on land inside the seam are caught in a social quagmire. In order to stay in their homes, and to go back and forth into the West Bank, these people have very special permits. No Palestinian without such a permit can enter the Seam Zone, so these families are not able to receive visitors, not even from their extended family members who live elsewhere in the West Bank, not even from United Nations officers if they are Palestinian. As internationals, we were among the very few who actually were permitted to "go to home" and visit the children.

So sometimes, not often enough to be sure, we found time to spend some hours in the village. There, in the shadow of the illegal settlement's synagogue, were little tin-roof shanties where the children lived. On one occasion we had a chance to speak with their father, who spoke some English. We found him repairing the roof, as the rainy season had begun, and water was coming into the houses. He was very angry and frustrated. He explained that the family suffered greatly from restrictions on what he was allowed to bring into the Seam Zone. There were strict limitations on water, fodder, food, and construction materials. All these restrictions, ostensibly for Israel's security, served the purpose of making life in the Seam Zone nearly unbearable. Children were poorly dressed for the weather. Shelter was minimal. The children's father described a time during the previous year when he had been

awakened at night by some of the settlers coming from the nearby settlement to steal his sheep. When he responded by trying to get

them back, he was arrested and served time in prison. During the time of his prison term, the family's car was vandalized by the illegal settlers living behind the houses. No one was ever held accountable for the sheep stealing or the vandalism. More recently, he said, settlers had fenced off his plot of land, so that he could not access it to plow it.

We believed him. Every day that we walked the children home from school, we and they would walk

through a military checkpoint beside an Army base and the illegal settlement. The children had to walk through a metal detector, and their bags were x-rayed. Their identity papers were carefully screened. Finally, their backpacks were thoroughly searched. No item went unexplored. These Palestinian children, some as young as 6, had to undergo screening every day on the way to school and on the way back, not to enter Israel, but in order to attend school in Palestine, in the West Bank, and then to go home to Palestine, in the West Bank.

"Go to home?"

Will you come and see who we really are, underneath the school uniforms; how we really live?

Jaba'

The Bedouin woman in the village of Jaba' pulled at my sleeve. She kept touching me, desperately needing to connect with the compassion of another human being in the rubble of her home, demolished just an hour earlier. As we stood, she told her story through an interpreter. But surprisingly, it wasn't a story about the demolition. That story we had heard from her nephew, as he told how the bulldozers had come and taken down two dwellings and five animal sheds. We could see the impact; how the goats milled around in confusion, and how the children stood distressed and traumatized. We had been shown other homes next door that also had demolition orders against them.

But as distressing as the loss of her home must have been, the woman's story was about another time, six months ago, when the soldiers had broken into their home in the night. It was about how they ransacked the home saying they were looking for something. How they touched the young Moslem girls, provoking the

boys to defend them, and then arrested the boys and took them to prison. The woman hadn't heard from her sons since then. Could I find out something about them? She was too distraught to find the business card of her lawyer. I felt helpless. There was nothing I could do for her except to listen, to write a report, and to hope that others with more connections than I could take it from there.

Um Fagara

On Thanksgiving Day, while I was worshipping in a lovely chapel in Jerusalem and eating a turkey dinner, Sausan was in her cave home in her village of Um Fagara when she heard the bulldozers come. The village is in Area C, land the Israeli government calls a military zone. According to international law, the land belongs to Palestine. There had been no warning, and the village was unprepared as the soldiers destroyed the mosque and several homes. When she ran into her own home to remove belongings, she was grabbed by a soldier and, when she resisted, he sprayed something in her eyes that made her lose consciousness. Sausan's mother, trying to protect her daughter, was roughly pushed to the ground, and her leg was broken in the fall. When Sausan awoke and cried out for water for her eyes, her 17 year old cousin Amal responded, but she was also restrained. In the process, Amal spilled some water from her bottle onto a soldier. Both girls were arrested and held without legal representation for a week in a military prison. Both of them were charged with assaulting a soldier.

The village is rebuilding the mosque, but it already has a new demolition order.



Dkaika

Dkaika is about as remote a place as any in the West Bank. Wild camels come here each day to receive fodder and water that is brought in for them, and sometimes stay to carry a burden or do other work before meandering back out into the desert. This year the children in Dkaika, a Bedouin village in Area C, each got to plant a tree in the shade of their new school. A few months ago, the school was partially demolished by the Israeli army, causing traumatic stress for the children and their parents alike. But after UNICEF and Islamic Relief rebuilt the school, each child was given a tree seedling. To understand the significance of this fully, perhaps you have to see Dkaika, which is so arid a place that it has no trees. So for the trees to thrive, they need both shade and water,

Um Fagara

two of the rarest commodities. But caring for the trees gives the children a hopeful activity to participate in. In other words, this teaches hope as a spiritual practice. This in itself is pretty amazing, and speaks well of the resilience of the Bedouin people living there. It's hard to imagine being people of hope when your entire village is under a demolition threat.

"I hope that the children are able to say in 10 years, I helped plant and care for these big trees," I told the principal. "Inshallah", he replied. "If it is God's will." But he also said about the demolition orders threatening every structure in the village including the new school, "We aren't going anywhere. We live here and we will die here, this is our home." He thanked us profoundly for our concern for the village and its children, because he knew we care, and we promised to tell their story.

Somewhere in the West Bank

We sat in the tent and drank tea with the young man from yet another place in the southern West Bank. "How were things in the village?" we asked through our interpreter. No problem, he replied. "Have you had any problems with violence from settlers or from the Army?" No problem. We sipped the tea. A first cup. A second cup. And then during the third cup, when it became obvious we really did care how the village was doing, and how he was doing, he told us his story. He told us how he was arrested by soldiers who arrived by helicopter, and how he was beaten, and taken to an Army base for interrogation and more beating because soldiers suspected he had information that he didn't have. He told us how later they came back and arrested him again and beat him; and how he hid the



Bomb shelter decorated like a caterpillar in Sderot

third time they came. "What happened to you was wrong," we said, "and we have to tell the world these things are happening." This, he understood. But he didn't want us to use his name or take any pictures. He was afraid. What he wanted to know was, if the soldiers came and arrested his children, would we come? My heart wept then.

Sderot

During the middle of our service, we were supposed to go to Sderot, the Israeli city a couple miles from the border of Gaza, but we were not allowed to make the trip for safety reasons. Because Israelis had assassinated some militants in Gaza, there had been an escalation in the Qassam rocket firing from Gaza, and it was felt we were not safe. So we went a few weeks later, when things calmed down. "Not in my name." That's what Nomika said to our group when we went to visit her home. This Israeli woman, a long-time resident of Sderot and a community leader, described to us what it was like to live there, just a couple miles from the border with Gaza. She remembered how, in years past, people in Sderot had close relations with people in Gaza; 80% of the market goods were from Gaza. "We were not equal," she remembers, "but at least there was contact." She talked about how things have changed since 2001: 20% of the population left because they could not take the stress of the bombing; 1000 small businesses closed; and the entire village chose to get group therapy because of the constant stress of the threat of rockets falling from the sky.

On a tour, she showed us how each home had a bomb shelter, how each bus stop was a bomb shelter, how a school playground had constructed a huge concrete bomb shelter decorated like a caterpillar, and how bomb shelters had been constructed every 200 yards or so in every neighborhood, so that people could go running outdoors and have a safe place to hurry into if the sirens went off. But she also talked about becoming friends with people from Gaza, getting to know them by telephone, coming to understand their suffering, learning of their deprivations. She spoke of how people from Sderot formed a group called Other Voice, a group that sought to maintain relationships between Israelis in Sderot and Palestinians they knew in Gaza, to act as people of peace.

She talked about how people from Israel would come to Sderot to sit on the hill by the border fence and watch the shelling as though it was some kind of a carnival. She said she had written an article about Operation Cast Lead, saying, "Not in my name and not for my security." She implored us as international observers to try to get Israel and Hamas to find some other

way besides war. "I feel my society has developed an addiction to war," she said. "It's not everybody. There are still Israelis...who sacrifice much for the peace process. But we lost the ability to see the Palestinians as human beings; the Palestinians are invisible. They have no faces. They have no voices. They have no names. They don't have identities." She paused, became thoughtful, then continued. "I correct myself. They all have one identity. They are 'terrorists'—an anonymous, dark demon that's so easy to hate. Mothers, fathers, children; they are all terrorists. When you stop seeing others as human beings, eventually you stop being human yourself. I'm almost more scared of this than the rockets."

Then she began to describe her own personal relationships with the men and women in Gaza she had managed to get to know well, to respect and to love, people who like her wanted to relate as person to person, despite the hostilities, showing us that there were alternatives to fear and hate.

These are a few, just a very few, of the stories of the lives of the Palestinian and Israeli people I met in my three months as an EA. Both Israelis and Palestinians suffer from the injustice of the Occupation. Both Israelis and Palestinians long to be known, respected and loved. This is especially true of the Palestinian and Bedouin Moslems who have been stereotyped as terrorists and villains although it is most often they who are being terrorized.

Francis would have loved the model of accompaniment, because through accompaniment we learn more than we teach, we receive more than we share. Knowing himself to be a beggar, his humble soul would have rejoiced in this. Through the process of being with those we came to serve, wasting time with them, enjoying them and letting them get to know us a little, we learned who they are and who we are as well. We learned how much we listen to stereotyping. We learn how deeply we depend upon our comforts. We learned it is possible to be content to enjoy life together without having to be productive every single moment. We learned what it is to be loved, respected and cared for as a stranger in a strange land.

We learned hospitality and generosity from the experts in Palestine, in little villages like Wadi J'Hesh. We learned to share our water with the children of A'Seefer, and how to play. We learned how just to listen, and just to be with those who grieve in villages where demolitions took place. We also learned what hope looks like from those who rebuilt schools and mosques and planted trees without any guarantees of ever sitting in their shade. As Pastor Mitri Raheb, from

Bethlehem, says, "Hope has nothing at all to do with what we see; hope is what we do".

We learned to take a stand against injustice, and how to work to alleviate it. We learned the importance of telling the story. All these things are what make for peacemaking. If hope is what we do, what can *we* do to make a difference in this situation? I pray to know each day what are the things I can do that make for peace. *Lord, make us instruments of your peace.*

Here are things you can consider doing as a peacemaker.

1. Become informed about the issues of injustice in the land of Jesus. To begin with, you can go to the EAPPI website, www.eappi.org, to read eyewitness reports of what is really going on in the West Bank. Read the document by the leaders of Palestinian Christian Churches describing the effects of the Occupation at www.kairopalestine.ps and see how it calls Christians to respond. Read my blog at <http://www.christiarts.wordpress.com>. Invite a speaker to help you gain more information. Former EAs can be reached through <http://www.eappi-us.org>.
2. Pray daily for true peace based on justice in the Holy Land.
3. Read the news critically. There are strong undercurrents of anti-Arab, anti-Moslem, and anti-Palestinian sentiment in our society. Some claim that the Palestinians are an invented people or that there is no Occupation. Neither claim is true.
4. Think critically about theology. Many Christian churches embrace Christian Zionism, an ideology that tells us it is God's will that we support everything done by the nation of Israel. This is not true; we are all expected to live according to the great commandments to love God and one's neighbor. The Palestinian Bishops Munib Younan (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land) and Suheil Dawani (Anglican) have condemned Christian Zionism as a perversion of the Gospel. Archbishop Rowan Williams has stated that Christian Zionism is not part of the Christian historic tradition.
5. Ask your Senators and Congressmen to hold Israel accountable for human rights abuses and violations of international law.
6. Consider giving financial support to church ministries seeking to improve the quality of life in the West Bank, such as Bright Stars of Bethlehem which supports various ministries in Bethlehem, or organizations that provide tangible help to allevi-

ate suffering in the West Bank, such as UNICEF, OXFAM, Church World Service, Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, United Nations Relief and Works Agency, and Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel.

Bishop Berkley, TSSF, Enthroned as New Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, Tuesday, January 17 2012, There was joy and jubilation in the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity in downtown Port- of-Spain when A Service For The Enthronement of The Right Reverend Claude Berkley, TSSF, as Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago, took place.

The Enthronement is a ceremony of inauguration and of the celebration of a new ministry, built around the entrance into the Cathedral of the new Bishop of the Diocese and the Bishop being seated in the chair or throne appointed to that office, in this instance, of the See of Trinidad and Tobago.

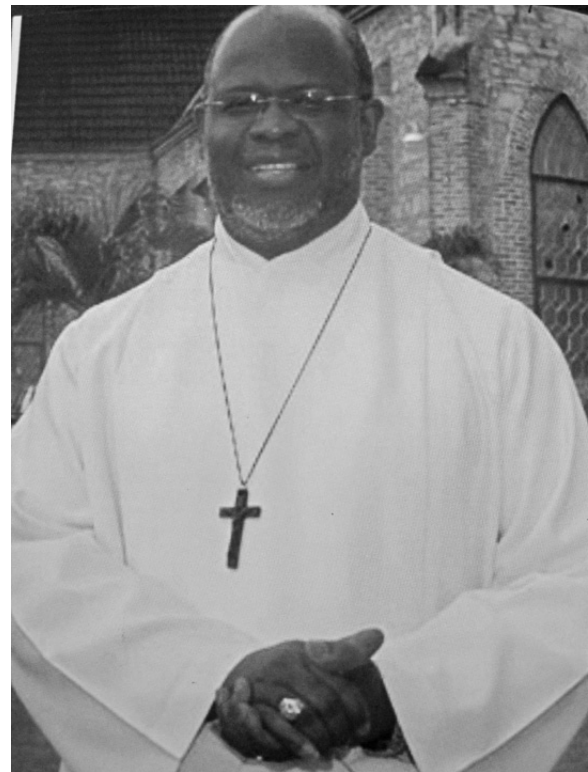
The Reverend Claude Berkley, the first Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago to come from Tobago, had been ordained a Deacon on August 8, 1992, then a priest on October 28, 1993. Elevated to the rank of Canon of the Cathedral Chapter in 2001, Canon Berkley was elected Coadjutor Bishop on October 23, 2010, and Consecrated Coadjutor Bishop on March 17, 2011. So when Bishop Calvin Bess demitted office on December 17, 2011, the Coadjutor automatically became Bishop of the Diocese, having already been ordained and consecrated. His enthronement was simply the public recognition of his new post.

A touching moment occurred when the Dean closed the West Door to the Cathedral, and with the Cathedral Chapter, remaining inside. The new Bishop was standing outside the door with the Chancellor – Justice Paula-Mae Weekes, Registrar – Phillip Lamont, and his Chaplain – Reverend Ashton Gomez. He then knocked three times with his crozier (pastoral staff). Dean Sampson unlocked the door and the Bishop moved into the doorway, and, in a loud voice, demanded admittance.

Another very touching moment came when Dean Sampson declared “the Enthronement of Claude Berkley, by Divine Permission Lord Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago is now duly and fully accomplished.” A fanfare of drums and bells welcomed the 12th Bishop of the Diocese, and the fourth local to be appointed Bishop after Clive Orminston Abdullah (1970-1993), Rawle Ernest Douglin (1993-2001) and Calvin Wendell Bess (2001-2011). Bishop Berkley, age 54, is married to Dawn, a school teacher. They are parents of two adult

daughters, Safiya and Fayola.

From the observation of my Tobagonian colleague Selwyn Melville, it would seem that every village in Tobago was represented. Signal Hill Alumni Choir came specially to perform for “Ah We Boy.” The St Agnes Anglican School Dance Troupe, Trinity All Generations Steel Orchestra and a group of African Drummers also



performed.

The new Bishop having blessed the large congregation, went back to the West door and blessed the City and the Diocese as bells and drums rang out.

An energetic and passionate community worker, striving to build and challenge the people of God into living practical Christian lives, while facing the opportunities and challenges of the 21st Century, Bishop Berkley’s vision for the Diocese is as follows:

To transform the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago into a New Wine Vineyard where the entire community of stewards, labourers, tenants and others know and love God in unity with each other; and where all branches are cared for and firmly connected to the vine; and in which the productive processes are high-level, sustainable and accountable functions resulting in a high-quality abundant yield of New Wine.

Bishop Berkley was professed in 2003.

In Remembrance: David Nard

Terry Rogers

I first met David Nard 30 years ago, when Marie Webner, the then TSSF Fellowship Coordinator, gathered a handful of conveners from around the Province to compose the first edition of the Convener's Handbook. David was an insurance salesman, and somewhere in the process of preparation for ordination to the diaconate. By the end of the weekend I knew I had met a remarkable man and an even more remarkable Franciscan



- calm and warm-hearted, sensible and grounded. As I think back, I believe I came away feeling that his presence was an affirmation of my Franciscan vocation. If an obviously non-crazy person like David was called to and believed in our

Order, it must be a good thing.

Then in 1983, David, Masud Syedullah, and I were all elected to TSSF Chapter as members-at-large. We were all in our late thirties, and we bonded immediately. We were deeply committed to one another and a point of reference for each other during the nine years (three terms) we served on Chapter together. David did not say a lot in those meetings, but what he said was always thoughtful, reasonable, peaceful, and helpful. He showed us how to differ from others humbly and gently. His practical good sense was so outstanding that we sometimes didn't notice the creative imagination that inspired so many of his ideas.

Over the years I visited David and his beloved wife Mary Alice, and shared time with him at several southeast convocations. Once he was ordained to the diaconate, he soon became a hospital chaplain, which was his work till the end of his life. I remember one conversation with him when he was saying, "I'm not much of a Franciscan - I have a good job, a nice home, and I am not doing the true Franciscan work in the world that others are doing." I told him, "David, in your work in the hospital you are absolutely on the front line - every day you are with the sick, the disabled, the dying, the bereaved, those in every kind of crisis. You are knee-deep in human suffering and brokenness. How could you think this is not a Franciscan calling?" He looked at me dumbfounded; such was his humility.

Some years ago David called me and said he'd been doing a lot of reading about Benedictine spirituality and found it very interesting and attractive. For a number of months he continued this line of study, and began to wonder if God was calling him to be released from his TSSF vow and become a Benedictine oblate. Never one to act impulsively, he prayed and thought and sought guidance. I remember telling him that maybe God was leading him to enlarge his, and our Order's understanding of the various religious charisms. I thought I was giving such helpful advice during this difficult time! But here is how I remember that it was resolved.

David told me he was at a southeast convocation with Br. Robert Hugh SSF. "I told him all about my difficulty and Br. Robert said, 'You'll stay in TSSF and keep your vow because you promised you would.' and that was all I needed to hear - it's all okay now." (Note: Wise advice for a particular person and would not necessarily be true for someone else).

In some ways David did seem to be on the Benedictine end of the Franciscan spectrum. And we very much need people like that. But he also had a heart for color, music, design, beauty, liturgy, chivalry, poetry - a passionate Franciscan heart. For some years, he came to NYC yearly for a national meeting of diaconal leadership, one of which took place the first week in September, 2001. We went up to the Cloisters, a museum of medieval art, where he was spellbound by several life-size crucifixes. We also saw an exhibit of the photographs of Salgado, portraying desperate poverty and suffering in places like refugee camps in Africa and silver mines in Latin America. Two days later was 9/11. David was staying at General Seminary and he helped the folks there as they responded to the crisis. Several weeks later, we were both at the southeast convocation, and he spoke, totally calmly, but with deep intensity, about what it had meant to him to see those works of art, the crucifixes and the photographs, to prepare his spirit for being in NYC on September 11.

Most of us don't know that the first regional convocation was in the southeast, years ago, organized by David and (I think) Dorothy Adams. David also served TSSF by working on our Devotional Companion years ago. Most recently, and most poignantly, he wrote for TSSF a rite to be used when a tertiary dies.

The last time I saw him was several years ago. He and I visited and said Evening Prayer in his prayer room, with a shelf of icons, crosses, holy pictures, sacred objects. All were part of his devotion, his prayers, his profoundly incarnational and sacramental contemplative life.

In Remembrance: Rita Tolomeo

Rita Tolomeo (professed in 1996) died at her home in Ithaca, NY. She lived in Levittown for 55 years. She had a Masters degree in Special Ed. and taught in the Roosevelt school system for many years. Rita was an accomplished violinist and played in several community orchestras. She was active in the Nassau County soup kitchen, where she later served as director. Rita was a member of the Third Order of Franciscans and was actively involved in the Episcopal Church all her life. Rita moved to Ithaca 4 years ago and loved to look at the world from the windows of her 4th floor apartment. Last December she moved to the Longview Senior Community, where she fiercely maintained her independence. Rita is predeceased by her beloved husband of 44 years, Michael, and she



is survived by her three children, five grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and her grandson-in-law. Rita also leaves behind many close friends and relatives. She was a caring person who loved animals and believed in helping others, and was admired by all

who knew her for her wit, warmth, and willingness to help.

In Remembrance: Julianne Best Schmidt

The Reverend Julianne Best Schmidt (professed in 1986) longtime resident of Glen Ellyn, passed away Friday, Feb. 10, 2012 at the age of 82. Julianne was a faithful deacon at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, and had a passion for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. She taught elementary school in District 89 for many years. She loved her family, friends, books, and good-ies. Beloved wife of the late Walter Leighton; loving mother of Peter, Claudia, Booie, Andrea, and Henry.



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In Remembrance: Canon John Peter Bennett

(From *Stabroek Newspaper, Georgetown Guyana, November 27, 2011*)

Arawak Anglican priest John Peter Bennett, who was known for his compilation of an Arawak/English dictionary and was awarded the Golden Arrow of Achievement, died last week.

According to the Anglican diocese, Bennett was born to Jacob and Elsie Bennett at Cabacaburi Anglican mission on the Pomeroon River on November 30, 1914. He attended the St Matthias' Primary school and, by the age of 12, he had completed his schooling. With a smattering of English, he advanced himself by reading "anything that had writing on it." As a young man, Bennett was employed as a driver for the outboard engine on the mission boat belonging to the Reverend Hirst because, as he put it, "Father Hirst had a lot of books and that was the attraction."

In 1946, Bennett was sent to Codrington College, Barbados, giving him the distinction of being the first Amerindian priest to attend Codrington College. Upon completion, he was ordained a deacon on July 24, 1949 and a priest on September 18 of the same year. He was installed a Canon of the Stall of David in 1976.

Bennett was worried about the future of the Arawak language and his concerns led to the compilation of an

Arawak/English Dictionary, a teaching guide with 28 lessons in Loko/Arawak, the translation of some of the Gospel books into Arawak and the publication of *The Arawak Language in Guyanese Culture*. His work in the indigenous language brought him much acclaim and in 1989 Canon Bennett was awarded the Golden Arrow of Achievement.

A book of his correspondence with Richard Hart edited by Janette Forte, *Kabethechino: A Correspondence on Arawak*, was also published.

Canon Bennett served as a priest in New Amsterdam, Bartica, Rupununi, Moruca and at home at Cabacuburi. He was married to Clara and had two children, Jennifer and Maurice, seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

In Remembrance: Eunice Edwards

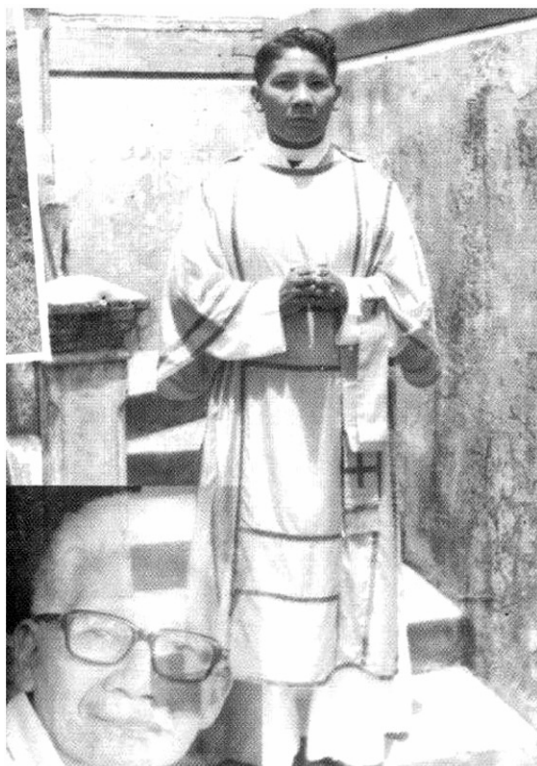
Barbara Baumgarten

Eunice Edwards, our Guyanese sister who died on March 6, was a determined woman, had no fear of letting others know what she thought, and she had a heart of gold. She was one who stepped up to help before being called upon, and by doing so she had a remarkable effect on the Third Order, especially in Guyana.

Back in 2001, when I became Formation Director for the Third Order, Carol Tookey, whom I was replacing, instructed me to visit our tertiaries in Guyana because, she said, "No one has gone there for over fifteen years. Communication is nearly impossible. It is possible the Order has died out. Someone needs to go there and find out."

It took two trips, persistence, and the help of Eunice, led no doubt by the Holy Spirit, for Julia Bergstrom, the Order's Chaplain at the time, and me to gain entrance to the interior of Guyana, where the Amerindian tertiaries live. The interior consists of rainforests and highlands. It is accessible by bush plane and boat and only with permission from the government. It is a place with no electricity other than one small communal generator, no piped-in water, and no direct lines to the outside world.

The then Anglican bishop who, on our first visit, exhibited indifference toward the Amerindians and the Third Order, on our second trip in 2003, asked us to leave the country because of the threat of violence in Georgetown. Our so-called well-planned trip was falling apart before our eyes, not



only because the bishop dismissed us but also our local guide backed out, refusing to help us, and the Minister of Amerindian Affairs, whose permission we needed to travel into the interior, was on vacation.

Julia and I sat crestfallen at an outdoor hotel table where we were taking lunch and planning our pre-mature departure when a Guyanese woman approached us. "I am Eunice, God has sent me to help you," she announced. And she did. She took us back to see the bishop who this time welcomed us and instructed us not to leave Eunice's side at any time or for any reason while in the Georgetown area. She drove us over to the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs where the Minister happened to come in and not only agreed to see us but granted us permission to travel to the interior. Eunice drove us to the airfield where a plane happened to be scheduled to transport supplies the following morning, and they had room for us. When we arrived at the Imbaimadai airstrip, in the highlands of Guyana, two priests, both tertiaries, happened to be there to welcome us. They took us by boat up the Mazaruni River to Jawalla, a settlement high above the river connecting people living over a great area through a network of waterways and trails.

We were given a room in a simple guest-house where tertiaries Charles and Cecilian Roland and Winston and Dorina Williams, along with others interested in the TSSF, made their way to greet us and share their stories. The twenty-year old, struggling Guyanese fellowship was noticeably relieved to learn the Order had not forgotten them and their participation in the Province has since become active instead of hidden. All because of Eunice. It was her determination and faith that moved mountains and prevented Julia and I not only from aborting our trip but enabling us to enjoy the hospitality and friendship of this vital Franciscan community.

Eunice's help did not stop there. She also took us to meet with the Chief Medical Officer of Guyana, Dr. Rudolph Cummings, who gave us instructions on how to arrange a medical mission into the interior if a team of Third Order members desired to undertake such a ministry, which some did a few years later. She took us to her home up

the west coast of Berbice, which sat next to one of the churches where she served as a lay minister. The priest, who serves seven churches, depends upon the lay ministers to do everything, according to Eunice, except weddings. The cemetery, situated between Eunice's home and the church, now welcomes her to rest with her ancestors who, she claimed, kept watch over her and made her work possible.

Julia and I were happy to cling to Eunice during our visit to Georgetown. After all she was, for us and many others, a miracle worker, beloved of God. Thank you, Eunice, for your witness and for your service.

In Remembrance: Bob Teudesman

Terry Rogers

I first met Bob in the library at Little Portion Friary. He had worked for many years as a nurse in VA outpatient psychiatric clinics on Long Island, and, when I met him, was just beginning TSSF formation. From then on he was a faithful member of the Long Island fellowship, and for many years served TSSF as the Inquirers' Secretary.

He was also close to the First Order brothers, and spent some years living at Little Portion as a TSSF resident. Bob also often came into Manhattan for the NYC fellowship meetings, which is where I really got to know him.

Bob was essentially unpretentious and down-to-earth, short and round-faced. His presence was radiant with compassion and common sense. His years as a nurse, and his loving heart, made him wise about people, pastorally astute, comfortable and skillful in dealing with groups.

After his retirement from the VA he spent his time visiting and taking communion to the sick and homebound. We talked frequently on the phone for years, and I treasured his companionship, his counsel, and his support. It was because of his example that I became a nurse myself. He became increasingly isolated at home by frailty and failing vision. His last years were spent in a nursing home, severely demented. He had been ready to go home to Jesus for years, and his faith was absolutely real, simple and deep.

In Remembrance: Arthur Wolsoncroft 1933-2012

Terry Rogers

Arthur and I were fellow-parishioners for many years. Our birthdays were the same day, but a different year. We worked on *Cursillos* together, and I began to see the deep warm heart in this apparently rather buttoned-down man.

Arthur had a painful childhood, marked by foster care and poverty. When he moved to NYC he had various jobs, one of them being the editor of *Playbill* (the little magazine that comes with your program in a Broadway theater).

For some years I saw Arthur as an opera, Broadway, art museum and classical music kind of guy. I was amazed after he joined TSSF and I learned what his actual job was at that time: a teacher in the NYC public school system for hearing-impaired, developmentally disabled teenagers. He was frequently exhausted and discouraged by the chaos of his classes and the fragile families his students often came from, but he was passionate about this work and had a deep commitment to and connection with these teenagers. Then I totally understood his Franciscan vocation.

He was a member of the NYC fellowship for many years. In the first years of the northeast regional convocation, he was crucial to our fellowship's participation when it was our turn to put on the weekend.

In late middle-age he began to focus on the vocation to the priesthood that he had been dreaming of for many years. He entered the ordination process, went to Nashotah House, was ordained, and worked for several years as a hospital chaplain. A budget cut ended that job, and it saddened him immeasurably that he never found work as a priest again.

Ill health then began to shadow his days. He coped with open-heart surgery and prostate cancer, and then was found to have a build up of fluid in the ventricles of his brain, which affected his physical and mental functioning. He then began a slow decline to dementia. His longtime and deeply loving partner, Stanley, cared for him during the last years of his life.

I remember Arthur at one of the first TSSF convocations handling this unruly bunch of Franciscans with ease (a piece of cake compared to his public school classroom.) He was conscientious and dependable, had a dry sense of humor, a great love of the liturgy, and a gift for friendship.

In Remembrance: Janice Meikle 1942 - 2012: Part 1

Barbara Baumgarten

"Do you think you could make that into a quilt for me? A red one!" Jan asked when she saw the painting I had recently completed of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet (Luke 7:36-50). "I just love red."

I found the idea not only fitting but compelling. Jan was one filled with passion for following the light of Christ, so much so that her eyes always twinkled with Light; but hers was a gentle following, aptly symbolized by Luke's story of a woman who loves Jesus with extravagant yet tender generosity of heart.

Her very life was one of expressing the goodness of God in joyful and generous ways. She refused to buy into humanly constructed categories of any sort, be they denominations, different abilities, gender, age, race, etc. She, indeed, fought against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality by spreading the spirit of love and harmony among all peoples. An example etched in my mind happened on the day that Jan had just gotten word from the Diocese of El Camino Real (California) that she had been approved for ordination to the priesthood. We were standing outside the church after Sunday services in the warm, spring sun when she gave me the news. I hadn't time to congratulate her before a male parishioner exclaimed, "You won't see me at your services. I can't stand the thought of you bleeding all over the altar!"

"I beg your pardon?" Jan managed to say. And then with remarkable composure, and maybe a bit of playfulness--the twinkle grew in her eyes, a huge smile spread across her face--she reassured the gentleman of God's love. He, and I, taken aback by her equanimity burst into laughter and congratulations. Jan was no threat, she was a blessing.

Jan later shared with me her frustration of the call to the priesthood being boxed into a women's issue. She had been refused ordination by her former Diocese of Alabama on account of her gender. The Commission on Ministry, however, could not ignore the strength of Jan's call and in lieu of ordination they recommended, at the suggestion of tertiary Fr. Bill Dennis, she seek religious vows in TSSF. Out of obedience, and fortunate for the Third Order, Jan complied. (It was at her Profession, in Morgan Hill, California, on January 22, 1986, that I met MaryAnn Jackman, who preached, received Jan's vows, and where I initiated my own formation

process in the TSSF.) Meanwhile Jan, tenacious in her Yankee "I will do this...it IS God's loving-will for me," never lost sight of her goal. Transcending barriers and steadfast to the call, she was ordained priest in June 1992 at, where else?, St. Francis Church, Willow Glen (San Jose).

Jan saw the Common Life as key to following Christ, where human differences were harmonious parts of God's stunning symphony; and she played her part of the symphony with orderly beauty, be it with her family, TSSF, the church, or just out and about. She served the Order as Area Chaplain and formation counselor, and she travelled good distances to be in fellowship with other tertiaries, particularly by attending New Umbrian Fellowship meetings in San Francisco and Western Area Convocations at Bishop's Ranch.

(continued on page 17)

Southeast Convocation 2012: (May 4-6 in Atlanta GA)

Julie Goodin

The Wolf of Gubbio Fellowship hosted the event, and we had a wonderful Convocation even if it was bittersweet. We were all saddened by the death of our beloved brother David Nard just one week earlier, but we could also rejoice that he was no longer suffering and was with his Lord and Savior, Francis, Clare and all the Third Order saints. We held a short memorial service for him at 4pm on Saturday, the exact time of his funeral service in Asheville, NC. Our thoughts and prayers were very much with David's family, friends, co-workers and fellow congregants at All Soul's Cathedral.



Wolf of Gubbio Fellowship

Sister Jean, SSF was our visitor and presenter; we can't thank her enough for traveling from California to be with us. Her meditations on Creation Spirituality gave us much food for thought and opened up avenues of discussion for everyone. It was also great to hear from

her regarding the status and prayer needs of the Sisters and Brothers of the First Order.



We were honored and delighted to have our Minister Provincial, John Brockmann with us. He brought the artwork presentation of Chris Gollon's Stations of the Cross. Gollon was commis-

sioned to do this work by St. John's Anglican Church on Bethnal Green in East London. We were also blessed to have Heather Seaton with us, a very talented young woman from Virginia. Heather has composed music to go with some of the Stations. The artwork and music together made this presentation awesome and very moving. Hearing from John the history of the way the artist approached this work and how long it took made it even more meaningful.

We celebrated Yvonne Willie's 85th birthday on Saturday at lunch, although her real birthday was Sunday, with a surprise cake complete with candles, but not 85 of them!

Everyone seemed to enjoy the addition of Taize music



at the beginning and end of Compline. Almost everyone participated in the services and we thank Linda Caraway and Heather Seaton for their musical contribution at all the services.

It was so good to reconnect with familiar faces and to meet new ones. Several Associates were able to meet with us this year and we all agreed the weekend went by far too quickly. Franciscan family reunions are always special and the SE Convocation family reunion was one that will be bread for the journey until we meet again.

The Little Way is a pamphlet of a diffuse but emerging Episcopal Christian Community in Durham, North Carolina, that seeks a life of prayer, study, simplicity, and fellowship with the poor. We stand in the tradition of the Catholic Worker Movement founded in 1933 by Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day. Our work currently consists of this publication and a small hospitality house feeding and sheltering three residents and drop-ins. Many of us pray Morning and Evening Prayer, and support a daily breakfast fellowship, at a local church, St. Joseph's. Rent, food and utilities for the hospitality house are paid entirely on donations. Funds are always used directly for the performance of the Works of Mercy, and no one in the community draws any salary or other benefits.

Panhandling you, for God's sake

Colin Miller

There is a famous story told about St. Francis, near the beginning of his conversion, in which he is approached by a beggar who asks him for money, as was customary, "for God's sake." At first, Francis turned away, despising the man. He was struck, however, in a fresh way, with the utterly mundane phrase "for God's sake." So, "led by penitence he began to say to himself that it was a great reproach and shame to deny the request of one asking in the name of so great a King. And then he settled it in his heart that he would, according to his power, never in the future deny anything to any one asking him for the sake of God."

Begging is a very Franciscan topic, and so I want to write about begging in the Christian life. But the fact that I want to write about begging is not disinterested. I came to the idea for this column from the fact that I know that I need to beg the readers of *The Little Way* for money. So let me ask, up front, to please send us some, and please give generously, to support the hospitality house—for God's sake. As I write this column, on May 15th, we have about \$300 in our bank account. I still owe our graciously forbearing landlords the \$995 that was due May 1st. There will be electric and gas bills upcoming. There will be costs for the August 1st move, including a \$900 pet deposit for our two dogs, Roscoe and Sammie, and Gray, the cat. And then we will have the \$2400 monthly rent for the new place to take care of. And there are always unforeseen odds and ends, not least that I like to be able to give our residents a \$10 or \$20 spot from time to time to spend on themselves. We have freely received; we would like to freely give.

I once asked one of my friends who does a lot of panhandling what he thought about public ordinances that

banned the practice.

He told me that they "need to get educated about panhandling." After a pause he asked, "Who don't panhandle?" My suspicion is he meant that begging is something inherent to what humans are always doing, and that in the last analysis, whatever kind of "begging" we do, it is not fundamentally different than what he does on the corner of 9th and Main when he asks people for their spare change. We are all beggars, in other words, and so to outlaw his practice and not yours is simply to strong-arm those who cannot do it in the "right" way.

I think that begging is, in various different ways, an essential part of the gospel. Jesus seems to have talked about it a good deal. He said in the Sermon on the Mount that you should "give to whomever begs from you" (Matthew 5:42), and he encouraged us to "beg for what you need" (Luke 11:9-10). Indeed, in the prayer that makes up the center of our liturgical life, we beg God to "give us today our daily bread."

In greater depth in subsequent issues of *The Little Way*, I want to say something of what I see as the Gospel's beggar-economy. I offer this as a conversation, and welcome others to tell me what you think, in the spirit of our founder Peter Maurin's "clarification of thought." Begging is a theme that forces us to rethink, and try to re-live, some of our most deeply held, and often unconscious, convictions about ourselves. But, at the end of the day, I think the words we often say at the Offertory forms a base from which we might begin our considerations: "All things come of thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given thee."

God will give us what we need for our new house when we need it; I have no anxieties about that. When I do have anxieties about that, it is good for me. Sharing the precarious situation of the poor, even in this small way, as Dorothy Day wrote, is a council of the Gospel, because it brings us a taste of the poverty of Christ. Nevertheless, we have to beg. "Another miracle, please, St. Joseph." And this miracle may involve sacrifice on your part. Please partner with us. We feel entitled to nothing, and yet hope for everything.

Donations can be made in one-time gifts or in pledges, and checks can be sent and made out to "St. Joseph's Episcopal Church Hospitality Fund" (1902 W Main St., Durham, NC, 27705). In-kind gifts are also welcome, and please simply contact the community to sort out the details. We are ever-grateful for our current benefactors, as well as for the prayers and good will of those who cannot contribute materially.

Got any change, for God's sake?+

Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life by Richard Rohr: A Review

David Burgdorf

Some weeks ago, a friend very experienced in ministry mentioned that in all his 50+ work years, he had never failed at anything. Until now, that is. (His contract as an interim rector was not renewed when the parish needed to extend the interim.) Subsequently, a 76 year old retired university professor reported that church-going had become suddenly painful for her- not helpful and mostly irritating. I invited both of these people to read Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr's newest book, and both were happily surprised to see how much he spoke to them.

Rohr's principal argument derives from Dr. Carl Jung's observation that in the middle of life for most people, a kind of trap door opens and we fall into the unfamiliar. We go from accumulating (competence, identity, family, security, sexuality and gender), accomplished mostly by efforts of ego, through the disorienting midlife passage to detachment with love from all that we had formerly accumulated, including our dear egos, and their need to control everything and everybody. That journey from accumulation to detachment is seldom easy (which is one reason why TSSF requires spiritual direction for all its members). Books sometimes offer spiritual direction too, and this is one that does generously.

Here is how Rohr distinguishes the two halves of life:

...the task of the first half of life is to create a proper container for one's life and answer the first essential questions: "What makes me significant?" "How can I support myself?" and "Who will go with me?" The task of the second half of life is, quite simply, to find the actual contents that this container was meant to hold and deliver. As Mary Oliver puts it, "What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

For Christians, Rohr shows how such a psychological transition is very compatible with the principle of "dying to live." Frequently using the life and words of Jesus as examples, Rohr demonstrates how "necessary suffering" is usually what ushers us from the first to the second half of life. While nobody likes the idea of failing, losing, being disappointed or victimized, Rohr invites us to reflect on the suffering itself as a means of breaking through the controls of ego to the place of wisdom, which realizes there is often no control to be taken. This is the "further journey."

To get there, he says: "Discharging your loyal soldier will be necessary to finding authentic inner authority, or what Jeremiah promised as 'the law written in your heart' (31:31)" This figure of "your loyal soldier" he

sets up as that mishmash of godly sounding admonitions we've all heard and tried to be loyal to whether from our eighth grade teacher who "highly recommended..." or from a parent, some selected text of scripture or even the infallible Republican/Democratic Party. It's got to go, says Rohr, along with their quick and easy (though untrue) answers to life's quandaries.

Jesus did not seem to teach that one size fits all, but instead that his God adjusts to the vagaries and failures of the moment. This ability to adjust to human disorder and failure is named God's providence and compassion. *Every time God forgives us, God is saying that God's own rules do not matter as much as the relationship that God wants to create with us.*

When you are young, you define yourself by differentiating yourself; now you look for the things we all share in common. You find happiness in likeness, which has become much more obvious to you now; and you do not need to dwell on the differences between people or exaggerate the problems. Creating dramas has become boring.

With just a few of these quotes, perhaps you can see how my two older friends, recoiling from their perceived failure and dryness, found much to like in Fr. Rohr's book. As one who can rattle off many of my own "disappointments and failures which lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone," (BCP, p. 836), and having met many in TSSF who are in the same boat, my hope is that we can be present with Rohr's wisdom to meet and welcome those who have ample containers for their lives but not much content yet. I'll close with a glimpse he gives us of that content:

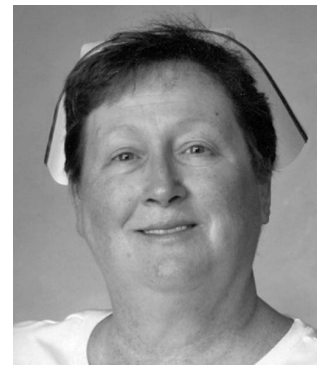
This mystery has been called the conspiracy ("co-breathing") of God, and is still one of the most profound ways to understand what is happening between God and the soul. True spirituality is always a deep "co-operating" (Romans 8.28) between the two. True spirituality is a kind of synergy in which both parties give and both parties receive to create one shared truth and joy.

In Remembrance: Katherine George

Carol Nolan

Kathryn breathed her last breath on June 12. Mother was home with her at the time and was reading evening prayer to her from the prayer book. This little family has lost a very important member. It was truly a blessing that she went so fast.

(more in next issue)



An Enlightening Close Call or How I spent my February and March: A chapter in my life with lung cancer

Paul Jakoboski (reprinted from the Troubadour 14 (1) 2012)

“Lord let me live until I die.” By that I mean I want to live, love, and serve fully until death comes. If that prayer is answered, how long really doesn't matter. Sister Thea Bowman, African – American Franciscan (1937-1990)

I do not seek to grasp or fight for life; I do not fear death nor seek its solace. I am part of creation and I want to open wide the blinders on my vision. I want to remove the scales from my understanding as much as I can be open to, as much as grace will allow, or is given to me to understand.

Often, the breaths I take now I am conscious of taking. They are somewhat labored, shorter, gasping types, trying to play catch up, straining against tired chest muscles. I am grateful for these breaths as reminders of how fragile my (our) life is. They give me an awareness and perspective that I was not comfortable with before my last engagement with my lung cancer. Now I have a better balanced sense of acceptance of life's terms both in relationship to creation and in right relationship to my own life.

To give a better picture of the story of the past six months, let me fill in some details. A checkup CAT scan last October showed three small cancerous tumors in my remaining left lung. Cyber knife therapy (pin-point targeted radiation) was performed to thwart the tumors in November. On January 2nd, I called in with significant shortness of breath, visited the doctor's office and began treatments for pneumonia and radiation pneumonitis (radiation induced inflammation). The antibiotics and steroids seemed to work well and in a few days I was continuing on my walks and gradually feeling well. But as is recommended, each week I reduced the dose of Prednisone (steroids) by 10 mg having begun at 60 per day. Soon I was down to 20 mg per day and had one more day to complete the regimen.

I went in for a scheduled checkup and after some discussion determined I might be able to keep the inflammation at bay with Alleve and an Advair inhaler. I began those on Tuesday. Wednesday morning I woke up with a slight fever and some difficulty breathing. While waiting for a call back from the radiation oncologist I contacted my primary care doctor and visited him in

the afternoon. He prescribed some medication for the symptoms I was having and I drove home in time for dinner. After the drive home I started having increasing difficulty breathing. I ate dinner and decided to go to bed early. After sleeping for thirty minutes I woke, knowing I was in trouble as my heart rate was fast and the shortness of breath increasing. Wendy ended up driving me to the hospital where I was rushed into the emergency room and treated.

The next few days were very difficult and on the edge of my not surviving. I remember vividly lying in the hospital bed with Wendy, Anne, and Carolyn (Patierno, friend and colleague who serves as pastor of All Souls UUA Congregation) gathered round deciding what next steps would be agreed to and which would be refused. The choices were difficult knowing that death was the possible outcome of the decision just made. A friend, Claire, who is also a hospital doctor, stopped in to check on me. She sat and asked how I was doing. I responded that I was overwhelmed with the love expressed by those surrounding me. I felt a strong sense of humility when confronted with my situation and shared with those close to me. We all knew that dying was a strong possibility, yet here I was experiencing their loving care, alive. There came to me a sense of inner serenity and confidence, a kind of joy, that carried me through and assured me that all was well. Claire grasped my hand as I described my feelings and she advised to stay in the moment. Let the loving care of those around me permeate, wash over and through me and hold onto that reality. It was a moment I had experienced before as the psalmist wrote, “Be still and know that I am God.”

As the days passed I maintained and did not get worse. With the continuing treatments I began to improve although the need for high volume, continuous oxygen did not change. I was in the hospital for two weeks and then the determination was made to release me on February 20th in the care of Hospice which could provide the level of technical and home care needed to sustain those levels of oxygen. After the first few days at home my health steadily and rapidly improved. By the 27th of March I was able to stop with the continuous oxygen. Once again I could be mobile. What a relief to be able to walk outside and sit on the porch! I still need oxygen assistance when I exert myself with long walks or exercising but I envision that need going away soon (I hope!).

The latest good news is that on April 3 I was released from Hospice and a CAT scan checkup revealed no evidence of cancer in my left lung and continued healing. Now to wean me off of the Prednisone – very carefully!

Each day is a challenge as to how much energy I have and then the determination as to how / where to apply it for maximum healing and still get some things done that need doing. Realizing I do not have the depths of energy resources I am used to is frustrating and is the most difficult challenge. Being conscious of the fragility of my life has been a great gift. Those breaths I cannot refuse to acknowledge are the gift of increasing my conscious awareness of life itself. I have much to be grateful for.

Paul Jakoboski lives and works at St. Francis House. He serves as president of the SFH board and has been overseeing our energy audit, the development of the Francis Fund and the 2012-13 budget.

In Remembrance: Janice Meikle (cont.)

The value for the common life also led Jan to live on campus while at seminary. Her education went far beyond classroom time; it also went beyond denominational lines. She chose, at risk to her ordination process, to take her seminary training at the Graduate Theological Union's Pacific School of Religion (PSR), where multicultural and ecumenical studies were emphasized, as opposed to the Episcopal CDSP--where she did take her particular Episcopal studies. (I too was a GTU student at that time but commuted from our shared home town of Morgan Hill; except on Thursday nights I would sleep on Jan's dorm room floor--well, we would try to sleep. We would get so wound up talking and giggling that it was an herculean act to get ourselves to settle down to sleep.) That Jan saw, and lived, God's love as unsparing and indiscriminate is why my husband and I asked her to be our biracial youngest child's Godmother.

On the domestic front, Jan's passions included her high school sweetheart and husband of 49 years, Bob, and their three children, Steve (deceased Nov. 2011), Tim, and Shannon; dachshunds; and building a house in the woods with Bob. To celebrate her acceptance into the ordination process, Jan brought home a dachshund puppy and named him "Doc." Doc kept her, and the rest of us, laughing through the most trying theological discussions. After faithfully leading the congregation of St. Stephen's-in-the-fields, San Jose, Jan and Bob retired to Cave Junction, Oregon where they built their dream home in the woods, not just for themselves but as a place of welcome for friends and family. It was here that Jan fell ill first to Sarcoidosis and then to the Alzheimer's which ultimately claimed her life.

Last night I was rooting around in my fabric stash looking for a certain red to include in my current quilt project and I came across a scrap from "her tears fell on

his feet II," Jan's quilt. Jan, I mused, by finding her life in God "anointed the feet" of many and she dissolved barriers with her tender "tears." Hers was a witness of Franciscan simplicity in the Love of God cherished by those privileged to walk with her for awhile. She had no fear of sister bodily death; she knew where she was headed. The Reverend Jan Meikle, TSSF, died in her husband's loving arms at peace and with a smile on her face. She was a gentle person of God. (see also page 20)

In Remembrance: Jan Meikle: Part 2

Joan Verret

Day 26 the second note: We have a special love and affection for members of the Third Order, praying for them individually and seeking to grow in that love

Other than praying her name routinely from the directory and intercession list I had no knowledge of Jan Meikle until last March. I received an email from her husband Bob describing their situation and that they were now living in The Villages in Central Florida almost two hours from my home in Lakeland. He had

(continued on page 20)

From the Bursar: Scholarship Help Needed



Tom Johnson, Provincial Bursar
I am also reaching out to you to help me feed the "central piggy bank" that Chapter has set up to provide scholarships for those who need help to attend the convocation.

Recent Provincial Convocations saw attendance of just a little over 100 tertiaries. That's but a fraction of our membership! It is our prayer that we can make it so easy for people to attend next year that at least 150 to 200 tertiaries will come together in Minneapolis.

That's why Chapter established a Scholarship Fund to help out those who otherwise would not be able to attend. And that's why I'm asking you to make a special contribution to that fund. Maybe you can even budget to send a scholarship check once a month for the next year.

Although we are working very hard to keep the registration costs as low as possible, there are still a lot of our fellow tertiaries who will not be able to afford the full cost, along with the cost of travel. Please consider them and send whatever you can to our ProvCon13 Scholarship Fund.

Make checks payable as always to TSSF and mail them to me at 214 Leafwood Way, Folsom, CA 95630 – clearly marked scholarship contribution.

Bursar for USA

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214 Leafwood Way
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tjohnsonret@gmail.com

Bursar for Canada

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Bursar for Caribbean

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Blue Range, Diego Martin,
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Bursar for Guyana

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East Bank Demerara, Guyana
dioofguy@networksgy.com

From Minister Provincial

R. John Brockmann

Care of the Professed

2012 has been dominated by many activities that come under the umbrella of Care of the Professed. In the last issue of the Times you saw:

- A prototype Celebration of an Profession Anniversary by Rick Bellows. I hope you have had a chance to use it in your local convocations or fellowships. We need feedback on its usefulness and flow. I intend to put this draft on the agenda for approval at our next Chapter.
- An effort to include pilgrimage (local and domestic). We need you to consider creating a pilgrimage design for your local area—for example when I was at the Southeast Convocation in May, I challenged them to come up with a pilgrim route along the Georgia coast which would take people to the sites of where five Franciscan missionaries were martyred by Guale tribe in 1597.

Series of Letters to Professed Members Who Have Not Pledged in Last Two Years

In an unexpected way, we have come up with a very powerful act of Caring for the Professed. As a province we have always been a bit embarrassed by the large percentage of *professed members who do not pledge*, and so the Bursar came up with a list of those who have not

pledged or contributed for over two years. He and I sent out a series of three letters.

Many have sent checks so that they are up to date, but some responded to these letters as a clarion call to return to the Rule and spiritual practices. So we now have at least a half dozen members who are reinvigorated and re-energized, and two thirds of those who have not pledged in two years have now pledged.

We also discovered those who have fallen through the cracks of attention by the rest of us—one lady not too far from Little Portion wrote to say she was dying and in hospice.

We have also discovered those who are too sick, too old, too poor, or in the throes of Alzheimer's disease who want to continue in the Order, and, for these folks who continue to report and renew annually (the other two marks of TSSF profession), The Bursar and I are soliciting "guardian angels" who will personally pay the person's pledge as well as promise to look in on them and ensure that they don't fall through the cracks.

Exposure of Structural Weaknesses

I received a bit of a shock in discovering that a goodly number of our local leaders have also not pledged in over two years. These are the people who should be exhibiting and mentoring a Third Order way of life.

In response to this discovery we will be working on some improved ways to care and feed these crucial TSSF "first responders."

2013 Provincial Convocation Plans

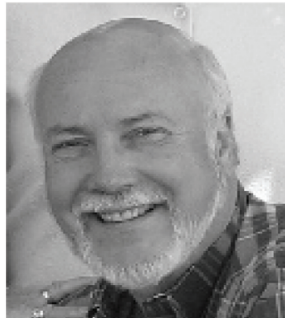
Marilyn Minncy is heading up this work. We will meet June 25 through 30, 2013, at America's Best Inn in Shakopee Minnesota, which is very close to Minneapolis.

<http://www.americasbestvalueinn.com/bestv.cfm?idp=1822>

The title and theme for this provincial convocation is: A Franciscan Search for Action and Healing .

Our Convocation speakers are the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, TSSF, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop of Canada, the Rev. Canon Jeff Gollhofer, TSSF, program associate for the Environment and Sustainable Development in the Office of the Anglican Observer at the United Nations, and Elsie Dennis, Co-chair First Nations Committee, Diocese of Olympia, Executive Council Committee on Anti-racism.

More details will be forthcoming soon as to cost and reservation process.



On the Care and Feeding of Our Fraternities

Deacon Tom Bello, Secular Franciscan Order, National Minister's Message (from TAU-USA Newsletter Fall-Winter 2011)

Thus, I wrote in my 2011 Annual Report and spoke in my 2012 *Vision of our Order*:

Perhaps no aspect of the Secular Franciscan life should be of more concern to those called to leadership than the vitality of the fraternity, be it local, regional, national or international.

So how do all of us called to leadership, called to the training and nurturing of leaders, provide for the vitality of our fraternities? Article 92.1 of the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order states: “

The purpose of both the pastoral and fraternal visits is to revive the evangelical Franciscan spirit, to assure fidelity to the charism and to the Rule, to offer help to fraternity life, to reinforce the bond of the unity of the Order, and to promote its most effective insertion into the Franciscan family and the Church.

These are the measures of how we all should be caring for and feeding our fraternities. I have written in this publication about the four “signs of vitality” for every single Franciscan gathering, whether an Annual Chapter or an “ordinary meeting”:

- “Prayer,
- Formation,
- Fraternal Sharing, and
- Necessary Business, and in this order!”

We need time to pray, to reform ourselves and our fraternities, to know and love each other better, and to conduct whatever necessary business we have to do.

Perhaps the key word here is time: it takes time to build and be a Franciscan family at any level. Please, leaders, allow enough time to ensure the vitality of your fraternity. We at National, met from Tuesday, October 25 to Sunday, October 30, 2011. We plan to gather the entire National membership at our Quinquennial from Tuesday, July 3 to Sunday, July 8, 2012.

Did your Regional or local fraternity gather even once in 2011 for an entire weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday morning?

Do you plan to do so in 2012?

How can you build the vitality of your fraternity on a few hours a month?

Is this what you would expect from your own family?

Often, I fear we sacrifice the vitality of our fraternity life to save time and money. I followed [this idea] up this past year with an article entitled, “The Primary

Focus and the Four Marks of a Vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity.” In that article, I stated that: “Spirituality, Formation, Family and Witnessing all for the sake of ‘the salvation of souls’ offers us the Primary Focus and Four Marks of a vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity.

These are precisely the reason why prayer, formation, fraternal sharing and only as much business as is necessary offer us the four purposes of a fraternal gathering, and I prayed in the article and every day that God will

give us the grace, the Living Presence of Christ and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit when we gather to worship, to form, to share, to witness in Christ's Name, always striving to keep our fraternities and our souls alive and focused on salvation.

[Since] Spirituality is the initial and essential element of fraternity, then that Spirituality and love of the Lord must be witnessed out in the world, not put under the bushel basket of the fraternity gathering.

Therefore, in the same article I wrote, “We are to be a ‘community of love’ to all in the world. As Blessed Pope John Paul II told us directly at the 10th General Chapter in 2002:

The church expects from you, Secular Franciscans, a courageous and consistent testimony of Christian and Franciscan life, leaning towards the construction of a more fraternal and gospel world for the realization of the Kingdom of God.

[Later in the SFO journal, Tom Bello's Keynote Address was presented, the Vitality of the Local Fraternity, in which he offered further material for our consideration:]

The true vitality of a fraternity must first be its spiritual vitality. It is the Holy Spirit's Order. We pray because we cannot save ourselves. We need God. And it's not about our individual efforts. Our salvation is never about any one individual. God called twelve and sent them two by two. We need to work at our salvation in community. We are a community of love. Love by definition needs another.

Tom introduced how these vibrant marks of fraternity influenced the themes for the subsequent days of Chapter. He reviewed the accomplishments of the past year in these areas — one being the new For Up to Now (FUN) formation manual.

These new formation materials now must be put into the hearts and minds of every Secular Franciscan. This is a great call and can only be done in fraternity.

He noted the success of our “courageous witness” in our JPIC outreach and partnering with Catholic Relief Services. Quoting an observation made by Mary Bittner, Tom explained the connection between frater-

nity and our JPIC activities, "Extending Francis' notion of 'fraternity' into our relationships with all people is the foundation for all JPIC activities and a serious challenge for our Order.

Fraternity does not stay within ourselves— we reach out. Tom joyfully welcomed to our Chapter those representing Amazon Relief, the Franciscan Action Network, Franciscans International, and Franciscan Mission Service— "all with us as brothers and sisters, members of the one Franciscan family".

With these groups and with others we walk step in step to give courageous witness to the world. "We cannot do this great work alone —we do it in the wider fraternity — the community of love".

...Tom concluded this address on fraternity with a quote from the 2010 CIOFS Visitation report to NAFRA written by International Councilor Tibor Kaiser, OFS: "

The fraternal spirit among the local fraternities is good, but we still recommend to strengthen it. Those fraternities, who have more in formation, in vocations, in spiritual or mental capacities, in financial resources, shall in a good fraternal spirit share these goods with the others. This is explicitly valid for the formation and the spiritual capacities.

Tom then challenged us:

We, in leadership at the regional and national levels need to think and pray more about this—how we can we help local fraternities share their resources with each other? How can the vitality of our fraternities be shared? Do we know which of our fraternities have more vitality and which fraternities are struggling? How can a strong local fraternity help a local fraternity that is struggling? Let us go forward with that sense of helping one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

In Remembrance: Jan Meikle: Part 2 (cont.)

He had questions regarding any particular prayers etc. for death and burial preferred by the Order.

I responded immediately that I would, with his permission, forward his message to the TSSF list-serve and would personally visit them as soon as possible.

The following Sat. was the ordination and consecration of our new bishop and one of those little "coincidences" occurred. I found myself in the procession in front of a priest I had not met previously. He just happened to be the rector of St Georges, Jan and Bob's parish. We had the opportunity to discuss TSSF and Jan's dedication to the

Order.

The next day, Sunday, I met Bob and Jan in their home. I learned of their lives from meeting at a dance as teenagers to marriage, children, her profession to TSSF in 1986 and her ordination as priest in 1992. Bob shared much of their many special friendships, including the Rev Bill and Barbara Baumgarden. He proudly showed me the beautiful quilt and vestment made by Barbara for Jan. As we traveled down Memory Lane Jan listened and smiled at times.

I left that day having been bound by the love of Christ and Francis with Jan and Bob.

Bob sent word on May 14th that she was being moved to the Hospice House, and the family was gathering.

When I arrived at St Georges on June 16th for the Celebration of Live for the Rev. Jan Meikle the rector asked if I would vest and read the gospel so there would be a Franciscan presence in the service.

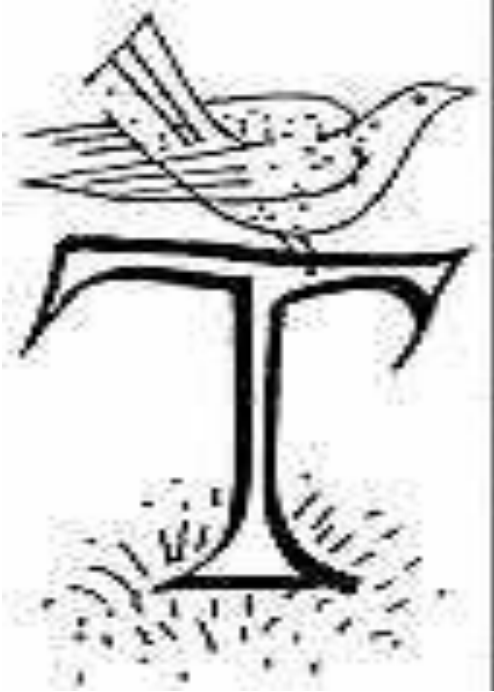
I will never forget Bob's description of Jan's final moments. As family, Bob and the priest were gathered, Jan didn't understand their tears and sadness. She offered them words of comfort and then smiling touched Bob saying "see ya," closed her eyes, and entered the nearer presence of God.

At the end of the service when Bob approached the casket he touched it, smiled and said "see ya."

It was an honor to share these moments of sadness, joy, and mostly love with Jan, Bob, their family and parish family.

There was opportunity after the internment to meet the family and they were pleased to present the handmade communion kit and Dancing Francis vessels that they had made for Jan's ordination to me to share with the Order.

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Anglican Communion at the United Nations since 1991)**

**ELSIE DENNIS- Shuswap/Secwepemc (Co-Chair, First Nations Committee, Diocese of
Olympia, Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism)**

Quinquennial Report—The Q

Joan Verret

I had the honor and joy of representing TSSF at the Quinquennial Congress XVIII Secular Franciscan Order USA in Chicago July 3-8. The Q occurs every five years, and is basically the same type meeting as our Provincial Convocations such as the one coming up next year in Minneapolis.

In fact we often have the same speakers. At our Provincial Convocation in the Boston Brother Bill Short OFM was a keynote speaker, and this year he was a keynote speaker at the Q. His presentation this year was "Who are We?: An Overview of the Franciscan Family and the Place of the SFO and the Rest of the Third Order." (He mentioned TSSF in his talk.)



The three other major presenters included:

- Sister Ilia Deleo ("Why Francis? Claim the Gift!"; "Who are You, O Lord?; and What am I?")



- Ed Shirley ("Deepening our Relationship with God: Tools for a More Authentic Spiritual Life")



- Pat Brandwein-Ball ("The Rule of the SFO and Presence in the World").

Each presentation was followed by a "Q fraternity" (small fellowship group) to discuss the presentations in depth and their effect on their individual life and their Franciscan charism. At the end of all the presentations and meetings the information from the "Q fraterni-



ties" was correlated and given to the Chapter ministers (NAFRA) who, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are determining what the SFO vocation will look like in the future.

Worship consisted of daily Offices and Eucharist. Meals and the evening social times provided opportunities for building relationships. I particularly enjoyed renewing friendships and meeting so many new Franciscan brothers and sisters.

Some of you may remember Jean Denorfio from meetings at Little Portion at Mount Sinai, Long Island. She has a clown ministry and organized a skit for Friday night in which I was chosen to be a tree (perhaps because I'm all bark and little bite?), and I was suppose to shelter two friars. Lo and behold I found out the next day I had sheltered Padre Pio!

I'm sure the SFO representatives at our Provincial Convocation next year will be greeted with the same Franciscan hospitality that I experienced at the Q.

"While we await His coming in glory"a reflection.

Julie H. Goodin

We have waited, and waited, and waited for this event for over 2000 years now.

So Jesus, what is with the delay? In your time on earth you made it sound like it was going to be very soon. Paul was sure your return was imminent, but still we wait.

Sometimes I wonder what reason you could possibly have for the delay, are you waiting for everyone on earth to become your follower? Are you waiting for

those who claim to be your followers to start living the way you said we should live? You know, the stuff about loving each other as you have loved by us, turning the other cheek, taking care of the poor, the hungry, the homeless ones; advocating with action for justice and peace. If those are the reasons why you are delaying your 'coming in glory' we might still have a very long time to wait. I hope you haven't given up on us, washed your hands and resigned yourself to the idea that after 2000 years we still don't get it and therefore never will. No, I don't believe you could do that, you gave up too much for us to ever give up on us.

But wait, even though you might be delaying your grand re-entrance in great glory you do come to each of us who love and follow you every day in the faces of the poor, the broken, the hurting, the sick and friendless; those fragments of humanity whose paths intersect with ours day after day. Until the day of your coming in great glory are you watching to see how we handle these small glimpses of you? Maybe, just maybe, when we get that right you will know we are ready to see you coming in all your glory.

New Minister Provincial of European Province

Joanna Coney (reprinted from Third Order News, July 2012)

At the close of our recent Chapter meeting we joyfully blessed the ministry of our new Minister Provincial, Averil Swanton.

As I hand over to her the joys, privileges and yes, sometimes the frustrations, of the role I am delighted and confident that the Order will be in such capable and loving hands.

During my time as Minister Provincial my greatest joy

has been that I have met so many of you and enjoyed your hospitality at Cluster and Area meetings.

I have been constantly encouraged and humbled by how many wonderful people there are 'out there' just getting on with living a Christian life in the footsteps of Blessed Francis.

The integrity and commitment of so many faithful Tertiaries, who are daily demonstrating the love of Christ, who are making community together in love and harmony, and who are daily living out their lives in simplicity and humble service, is something in which I rejoice, and for which we should all be truly grateful to God.

So as I bid you my farewell I thank you for your prayers and your friendship, and for giving me the opportunity and joy of service to the Order over the last six years, and I shall continue to pray daily for you.

I commend Averil to your care, your love, your support and above all to your continued prayer.



Joanna Coney and Averil Swanton

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Send in your contributions for the Fall issue by October 4

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