



# The Franciscan Times

A Magazine of the Third Order,  
Society of St. Francis,  
Province of the Americas

*Pace e bene*

Advent 2019

## Our Call to a Life of Justice & Stewardship

*R. John Brockmann, Editor*

*At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile Earth, our island home.*

Long before Howard Galley, Jr. drafted this Eucharistic Prayer C sentence in 1974, *Genesis*, of course, had declared God's creation and God's judgment that it was very good. Francis took up the refrain in his Canticle of Creation: *Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation...*

Such praises through sacred history are now being transformed into urgent calls for action. In *Together, With Earth (YES! magazine, Spring 2015)*, Wendell Berry joined this refrain of the divine gifts we must steward:

*I know from as many reasons that the alleged causes of climate change—waste and pollution—are wrong [sinful]. The right thing to do today, as always, is to stop, or start stopping, our habit of wasting and poisoning the good and beautiful things of the world, which once were called "divine gifts" and now are called "natural resources."*

I know of this fragility firsthand as I write these words in a darkened house without electricity or heat because a typical Nor'easter here on the Massachusetts coast transformed into a "bombogenesis" with the lowest barometric pressure ever recorded in the month of October.

This issue of the *Franciscan Times* joins in this refrain and call to action. The first section is directly focused on Climate Justice, but all the other sections explore in their own ways our call to a life of justice and stewardship.

*R. J. Brockmann TSSF*

## CLIMATE JUSTICE

Taking Care of the World Around Us

*The Rt. Rev. David Rice, Bishop Protector*

Recently the Episcopal News Service featured an article regarding San Joaquin's new proposal for a diocesan-wide solar project. We have hired a consultant and early indications suggest that by the conclusion of 2021 most of our faith communities will be the beneficiaries of solar energy. The seriousness, and moreover, faithfulness with which San Joaquin has expressed wanting to make a real difference regarding Creation care occurred earlier this year.

As you are perhaps aware, the Episcopal Church invited Episcopalians and others to consider a Creation Care Pledge to consider the ways in which we can reduce our carbon footprint and move into a place of cleaner energy. This was an opportunity for individuals as well as communities to identify that giving care to our earth is a part of our baptismal covenant and—*wait for it*—participating in the Jesus Movement. To that end, every clergyperson in San Joaquin made the pledge. Additionally, a significant number of laypeople made the pledge. To date, San Joaquin is third on the list of Episcopal Dioceses who have made a pledge for Care of Creation.

It is time to get truly serious, moreover exceedingly faithful, concerning how we are engaging in and taking care of the world around us. It is time because that is truly who we are called to be. It is time because we must do something before it is too late.



*Taking Care, cont. on page 4*



## The Franciscan Times

is a magazine  
of the Third Order  
Province of the Americas  
Society of Saint Francis

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# Table of Contents

Franciscan Times, Advent 2019

*Go directly to each article by clicking on it.*

## From the Editor

Our Call to a Life of Justice and Stewardship, by  
R. John Brockmann.....1

## Climate Justice

Taking Care of the World Around Us, by the Rt. Rev. David  
Rice, Bishop Protector.....1

Hear the Cry of the Earth, by John Hebenton, Godfrey Fryar,  
Blair Matheson, Michael Twum-Darko, Tim Higgins and  
Janet Fedders.....4

Facing the Reality of the Climate Crisis, by Jeff Gollhofer.....5

## Reflections

First Order Chapter Address, by Desmond Alban.....7

Renewal of Vows Sermon, TSSF Chapter, by Tracey Carroll....10

Meditation on the Tree of Life, by Jeff Gollhofer.....14

Songs of the Cosmic Heart, by Anton Armbruster.....16

How to Increase Your Franciscan Presence and Ministry,  
by Rick Simpson, Provincial Chaplain.....19

A Profession Story, by Mary Teresa Rogers.....20

An Advent Prayer: *Let Me, Lord*, by Alice Baird.....21

## The Spirit of Harmony

United Religions Initiative, by Joyce Wilding.....22

Two Charters: For Compassion and For Earth, by Bonnie  
Barnidge.....24

## News from the Province

Southeast Regional Convocation: Sister Water, by Alice  
Bangs.....25

Southwest Regional Convention: *Visio Divina* with the St.  
John's Bible, by Alice Baird.....27

*Table of Contents, cont. on page 3*

## Anita Catron Miner



*Thank you, Anita, on your retirement from 16 years on the Editorial Board of The Franciscan Times. It would not have been the same quality publication without your diligent and perceptive work. You consistently caught those comma splices, prevented some hilarious bloopers, and wrestled those run-on sentences to the ground. All the while, you encouraged and challenged us, your colleagues, to the highest qualities of a religious newsletter. Plus—no small thing—since you were always such fun to work with, you brought a Franciscan sense of joy to our editorial partnership.*

*Thank you, again, for your dedicated service to accuracy, clarity, and proper punctuation!*

## Table of Contents, *cont.*

### News from Chapter

Highlights from Francistide 2019 Chapter, by John Rebstock.....	30
Report on the Rule of Life Experiment, by Rick Bellows.....	32
<i>Sidebar: The Principle-Based Rule of Life: A Dissenting View</i> , by Alice Baird.....	34
2018-19 Financial Summary, by Alison Saichek, Provincial Bursar.....	35
McCarron Appointed Assistant Minister Provincial, Province of the Americas.....	36
New Assistant Fellowship Coordinators, by Peter Stube.....	36

### International News

Meeting of the Ministers Provincial and the Minister General of the Third Order, by Janet Fedders, Provincial Minister, Province of the Americas.....	37
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### Milestones

#### Newly Professed

“Joy” Agotescu: <i>From Romanian refugee to a Parisian transformation, to life as a Franciscan in the United States</i> ....	38
Don Bernhardt: <i>Ordained to full-time ministry, “Doing what I’m supposed to be doing.”</i> .....	40
Steve Eubanks: <i>NASA engineer, musician, farmer, chaplain, convener</i> .....	41
Jonathan Lloyd: <i>Priest, family and mental health social worker serving individuals, social justice causes, and churches in London, South Africa, Denmark and Canada</i> .....	42
Hugo Padilla: <i>Priest and evangelist for the Third Order in Latin America</i> .....	44

#### Rest in Peace

Mark Edward Waldo, Sr., <i>Professed 13 Years</i> .....	44
Remembering Mark Waldo, by Lucy Dunn McCain.....	45

### Poems

Francistide, by Rick Pearce.....	48
A Minor Life, by Mary Tarantini.....	49
Drink This Cup, by Alice Baird.....	49

## Taking Care of the World Around Us, cont. from p. 1

So here are some suggestions:

- Drive less; walk, cycle or carpool more.
- Travel less for meetings and ZOOM or Skype or whatever the equivalent technology is.
- Put a bucket in your shower and use that “bucket-ed water” to power your toilets and nourish your plants.

**Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly, and, might I add, consume less.**

- Eradicate single-use bottled water (use your own water container).
- Definitely eradicate styrofoam (it is an environmental nemesis).
- Consider clean energy sources (wind, solar). We have solar on our house and as I have suggested, soon will have it on our churches.
- Reduce paper usage (paperless meetings, conferences, conventions and the like).
- Use organic products whenever possible.
- Use your own shopping bags!
- If you are a straw person, reusable it is.

I have every confidence that Francis would be all over this. I have every confidence that as people who follow the way of Francis, who followed the way of Jesus before him, we must be all over this as well.

Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly, and, might I add, consume less.

Explore the Care of Creation Pledge at [https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/creation\\_care\\_pledge\\_and\\_vision\\_english.pdf](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/creation_care_pledge_and_vision_english.pdf)

## Hearing the Cry of the Earth

*John Heberton, Minister General, New Zealand; Godfrey Fryar, Minister Provincial, Province of Asia-Pacific; Blair Matheson, Minister Provincial, Province of the Pacific; Michael Twum-Darko, Minister Provincial, Province of Africa; Tim Higgins, Acting Minister Provincial, Province of Europe and Janet Fedders, Minister Provincial, Province of the Americas.*

**W**hat is Creation saying to us? What are the land, the animals, and the oceans saying to us?

They are saying, “Help! We’re in trouble!”

How are we, as followers of Francis and Clare, called to respond to this trouble?

What will happen to our children and grandchildren if we don’t stop global heating from going past 1.5 degrees? The web of life is unraveling, and we see the pain and suffering in God’s Creation. In our care for each other and the gift of God in Creation, we respond with joy and love. What does this joy and love look like?

In this time of planetary trouble, what do joy and love look like?

Many of us have used Genesis Chapter One to treat Creation as an experiment to exploit rather than as our brother and sister. We have forgotten that we are made in the image of the creative and life-giving God. “God gave them his blessing and said: “Have a lot of children. Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth.” (*Genesis 1:28, Good News Translation*)

Dominion (rule) is not about control or about using others (people, animals or the earth) for our gain. It is about living in a way where we join with the Creating Spirit so that all of Creation and all of us who live in it may flourish. We lament that we have not lived this way.

Day 8 of our Principles calls us to love Creation as God’s gift and to resist all injustice. God’s creation embraces all life, as Francis continues to show us. We are all brothers and sisters and must watch out for each other. We will continue to love what God has made. We affirm the work that many Franciscans are doing in addressing this climate emergency. More work is to be done.

We can all do something in our local area, and some of us can do that and more by speaking to people in power about the anguish of Creation. We may need to change priorities and do less on some things we presently do and more to address the climate emergency.

“Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you will be doing the impossible.” (*Attributed to St. Francis*)

*Issued from The Meeting of the Ministers of the Five Provinces of the Third Order, the Society of Saint Francis, August 2019, Sisters of the Cenacle Retreat Center, Long Island, New York.* ◆



## Facing the Reality of the Climate Crisis

Jeff Golliher



*The Rev. Canon Jeff Golliher, Ph.D. serves as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Ellenville, New York, and has been appointed TSSF Assistant Minister Provincial for Sacred Ecology.*

*This goes way, way beyond politics.*

Occasionally people tell me that it's strange for a priest to have a background in geoscience and cultural anthropology. I understand that. For me, though, it's the times we live in that seem strange. I've known earth and climate scientists personally. Professionally speaking, they're some of the most cautious and conservative people you would ever meet – careful not to distort or exaggerate their findings as a matter of personal integrity. Most would probably not choose to work with politicians, knowing that their work will become fodder for who knows what in the media.

So as I read their most recent findings in journals of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science* and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, I feel a lot of grief, but I'm not surprised. For the vast majority of scientists worldwide, the facts indicate that the climate crisis will probably be more severe than expected even five years ago. Serious scientists no longer debate whether this crisis is real. And when they suggest that humankind has never faced anything like this before, they're not exaggerating. Watching the unwillingness of nations to act quickly enough, many of those scientists are afraid for the future – especially those with children and grandchildren.

It's all very personal. It should be personal, not in the sense of knee-jerk reactions, but of the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. When it becomes deeply personal, and if we're honest within ourselves, then we remember what's really important in life. This goes way, way beyond politics.

### *“God Is Not Like That”*

When I was nine years old, my mom and dad called a wise, elderly Southern Baptist minister in our hometown and asked him to talk with me privately. They weren't sure what the problem was. I knew, but I was upset, and I wasn't saying much. Preacher Morris stopped by the house, and we went for a drive. I struggled to find the words. What had happened is that another minister scared me when he spoke. His ridiculing tone encouraged everyone to look down on others. I'd never heard anything like that, especially from the pulpit. It's not that I was prone to fear. Preacher Morris knew that kids in Southern Appalachia can be an independent lot, and I spent a lot of time outdoors – very little TV, no cell phones or internet back then. In our house, unkindness towards anyone in thought, word, or deed just didn't happen. The Golden Rule (let's say, *treat others as you wish to be treated*) was assumed as if it was written in the air we breathe. The only spoken-out-loud rules that I remember were: *always tell the truth*, and *be home by 5:00 for dinner*. Maybe it was a different world back then, but some deeper parts of life never lose their meaning.

He was a good listener, unlikely to assume he had all the answers. As I poured out my soul, stumbling over my words, I realized what was bothering me and said it plainly: *I just don't believe him ... God is not like that*. Preacher Morris smiled, looked at me in the eyes, and said, *have faith, and always think for yourself and make up your own mind*.

*cont. on page 6*

*Facing the Reality of the Climate Crisis, cont. from p. 5*



*The disjointed, cubist style of American artist Anthony Falbo's painting, St. Francis Sermon to the Birds, seems to express the current anguish of our patron saint of ecology.*

*(From <http://falboart.com/featured/saint-francis-sermon-to-the-birds-anthony-falbo.html>)*

With my mom and dad, Preacher Morris set me on a path that led to becoming a cultural anthropologist and then an Episcopal priest. Early on, I wanted to find out for myself what indigenous peoples living in rainforests are really like and how they relate to nature. I met shamans in Central America who were some of the holiest people I've ever known. I became a priest because of them too, which led me to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan, St. John's Church in Ellenville, and the global Anglican Communion for whom I served as their environmental representative to the United Nations for almost thirty years. The irony is that nearly sixty years after that soulful conversation with Preacher Morris, the same questions have come around again - faith or fear, thoughtfulness or manipulation, respect or disrespect - but in an unimaginably larger way.

### The Point of No Return

What are we going to say to the younger generation? Two years ago, climate scientists estimated that we have until about 2030 to cut carbon emissions by half, and eliminate them completely by 2050 - if we want to avoid the worst kind of global catastrophe. For people in some places around the world - generally those who are the poorest -- catastrophic effects are already felt. The Arctic, Antarctic, and Greenland ice sheets are melting faster than expected. Agriculture is disrupted by severe droughts and coastal storms in many places, including Guatemala - that's why so many refugees from there are heading to the US. Some Pacific islanders are already leaving their homes because of rising oceans. This past year, Arctic temperatures have been 30 degrees above normal on some days.

The reason we must cut emissions in half within about ten years, and then to zero by 2050 is that if we don't, then we'll reach thresholds ("tipping points") past which there's no return. It will be too late. Those scientists writing in the journals that I mentioned are saying that the point of no return might come sooner than they thought.

***Not to act is to gamble with the lives of children.***

All this might seem more like science fiction than science. Nevertheless, the facts keep pouring in, carbon levels keep rising, and the facts point to a time when most of us will have passed away. It's the next generation that will face the worst of it, unless we act now. Not to act is to gamble with the lives of children. As awful as that sounds, it would be the easiest course of action - and the least faithful, the least responsible, the least thoughtful, and the least respectful.

My mom and dad weren't gamblers, and they still aren't. Neither was Preacher Morris.

What about you and me? ◆

# REFLECTIONS

First Order Minister's 2019  
Address to Chapter  
May 15, 2019

Brother Desmond Alban, SSF



*Editor's Note: Brother Desmond's address has been condensed for The Franciscan Times.*

I have travelled a lot in the past few weeks, but that can give you a chance to catch up with movies. One I watched ten days ago, between Chicago and New York, was the adaptation of a book I also read this year, Gerrard Conley's *Boy Erased*. Spoiler alert: somewhere in the last reel of the film, Jared, now two or three years into his escape from gay-conversion therapy and embarking on a fledgling writing career, makes an unannounced visit to his parents' home on a Sunday where he finds his mother home. She suggests that if he wants to talk with his father he'll have to go to Church - he is, after all, the Pastor! But that prompts Jared to ask his mother, why *she* isn't there. "I do go. Sometimes. I support your father. But he knows I can't cope with all the... well... I love God, God loves me, I love my son. That's it. I think for your father it's a little bit more complicated."

## Love Is Always Complicated

If there is one thing I have learned in two years as Minister, it's something that I really already knew. Love is *always* more complicated. Not, of course, in the ultimate sense—in the sense that so inflames our hearts as Franciscans—that conviction that Christ, the Creation, the Incarnation, the Universe, the very life of the Holy Trinity, the whole thing, is fundamentally about *relationship*: the primacy of a love that we can find so hard to believe in, at least for ourselves, even when we're declaring it to others; that hard knowledge that we are loved. Not because we love God. Not because we think we care for the poor, or the environment or about inclusion or social justice. Not because we say the right things or pray the right prayers. Not because we screw up our faces to try to make sure we believe what we say we believe. That nothing in the whole picture has anything to do with what we might deserve because it was never about being deserved in the first place.

That truth that is so hard to accept is also really so simple. But on the way, yes, it's complicated. Working it out, living it out in our individual lives and especially our community life, may be one of the most important examples of that insight of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "For the simplicity on this side of complexity, I wouldn't give you a fig, but for the simplicity on the other side of complexity, for that I would give you anything I have."

*Perhaps, I felt, if we could only enable each other to believe that we are loved, then we might begin more consistently to behave as if that were actually true.*

Two years ago, in my first address as Minister, I quoted the beautiful poem by Galway Kinnell about Francis blessing the sow, about the need to teach a thing its loveliness. I felt that it encapsulated so much of the ministry we aspire to as

Franciscans. And I felt its acute relevance when we look around at one another in community and what we see, sometimes, isn't lovely at all. Perhaps, I felt, if we could only enable each other to believe that we are loved, then we might begin more consistently to behave as if that were actually true. We can feel so small, so fragile, so uncertain, so in need of some kind of security and validation. Are we doing it all right? Am I going to make it? Are we going to

*cont. on page 8*



Brother Desmond, cont.  
from p. 7

make it? That example of teaching a thing its loveliness was so important to me that I made reference to it again a year ago, and here I am bringing it up once more. It seems relevant to some of the more difficult pastoral and interpersonal moments of the last year and in our current community life. But maybe, too, there was on my part an erring on that short-cut side of complexity. If, in the years ahead, at the start of this second century of our existence as a community, and starting almost from scratch (which is a good place to start), we are going to continue on the journey of building a community that expresses not only the love we have found in Christ but also the joy and humility that are core values for us as Franciscans, it's often going to be complicated.

### Surprised by Joy

That thought of joy caught me up short recently. I was "surprised by joy" by something said by a couple of members of the superiors' group during our sharing at the Leaders' Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA). I could tell they meant it when they spoke of the sheer wonder and privilege of living the Religious Life to which they were called, almost unable to fathom why anyone *wouldn't* choose to be a religious brother or sister in the Episcopal Church.

*I wonder why Franciscans, of all people, may be so reticent to express our lives in terms of joy, or even to characterize it as much of a feature of our daily life.*

I know that most of us wouldn't say that. Some of us would be rather cynical. I wonder why Franciscans, of all people, may be so reticent to express our lives in terms of joy, or even to characterize it as much of a feature of our daily life. We—I—seem to be pre-occupied with the problems, the anxieties, with all that is wrong...especially with each other. Of course, joy, as our Principles effectively remind us, is not the same thing as happiness, and neither is much attained by its deliberate seeking or grasping. As William Blake put it:

*He who binds to himself a joy  
Does the winged life destroy;  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in eternity's sun rise.*

Sometimes there is a joy that shines through in our community life, despite everything. It is often most apparent to those who are one step removed from our center, those who encounter us in the hinterland of our houses: in the parishes, the residential homes or hospitals, the clothing and feeding programs and the streets of our lives. We are, at least, not afraid of a sense of humor! And sometimes we actually rediscover joy when we articulate our life in talking to others. But if we may not grasp at it, joy *is*, unlike happiness, and more like the gratitude with which it is linked, something we can seek to cultivate and practice. Perhaps we do need to remember to kiss it as it flies occasionally! There is a very real sense in which it *is* a choice, an aspect reflected in those irritating stories of Francis upbraiding brothers who dared to walk around looking miserable!

### Living in Community

And so, to humility, which is so much the key factor in our Franciscan perspective on the living of the Gospel. And so paradoxical! Do we

*cont. on page 9*



Brother Desmond, cont.  
from p. 8

sometimes struggle to express the Gospel life in our community because we love ourselves too much or because we haven't learned to love ourselves at all? And perhaps that's the same thing.

Looking around, I do see a fair bit of protected-ness in our community, a lot of body armor at times. Including in myself. What that looks like varies, of course. Some of us can appear very reluctant to really let others in, to relate to one another at a level much below the surface. We escape into our heads, or into the acceptable stereotypes of our culture's construction of masculinity, or into a piety or religious practice that keeps us at arm's length from the messy reality of being human, and hence, actually from genuine encounter with our frightening, incarnate God.

*But what if the broken humanity with which I need to engage is my own? Or indeed that of my brother whose broken parts and deep need for connection is masked by apparent self-sufficiency?*

The Gospel tells us quite clearly that He is to be found where broken humanity is—and we revel in that in the kinds of ministries we identify with as Franciscans. But what if the broken humanity with which I need to engage is my *own*? Or indeed that of my brother whose broken parts and deep need for connection is masked by apparent self-sufficiency? As

Bishop Frank Griswold put it in his address to CAROA, imagine if people could really see what we're like underneath the habit!

But there's another kind of armor that doesn't *look* like armor at all. For those of us who are so inclined, weakness and vulnerability—which in their most genuine expression can be holy ground for true human and divine encounter—can become just another way of evading conflict or responsibility, of hiding behind an apologetic humility that isn't really humility at all. *If I'm incapable of doing it, then it really can't be my fault!* And "sorry" can be a kind of manipulation, a word calculated to make me more comfortable by preempting any further challenge from you. But sometimes we *appear* as if we think of ourselves as absolutely right, at least in our own favored areas of expertise, as if we have nothing at all to learn from the ignorant and character-flawed simpletons with whom we graciously condescend to share our lives. False strength, false weakness: both can be places to hide.

Now I *don't* think we're a disaster! I look around the room and "I thank God when I remember you in my prayers." I really do. And I do see you loving and caring for one another! When I do hear complaints about others, they are often born of a deep frustration that the unique value, the true giftedness of the brother we live with, is somehow being distorted or not given authentic expression. But there is a tension, maybe even a genuine paradox, between actually valuing ourselves with some small reflection of the value that *God* puts on each of us, and the *sine proprio* of letting go, not grasping at or promoting our "own" abilities, experience and opinions. We need help to realize our true value in Christ, in the light of which all our inauthentic self-regard melts away.

### Making Continuing Conversion Possible

Thomas of Celano famously records Francis saying at the end of his life, "I have done what was mine to do, may God teach you what is yours." It tends to make us think of his ministry, his service to the

*cont. on page 10*

*Brother Desmond, cont.  
from p. 9*

poor, his deepening life of contemplation. But may we not also ask what it was he needed to do, or at least to accept and consent to in his life, which made his own continuing conversion possible? Our Benedictine brothers and sisters take a *vow* of Conversion of Life and I think they are on to something.

What will it take for you to fearlessly continue along the path of transformation, whatever hobgoblins or foul fiends of the soul you may have to contend with in the way? Will you take the risk? Will you fearlessly persevere? Will you continue in the necessary personal work? I think that's what I'm asking. With the encouragement of my brothers, I have taken a few intentional steps this year along the complex path of learning how to love myself and serve with love in the role I've been called to. I believe I have begun to do what is mine to do. *May God teach you what is yours.*



Renewal of Vows Sermon  
(Matthew 11:25-30)

Tracey Carroll

*Offered at TSSF Chapter on  
October 8, 2019*

**I had never been to Mobile, Alabama. I had been to other cities** in Alabama, but not that one. Since we are who we are, we left kind of late on Sunday, and we didn't see much of the scenery once we crossed the state line. We were tired, and in a strange place and not at all sure of our mission. We had been on the road for over eight hours, and all three of us were grouchy, and Bill and I were probably both secretly wondering if we would even get Danny out of the car once we arrived. The last trip we made to Oklahoma the month before, he didn't get out of the car at the hotel until 3 a.m. It made for a long day the next day.

Somehow, we managed to get Danny out of the car. It wasn't easy, and there was some small amount of blood-letting. Fortunately, some Cheez-Its, some Diet Coke, and the promise of some time to watch his favorite show, "The Wiggles," on his tablet, got him up to the room. Mercifully, he got to sleep before 2 am...barely.

The next morning, we got in the car, and there was much grumbling between the adults who could talk... we talked about trying to keep an open mind... we talked about how we had no

*Whenever the going gets tough in our house, we look at each other and say, "So, you wanted to be a Franciscan?" Somehow, we gain some strength in that little irony.*

idea what to expect... I know I wondered if we were on a fool's mission; it certainly wouldn't be the first time. But, then again, wasn't that what we were called to anyway... one fool's mission after another? Whenever the going gets tough in our house, we look at each other and say, "So, you wanted to be a Franciscan?" Somehow, we gain some strength in that little irony.

Anyway, the morning after we arrived in Mobile, Danny once again surprised me by getting out of the car when we reached our destination. It was a one-story, small building, wedged in behind a Walgreens. The neighborhood was nothing out of the ordinary. When we crossed the threshold of that building, however, everything was different.

*cont. on page 11*

*Renewal of Vows Sermon,  
cont. from p. 10*

### **A Taste of the Kingdom**

*“Oh, Hi!! You must be the Carrolls! This must be Danny! Hi, Danny, would you like to come sit over here with us? We’re just watching the end of John’s movie while we wait for lunch.”* After introducing herself to us, Margaret, a “team member,” started introducing us to lots of people. Some, like Margaret, were team members, typically developing adults who worked with, and some of whom, lived in the community. Others were “core members,” adults with some sort of developmental disability who lived in the community.



*Danny, with Tracey’s  
husband Bill, the Rev. Dr.  
William Carroll.*

At one point, I leaned over to Bill and said, *“F.O.D over in the other room.”* F.O.D., for those of you playing at home, means “Friend of Dan,” and it refers to someone who has Down Syndrome, like our son. What was so interesting as I watched things go on around me, is... *things went on around me*, if that makes sense. Sometimes I had trouble telling who was a “team” versus a “core” member. Some core members, like our son, had very few words, if any, and required pretty close supervision. Others worked outside the community and seemed to be pretty independent. And, here’s what I noticed the two days we were there: *Danny, smiled.* It was as if he knew, that deep in his heart, he was with *his* people.

Where I come from, your people are important. It identifies you in the greater community; and you are either guilty or innocent by association. But Danny smiled. He interacted. He played ball. He ate lunch. He spilled people’s drinks, just like at home. He sat on the couch and reached over and held the hand of David, the “F.O.D.” from earlier, and David patted Danny and held his hand.

Now, Danny is picky. He doesn’t hold just anyone’s hand; but David was part of his tribe...one of his people. What I observed over our two-day visit were adults, some disabled, some not, who worked at helping Danny and his wide-eyed parents feel like part of the community, part of the larger family. Members of the community lived together in several houses in Mobile, and we had dinner at two different houses. At both tables there were stories, there was laughter, and everyone worked together to get the table ready. After dinner at each house there was a battery-operated candle with the names of all of the members of the house on it. The candle was passed to everyone at the table to hold and to lift up prayers. After everyone had a turn, the time of prayer ended with this prayer:

*cont. on page 12*

**The L'Arche Prayer**

*Father, through Jesus our Lord and our brother,  
we ask you to bless us.*

*Grant that L'Arche be a true home  
where the poor in spirit may find life,  
where those who suffer may find hope.*

*Keep in your loving care all those who come.*

*Spirit of God, give us greatness of heart,  
that we may welcome all those You send.*

*Make us compassionate,*

*that we may heal and bring peace.*

*Help us to see, to serve, and to love.*

*O Lord, through the hands of your little ones, bless us.*

*Through the eyes of those who are rejected, smile on us.*

*O Lord, grant freedom, fellowship and unity  
to all your children,*

*and welcome everyone into Your kingdom.*

*Amen*

Sound familiar? The whole time we were there, I felt the spirit of Francis and Clare, not to mention, Jesus, everywhere. It was truly a taste of the kingdom that had most definitely been hidden from the wise and been revealed to infants. In this particular community and others like it all around the world, L'Arche has managed to do a small part to reveal the kingdom; weakness was turned into strength, those who were not "intelligent or successful" by societal standards were teaching some of those who were what true living was about.

People like my son, who many would say are a burden to their families and to society, flourished, and had meaningful relationships and contributed to the lives of others; these who were seen as disposable in some places were able to live their lives as children of God who were loved and cherished. In so many ways, once we walked through the doors of the community center, it was an entirely different world. It was a community that certainly had its own problems and difficulties, but even those moments were handled with the love and dignity that all of God's children deserve...It was a community where everyone embraced the love and generosity of poverty, so that all might be spiritually rich.

**A Community of Brothers and Sisters**

Tonight, Beloved, we will renew the vows that we have held for years. We shall promise to take up the cross of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and it, above all things is what we proclaim to the world; it is the love of Jesus, and the death of self that we proclaim, so that *we might look like him, minister like him, love like him.*

Rebuilding the church, as Francis was commanded to do is a daunting task; but we have been given a community of brothers and sisters who, like each of us, are imperfect, broken, redeemed, and loved people. We do not do this work alone; the burden is indeed light, when we are yoked together. When he began the first

*cont. on page 13*



*Renewal of Vows Sermon,  
cont. from p. 12*

L'Arche community, I don't think Jean Vanier could have imagined the life-giving impact such a community could have on the lives of people like my son. And even L'Arche is imperfect, and the movement is much too small to help all of those who desperately need it; and yet with faith the size of a mustard seed, they continue; and with God's help, there will be more communities that form over the years, because "*We can't possibly do it all*" is no excuse.

*The world needs the message that we have to give; a message that says every creature on earth is our brother and sister; a message that says "no" to the demands of consumerism and time-clock punching that is killing us and our children. My son has taught me that what is simple is what is most life-giving.*

Jesus didn't heal everyone; Francis helped as many lepers as he could; there is much that challenges us as individuals and as a community; and we cannot possibly do it all... but we can do something; we can live and work together and in our communities, spreading peace, and joy, and living by the principles we have all vowed to uphold... by helping to build a loving community, by making our Lord known and loved, to spread a spirit of love and harmony, to live simply so that we might be generous, to bear the image of Christ as Francis did in the marks of his body to the world as witnesses to a better way.

The world needs the message that we have to give; a message that says no one is disposable and that all have worth; a message that says every creature on earth is our brother and sister; a message that says "no" to the demands of consumerism and time-clock punching that is killing us and our children. My son has taught me that what is simple is what is most life-giving.

*May Danny always have people around him that he can inspire,  
may you and I always seek to do the will of Jesus  
in the way of Francis and Clare;  
and may our Lord always give us the strength and the humor  
to live out the vows that we take tonight.*



*For those interested in learning more about L'Arche, see [larche.org](http://larche.org) or in the USA, [larcheusa.org](http://larcheusa.org). I recommend Henri Nouwen's book *Road to Daybreak* and Jean Vanier's book *Becoming Human for a deeper look*.*



## Meditation on the Tree of Life

Jeff Golliver



*The Cross of Christ has become the Tree of Life, expressed here in the vining motifs of the Celtic cross.*

**F**or thousands of years, the sacred tree, the *axis mundi* at the “center” of everything, has occupied an exalted place in how people experience and conceive of life’s meaning. Living today, in the “here and now” as we conceive of it, that singular, symbolic, but spiritually real tree seems to be a long way off. In our religious tradition, it figures prominently near the beginning of *Genesis* in the Garden, but even that seems a world away. So before turning to the sacred tree, let’s begin where we are -- the only starting place we’ll ever have. Maybe the sacred tree will not be so far away after all.

### Difficulties in Everyday Conversations

Recently, the number of people who share with me, as a serious pastoral matter, their worrisome frustration or alarm about difficulties in everyday conversation has substantially increased. They’re talking about their families and friends, telling me about divisions that have happened within their families to an extent they’ve never known, and the loss of friendships for the same reasons. Much of this is related to politics, but that’s not all of it. For example, their social networks online give the impression of being very personal, extensive and immediate, yet their lives feel, from the inside out, unexpectedly impersonal. Something isn’t right. In their minds, they go over it again and again, like watching the same movie over and over again, which adds to the frustration. It’s exhausting, but even that might not be obvious. The outer disturbance reflects an inner disturbance, and vice versa.

Increasing ambiguity in our ideas and assumptions about “power” and “persons” seem to underlie much of it – as if the ground of existence is shaking. Just hearing those words spoken in conversation or in the media is likely to get my attention. Whether or not we’re aware of it, I suspect this is true for most everyone, especially in the church. I’m not thinking of the meaning of words found in dictionaries, but the larger, lived meanings – meaningfulness -- that make up our lives every day. My experience is that when we’re paying close attention in almost any conversation, we’ll hear echoes of “power” and “person” swirling in the background – their meaning unresolved, up for grabs. As the ground of our existence seems to shake – as a result of political, economic, social, and ecological upheaval -- so do our assumptions about core meanings in life. Meaning becomes fluid and life feels shaky, for better or worse.

### Being Spiritually Awake

This is what I mean by “for better or worse.” That fluidity (and ambiguity) could be a good sign in difficult times, if it suggests that our creative juices are flowing – if we’re spiritually awake and willing enough to go deeper, spiritually, to realize the mess we’re in, *and* to search for a better course. But it’s not good, if it only suggests the kind of confusion and divisive forces created by manipulation, domination, and propaganda -- the very opposite of genuine creativity.

Either way, all this is about how we create a large part of our common life, what St. Paul would have called our “world” and the “principalities and powers.” Bonhoeffer wrote in a similar way by

*cont. on page 15*

*Tree of Life,  
cont. from p. 14*

describing “a life together” as the cherished, to-die-for goal in life. Powerful worldly forces are at work these days, forces that divide our “life together” into layer upon layer of “us” versus “them,” which would force us to forget any deep spiritual understanding of what it might mean to be a person or how to be with other persons. When this happens, the world becomes thing-like. Other people become thing-like. All God’s creatures become thing-like.

*Being right about moral issues is important and good ... but down deep in the soul, I’m not actually asking you to be right ... I’m asking you to be loving. Everything else will follow.*

Because this happens, Christians follow the way of Jesus, choosing faith over fear, discerning in our hearts and minds what it means. If all goes well, we’ll know that our efforts will not be enough – and then, we’ll stop talking to ourselves long enough to find that forgotten inner silence – when our minds rest long enough to hear the Spirit speak. An intuition, a voice, seems to come out of nowhere:

*Being right about moral issues is important and good ... but down deep in the soul, I’m not actually asking you to be right ... I’m asking you to be loving. Everything else will follow.*

When the inner silence fixes our attention even more, a door opens: “the gate” that Jesus talked about and was. We feel it, but without knowing how to move ahead. The Spirit comes to our assistance, whispering, *Do not be afraid, I love you.*

We want to trust all this, but the place seems totally unknown – so we start talking to ourselves again, trying to talk ourselves out of everything that has happened, without realizing what we’re doing.

Now the Spirit says plainly:

*This is your choice ... you can either empty yourself, or fill yourself with yourself and the world. Pick up your cross, or continue to build crosses. What do you really want?*

We say “yes” to self-emptying and cross-carrying with our heart and soul. But the unknown, the darkness, is overwhelming. The Spirit knows this too and says:

*Pick up your cross and I’ll carry you through the darkness. We’ll fly together, your cross and you on my back, all the way home.*

“Home” – what do you mean? The Spirit then becomes a luminous form saying:

*You are home ... you just haven’t realized yet where you live or your God-given work.*

When we pick up our cross and carry it, we begin to be changed, just as the cross becomes the sacred tree. The world God created is alive with the Spirit. Our work is to care for God’s world, every bit of it. God is calling us home.

*What are we waiting for – now is the time.* ◆

## Songs of the Cosmic Heart

Anton Armbruster

### Editor's Note:

In the 2019 Franciscan Times summer issue, Anton explored the New Cosmology, reaffirming that "theology is emerging once again as Queen of the Sciences." In this second installment, he considers the implications for our prayer life.

Right, HUBBLE'S TOP 100 · #1  
Credit: NASA, ESA/Hubble and the Hubble Heritage Team

The NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope has revisited one of its most iconic and popular images: the Eagle Nebula's Pillars of Creation. This image shows the pillars as seen in visible light, capturing the multi-coloured glow of gas clouds, wispy tendrils of dark cosmic dust, and the rust-coloured elephants' trunks of the nebula's famous pillars. From the website [Rocketstem.org](http://Rocketstem.org).



**I**ntersections of physics and Christology are certainly not new. One need only revisit the poetry, meditations, and philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin mentioned in the previous essay. As Teilhard saw the world, matter seeks out matter, producing fresh combinations of infinite variety. The dance of evolution is perpetual movement forward inspired by love. Exquisite forms emerge, each with a one-of-a-kind essence, yet fundamental oneness arises from the multitude of forms.

Similarly, Franciscan theologian John Duns Scotus spoke of two features of our relationship with the world: *univocity of being* and *haecceity* ("thisness"). In articulating univocity, he argued that the divine unifying Consciousness flows through our own being. Haecceity, on the other hand, speaks of the individuality of each creature under heaven.

There is a continuity between our understanding of God and our experiences of what He has created. Driven forward by the Spirit,

we inquire into how the world works. Our wondering is itself an act of devotion. In seeking and naming, we travel on the guiding currents of the Divine Logos: "*What we are seeking is seeking us,*" St Francis reminds us. Attending carefully to what is unique in each creature, we see and hear the Cosmic Christ. For Teilhard, "*research is the highest form of prayer!*"

For me, the power of the science-faith marriage begins with the fact that the evolution of the cosmos produced consciousness (the  
*cont. on page 17*



*Songs of the Cosmic Heart,  
cont. from p. 16*

so-called “anthropic principle”). It was in the very nature of our universe to move toward becoming fully conscious of itself in us. We turn back now and marvel at the splendor of it all.

Today mathematical physicists are working passionately to describe dimensions of an exceedingly strange and wondrous cosmos. Their abstract imaginings stretch us well beyond what we can experience directly through the senses. The intent is clear: to understand the real and, in so doing, celebrate the Mind of God.

This adventure awaits us in contemplative prayer. Pure prayer involves keeping to just a few words. I liken this to the goal of the mathematician to find the simplest, most beautiful way to accurately capture the real, or the haiku master who captures the essence of a moment in just seventeen syllables. We seek the whole-body experience of God’s presence in the here and now, in moments of true communion.

As religious, the heart of mysticism calls to us, and the New Physics is yet another lens through which to examine the full meaning of the *Imago Dei*: God’s breath in the soul of humanity. This kiss of the Divine Presence seals our identity in Christ from the very beginning of creation. We thus forever yearn for communion with the Mother/Father, through the Son, quickened by the action of the Holy Spirit. Divine Presence suffuses the entirety of creation with a movement toward Christ.

Thinking in this way, the “hidden God” is appreciated more as a verb than a noun: a perpetual outpouring of delicious mysteries. As a Franciscan, the New Physics is a renewed call to pure prayer.

In what ways, then, can the new physics inform our inward journey?

### **Christo-Physics as Meditation & Prayer**

The Psalmist cries out:

*“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, what is Man that you are mindful of him, the Son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.” Psalm 8:3-8*

Our theo-scientific inquiries do more than call us to connect the dots and find grand patterns

and unifying laws. We are called, as St. Francis encourages, to quite literally “become prayer.”

As Franciscans, we set aside formal time during each day for prayer. We apply our rules as metronomes that set the rhythm of our days and bracket our experiences in Christ. In doing so, we work to condition heart, mind, and body to seek a more intimate communion with the sacred. Our Mother/Father calls out to us from every cell and atom that make up the universe inside and out. It takes a lifetime of persistent, deep listening to surrender to the loving voice that emerges out of the silence.

Our souls resonate with the Cosmic Big Bang, an event that occurred at  $10^{-43}$  seconds of creation when everything emerged seemingly out of nothing: an ineffable silence. In the same way, silence defines music as each phrase is shaped by the pauses. We live our rules to attune ourselves to the sacred music all around us. We reach for a place within ourselves where there is nothing but prayer (echoing the truth about which St. Francis spoke).

Looking through the lens of a telescope or looking at spectrographs of the light signatures of planets and stars is also prayer. What’s needed is to observe with a sense of wonder as children of the hidden God. In the experience of a penitent Christo-physicist, even mathematics is prayer: the pursuit of the simplest, most elegant, beautiful equations. In the patterns we discern in our science, we celebrate the voice of the Cosmic Maestro.

Revelations from the New Physics challenge us like Zen koans (paradoxical riddles intended to push us beyond logic to enlightenment). We are invited to put away our usual dualistic thinking, this vs. that, and embrace instead the both/and nature of reality. Doing so brings us onto the frontiers of pure prayer with fresh eyes as practiced in the Hesychast tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy and described in the writings of St. John Cassian.

A well-known expression of this tradition is the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy.” Repetition over many years brings the penitent heart to the experience of the prayer praying within them without thought. It moves with the breath and becomes omnipresent. It shapes and defines everything.

Mantra-like “pure prayers” of this kind were part of the daily practice of Br. Bede Griffiths, Camaldolese Benedictine monk in southern India. Fr. John Main brought pure prayer to the

*cont. on page 18*

*Songs of the Cosmic Heart,  
cont. from p. 17*

laity inspired by the teachings of John Cassian. He espoused the use of short, often one-word meditations such as “Maranatha,” “God,” “Love,” or brief phrases such as “God, make haste to help me.” Christian mantra tied to meditative breathing leads the penitent into prayer that arouses the heart.

Referring to the several mysteries detailed in the prior essay, a few mantras of Christo-physics emerge. These illustrate the direction we can travel in, allowing the revelations at the leading edge of cosmology and physics to inspire prayer:

### Cosmological Paradox/Mantra

1. Only 4 % of what exists is observable.  
*Candle in the darkest night.*
2. Dark matter may be the connective tissue of the Cosmic Web.  
*I am that; that is Me.*
3. Dark energy may be the force accelerating the expansion of the universe.  
*All rush to the beginning.*
4. We are mostly made up of “empty space.”  
*Emptiness is Fullness, Emptiness forms;  
Christ is Fullness, Christ forms.*
5. Imbalances and asymmetries make everything possible.  
*”Tilting left, tilting right; All things leaning toward the Light.”*

The only limit is imagination. It is a spiritual exercise to reflect on these and develop mantra as part of one’s journaling. Such short prayers are a fitting place to come to rest after the Office, or as a prelude to a more profound experience of it. It also sets the meditative stage for the examen of consciousness.

Bede Griffiths wrote in 1982:

*If we conceive, then, of humanity converging on a new mode of consciousness in which the barriers of space and time are overcome, we also have to conceive of the whole universe as transcending space and time in the same way. This is what is implied in St Paul’s conception of the New Creation. It is to “bring everything*

*to a head,” everything in Heaven and on Earth, both matter and consciousness. Just as the material elements of the human body are transformed by the new consciousness, so also will the elements of the universe be transformed. This is what is meant by the “new heaven and the new Earth” in the Apocalypse. \**

### Reaching Farther, Wider and Deeper

As a Franciscan astronomer and student of cosmology, mind and the new physics, I find deep meaning in the recitation of the Nicene Creed:

*“I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.”*

Increasingly, I appreciate Duns Scotus’s extraordinary insight, so long ago, about the “thisness” of things hidden from view that can only be discerned by prayerful eyes and heart.

Italian physicist and author Giovanni Vignale wrote:

*...we find ourselves compelled to go beyond the visible, to reach for hidden forms, for fundamental principles working behind the scenes....but to take such bold steps, one cannot rely on calculation alone: it takes passion, imagination, a sense of beauty—all things that we grasp with our whole personality, and definitely with our heart. (Giovanni Vignale, *The Beautiful Invisible: Creativity, Imagination, and Theoretical Physics.*\*\**

It is profoundly encouraging to see the gift of imagination working to drive theology and the sciences back into each other’s arms. I pray each day for the conversion of mind that illuminates the inner light and will secure the future of humankind and our precious island planet. ♦

\* (Father Bede Griffiths, “Science Today and the New Creation” In *Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science (SUNY series in Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology)*. eds. Stanislav Grof, Marjorie Livingston Valier. Albany: SUNY Press, 1984, p. 56-7.)

\*\*Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 3.)

## How to Increase Your Franciscan Presence and Ministry

*Rick Simpson  
Provincial Chaplain*



**I**n the old days of the American Franciscan Third Order, it was actively taught that we should never openly advertise or make known the ministry of our members. If people noticed our good works, and asked, we invited and included them in the paths of the Third Order. My friends, those days are dead. Now is the time to be open about your Franciscan life and ministry.

Here are a few suggestions that can increase your presence and ministry in your local parish and diocese.

1. The historic charism of the Third Order is “The Continued Conversion of our lives to Christ.” Demonstrate the reality of this spiritual gift and growth in all that you do, think, and say. *“Let your light so shine that others will see your good works and give glory to God.”*
2. Wear the habit: having our Profession Cross on at all times is a good practice. In addition, fellowship “apparel” signifying our local presence makes a difference.
3. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in increasing your ministry.
4. Join the outreach ministry of your parish because Francis always ministered to those on the fringes.
5. Write a piece of your Franciscan Journey, or something about a Franciscan Saint for your parish newsletter.
6. Facilitate quiet days for the parish and give seasonal talks as part of adult ed.
7. Staff a table at the annual parish fair showcasing your fellowship and the Order.
8. Give brief TED Talk-like discussions at coffee hour.
9. Serve as a Eucharistic Minister and Visitor wearing your Cross.
10. Place Order literature in the narthex with your phone number on it.
11. Join the vestry and offer to facilitate vestry retreats in conjunction with parish clergy.
12. Help your local parish celebrate Transitus or St. Francis Day with worship and/or a party. Be a spark plug of Franciscan celebration!
13. Look in Clare’s mirror and ask yourself, “Do my ministry ideas truly meet the needs of my parish?”
14. Write about your parish experiences and publish these in the *Franciscan Times* or *Franciscan Connection*.
15. Initiate prayer partners in the parish. Facilitate pairing folks up to connect and pray with each other.
16. Join a Bible study and add your Franciscan perspective as a Tertiary.

*cont. on page 20*

*Franciscan Presence,  
cont. from p. 19*

17. Be part of parish outreach as a Franciscan ambassador, including interfaith work with parish clergy.
18. Teach Sunday school and include stories of Francis and Clare and other Franciscan saints.
19. Introduce the Franciscan Crown Rosary to parish prayer and practice.
20. Ask your local clergy, “How can I, as a Franciscan, better serve the church?” ♦

## A Profession Story

*Mary Teresa Rogers*



*Father Joseph. Photo taken in Florida during the 70s.*

**I**t was September 1978, and tertiaries from New York City and Long Island were meeting for a silent retreat at Little Portion Friary. There was a noon Eucharist on Saturday, where I was professed in the Third Order.

We had previously agreed to break our silence for a few minutes after the Eucharist so the fellowship could give me hugs and congratulations. Joining our little group was one of the friars who had been at the service, a small elderly man. He was disabled, using a wheelchair or a walker (I can't remember exactly). I was pretty sure this was Fr. Joseph, founder of our three Orders, who had recently come to live at Little Portion.

He spoke to us in a gravelly old voice and said, “I'd like to say a prayer now.” All eyes were on him as he prayed:

*O God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant: Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Then he asked, “Who can tell me where this prayer is from?”

Awestruck silence followed.

Fr. Joseph said, “It's from the Requiem Mass.” And then he laughed in his creaky voice, as if he were thinking, *Bet you weren't expecting that!* Then the caregiver friar who was with him helped him leave the chapel, and we re-entered our silence.

I remember how I loved having the silence in which to let the reality of my profession sink in, quietly and without distraction. It was a beautiful early autumn day, and I remember flowers and butterflies. I thought about what Fr. Joseph had said, knowing he had pointed us to an ancient connection between religious profession and death—death to self, death to the world, death to an old life, and being born to a new one. I knew it was true, but it was pretty abstract at the time.

It wasn't until some years later that I learned that Fr. Joseph had been an outstanding liturgist, deeply learned and influential in the Anglo-Catholic movement in the early 20th century. So when I thought about my one and only meeting with Fr. Joseph, who died six months later, I saw it as the way a liturgical scholar preaches a sermon.

*cont. on page 21*



*A Profession Story,  
cont. from p. 20*

Now, as I write this, it is close to 41 years since my profession. On that day in 1978, Fr. Joseph would have been professed for 54 years. From this vantage point, I see another message he was giving us in his cryptic scholarly way:

My children, it's better not to have sentimental illusions about the religious life. Francis wasn't kidding when he told Brother Leo about "perfect joy." You're very likely to find sorrow and loss and disappointment, even heartbreak and betrayal. You will hurt your brothers and sisters as well. And all these experiences are not unfortunate obstacles to living out your vocation. They are integral to the vocation itself.

And as your illusions die, you'll see more and more clearly the face of Our Lord, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and hear his loving, welcoming voice.

Which is no illusion at all. ♦

An Advent Prayer:  
*Let Me, Lord*

*Alice Baird*

*Let me, Lord, discern my faults,  
without becoming self-absorbed,  
let me confess my sins,  
without excuse,  
let me be penitent,  
without despair,  
let me grow in faith  
without self-righteousness,  
let me increase in virtue  
without conceit,  
let me be generous to a fault,  
desiring nothing,  
let me be humble,  
craving no esteem,  
let me be honest,  
even in my silences,  
let me be loving,  
with a true heart,  
and let me be filled with Your Holy Spirit,  
that I may worship and adore You,  
always.*

# THE SPIRIT OF HARMONY

United Religions  
Initiative (URI)

Joyce Wilding



## Editor's Note:

*This is an example, to use Bishop David Rice's words, of getting "truly serious, moreover exceedingly faithful, concerning how we are engaging in and taking care of the world around us." If you have a story about what you are doing to care for Creation, send it to **John Brockmann** for our next issue.*

**M**y formation in **The Third Order of Society of St. Francis** expanded my interest in interfaith work. Much of my TSSF praxis is now done with Bishop William Swing, Founder and Executive Director of United Religions Initiative (URI). URI is a global, grassroots, interfaith network that cultivates peace and justice by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world. The purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to:

- promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation,
- end religiously motivated violence, and
- create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

URI has more than one thousand Cooperation Circles in more than one hundred countries. (See [www.uri.org](http://www.uri.org) to learn the basics about URI Cooperation Circles).

## **Art and Peacemaking Events**

In 2016, I started the Nashville Cooperation Circle (NCC). The core team members are Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Sufi, Christian, Jewish, Cherokee Indian, and Yoga leaders. Our governance or decision-making process uses Appreciative Inquiry, which enhances self-directed work. We host an annual Interfaith Arts Event, Indoor-Outdoor Neighborhood Exhibits (music, mandalas, mosaics, murals,) and Peacemaking events. (See [www.urincc.com](http://www.urincc.com) to learn more about NCC and view a TED Talk by Bishop Swing about URI.)

In 2019 NCC began to host a new Science & Religion series based on "Journey of Universe Story" promoted by Yale's Forum on Religion and Ecology department. Each NCC science and religion program offers key components from "*Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth and Human Transformation.*" These connect mutually enhancing human-Earth relations and our place in this awe-inspiring universe. NCC monthly meetings are devoted to sharing stories about our interfaith experiences.

Each year NCC strives to host or promote Peacemaking Interfaith Arts Event (mosaics, mandalas, murals and music) in low-income neighborhoods. We offer rituals of reciprocity that are integral to indigenous people and interfaith work. These enrich our focus on distributive and prophetic justice. Some associate and core team NCC members work with the Nashville Cordell-Hull United Nations Association and the Global Action Summit's promotion of Sustainable Development Goals. NCC plans to collaborate with One City Nashville, an inner-city campus devoted to green public spaces and cultural diversity.

*cont. on page 23*

*A Profession Story,  
cont. from p. 22*



*Above, Joyce Wilding, standing by a banner on the Scarritt Bennett Center Campus\* where most United Religions Initiative Nashville Cooperation Circle (URI NCC) meetings are hosted.*

**Interfaith Worship Service**

NCC was asked to help the Nashville mayor’s staff plan and host an interfaith worship service to celebrate Nashville’s 20th Celebration of Culture event. My one fear about this service was that some attendees might perceive this service as type of syncretism rather than honoring Oneness and Living Cosmology. My work with Bishop Swing and other URI staff helped me see that the URI NCC work was not promoting syncretism.

As I began to plan the interfaith service and science and religion programs for URI NCC to host, I thought about my past work with Matthew Fox as a “Creation Spirituality” leader. Fox’s definition of cosmology from *The Coming of Cosmic Christ*:

*I mean three things: a scientific story about origins of our universe; mysticism that is a psychic response to our being in a universe; and art, which translate science and mysticism into images that awaken body, soul and society.*

Cosmology needs all three of these to come alive: joyful response (mysticism) to the awesome fact of our being in the universe (science) and our expression of that response by the art of our lives and citizenship (art). The Nashville URI NCC group strives to promote this perspective in its new science and religion programs.

My work with Thomas Berry, a geologist (Earth scholar, see [www.commonwealmagazine.org/geologist](http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/geologist)) and cosmologist inspired me to develop new ways to offer science and religion programs in the “Bible Belt.” Thus, I close with a quote from Berry:

*Both education and religion need to ground themselves within the story of the universe as we now understand this story through empirical knowledge. Within this functional cosmology, we can overcome our alienation and begin the renewal of life on a sustainable basis. This story is a numinous revelatory story that could evoke the vision and the energy required to bring not only ourselves, but the entire planet into a new order of magnificence. (Dream of the Earth)*

*Right, Joyce Wilding with Jayanthi Karunaratne, NCC Buddhist Leader, at a recent meeting. Photo courtesy Michael Shumate.*



## Two Charters: For Compassion & For Earth

Bonnie B. Barnidge

**I**n October 2018, our Chapter affirmed its commitment to the *Charter for Compassion*. You may want to visit their *website* to join as an individual.

The *Charter*, developed by writer Karen Armstrong, affirms basic human values that we cherish. This is a summary of the *Charter's* commitments:

1. To restore compassion to the center of morality and religion;
2. To return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred, or disdain is illegitimate;
3. To ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions, and cultures;
4. To encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity; and
5. To cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings – even those regarded as enemies.

Affirming the *Charter* is open to individuals of all beliefs. It could be a unifying commitment for all humanity. As we continue to ponder our theme, “Rebuild My Church,” may we continue to include the values of the *Charter for Compassion*.

### The Earth Charter

Another unifying commitment for all humanity could be the *Earth Charter*. Information is available on their *website*. This is a summary of their goals:

***Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.***

*The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions. ♦*



## Southeastern Regional Convocation (SERC)

Alice Bangs



*In front of the St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, a statue of St. Francis and the leper.*

**S**outheastern Regional Convocation (SERC) 2019 was memorable! Beth Harris, Cathy Reynolds, and I drove together on Thursday, August 1, up to St. Francis Springs Prayer Center north of Greensboro, North Carolina. They wanted to get some things set up early since the St. Elizabeth and Wolf of Gubbio Fellowships were jointly hosting the event. Also, it was to be a personal overnight retreat for me, and it afforded Cathy and Beth private spiritual time, too.

### A Green Cathedral

The ride was so relaxing and picturesque through mostly rural Virginia and North Carolina. We stopped for lunch on the way and arrived mid-afternoon. I explored the grounds that afternoon and Friday before the others arrived. The woods were a green cathedral. What looked like a deep, dark, and dense forest from a distance was open and airy once walking the trails. The St. Francis Springs Prayer Center comprises about 140 acres so one is immersed in the wooded outdoors with no sense of intruding civilization.

There are comfortable park benches and chairs discreetly placed at frequent intervals along the two main trails. The trails are marked with either white or yellow Tau crosses nailed to trees to designate the route and the degree of ruggedness. Being in the Piedmont section, there are ravines with significantly up-and-down walking terrain. There's a winding stream inside the property. A couple of times I stopped and listened to the water rippling over small rock outcroppings.

Connecting the two main trails is one containing Stations of the Cross. The contemporary interpretations and dedications were most poignant. Seating is provided for reflection. At every opportunity during the weekend I sought out the woods for prayer and introspection. There is a beautiful labyrinth also.

After dinner Thursday evening, Cathy, Beth and I gathered in their room for about an hour. It was a wonderful time. Tears came from laughter and life's shadows as we shared parts of our journeys.

### I Came to Feel I'd Known Them for Ages

This gathering of Franciscans was all I hoped it would be—getting to know people who were just names and photos in the directory, reconnecting with Judi Thomas of St. Elizabeth; Gary Mongillo (Land of Sky) whom I'd met at Northeast Regional Convocation (NERC) years ago when he was with Br. Juniper's Fellowship, and finding out he and his family had vacationed for years in Maine close to where my mother-in-law's house is. Driving down with Cathy and Beth, I came to feel I'd known them all for ages.

*cont. on page 26*

*SERC Convocation,  
cont. from p. 25*



*Beth Harris of St. Elizabeth Fellowship, leading the Litany for the Departed for Julie Goodin and Nancy Chiafulio, both of Wolf of Gubbio Fellowship. Behind Beth is a Japanese maple planted by Julie some years ago.*

I met Marti Mason, a very enthusiastic Companion, and enjoyed hearing about her progress through the rejuvenated Companions community. It's good to hear that their names will be added to the Directory.

Fellowships represented were Bonaventure, God's Joyful Fools, Delmarva Seesaw, Land of the Sky, St. Elizabeth, San Damiano, Tau, and Wolf of Gubbio.

### **Celebrating Sister Water**

Our gifted facilitator, Jim Hynes, led the two-session program on Sister Water: Celebration of God's Gift of Water with Biblical background examples and their contemporary relevance; and Justice Reflections for today's world. We were all fully engaged in Jim's presentation, asking questions, answering questions, offering ideas and sharing experiences. Between sessions we divided into small groups. There were no side trips into divisive politics, as Jim said it was not the program's purpose to demonize anyone. There were also periods for contemplation. Smaller meetings were also held during free time for fellowship conveners and formation counselors.

The staff at St. Francis Springs Prayer Center was warmly hospitable. And the food! Several times people exclaimed we were all getting so spoiled. The chef is a vegetarian, so those of us, including yours truly, did not feel like second-class culinary citizens, as is still sometimes the case. In fact, on one evening, the vegetarians were instructed to move to the head of the line so they would be sure to get their fair share! I felt as though I had a big "V" on my name tag.

Well, I'm still basking in the afterglow of the weekend—the congeniality, information, questions to ponder, the infusion of support for concerns, ministries and personal journeys, and above all the love that permeated our gathering.

Heartfelt thanks to those of Wolf of Gubbio and St. Elizabeth Fellowships who hosted this convocation. *Well done, thou good and faithful servants!* ◆



*Right, the large windows of the chapel looked out on unspoiled woods, seeming to erase the barrier between God's church and his Creation. The architecture was an expression of St. Francis's theology.*

Southwest Regional  
Convocation (SWRC):  
*Visio Divina* with the  
St. John's Bible

Alice Baird

Right, With a slide projected behind them of the Transfiguration, the last subject of their journey of visio divina, are (front row, left to right): Irma Gutierrez, Gay Crouch, Carolyn Woodward, Laurie Burdick, Jerry Thompson, Jane Barnes. Second row: Beth Bierwith, Martha Ernest, Candia Thew, Francesca Wigle, Alice Baird, Mellissa Wafer-Cross. Third row: Dianne Lowe, Mark Goodman (who led our retreat), Mary Mendenhall, Les Lundquist, Carol Tookey, and Cece Evola. Commuters Jack Yerby and Dennis Kane are not pictured.

To learn more about the St. John's Bible, go to [www.saintjohnsbible.org](http://www.saintjohnsbible.org).



**M**y mother was an extraordinary calligrapher. Having studied the methods of medieval illumination, she would prepare animal-skin vellum, make ink from oak galls, mix egg tempera paints with jewel-like brilliance, and lay down wispy sheets of 24-carat gold for her illuminations of Bible passages, poems by William Blake, and quotes from Shakespeare. When visitors come to my home, I am always pleased to show off her artwork, and they are always astounded by its perfection.

So when I learned that the theme of this year's Southwest Regional Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, would be "The St. John's Bible: Illuminating Creation," and an unexpected tax refund came my way, I was eager to sign up. The St. John's Bible, I knew, was the first completely handwritten and hand-illuminated Bible produced since the Middle Ages. Commissioned by the Benedictine monks of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, the project took 13 years and \$8 million to complete—far exceeding both its original budget and time horizon. In announcing the completion of the Bible in 2011, Abbot John Klassen, OSB, dubbed it "a work of art to ignite the spiritual imagination of the world." (<https://www.saintjohnsbible.org/promotions/news/Amen.htm>)

### Traditional Techniques with a Modern Esthetic

Under the direction of master calligrapher Donald Jackson of Wales, the artists of the St. John's Bible employed ancient, traditional techniques and materials in creating this masterpiece, but the esthetic they drew on was contemporary, born of a sensibility that aligned more with mysticism and broad theological reflection than the iconography of the past. Its powerful imagery invites *visio divina*, or deep reading into the symbolism and theology that is both revealed and hidden in its illuminations.

In this sense, noted Mark Goodman, who led our three-day retreat over the weekend of Francistide, the illuminations of the St.

*cont. on page 28*



*SWRC Convocation,  
cont. from p. 27*



*Gay Crouch, left, and Mary Mendenhall, right, in the “scriptorium.”*

John’s Bible are more akin to icons—portals to the divine—than to “illustrations.” He opened our eyes to the visual references embedded in the images: for example, the eyeglasses taken from Holocaust victims piled within Ezekiel’s Valley of the Dry Bones; aboriginal cave paintings and a portion of the satellite map of the Ganges River, both of which appear in panels of the Seven Days of Creation; visual references to Hindu and Buddhist spirituality; the striking Ethiopian ethnic motifs in the unsettling depiction of Adam and Eve; and scientific allusions, such as the double helix and images from the Hubble telescope; among many, many other references. And throughout, the

dazzling gold leaf signifying the divine.

### **A Scholarly and Very Personal Pilgrimage**

The Very Rev. Mark Goodman, Dean Emeritus of Saint John’s Cathedral in Albuquerque, led us in our exploration of the St. John’s Bible that was not only scholarly but also allowed each of us to engage in a personal pilgrimage by reflecting through *visio divina* on selected illuminations from the life of Christ. His own encounter with this extraordinary work of art and scripture began with his work to secure the gift of the seven-volume, large-format Heritage edition of the SJB for the cathedral in Albuquerque. (A Google search placed the cost of the Heritage edition in the neighborhood of \$150,000.) The cathedral staff brought all seven volumes to the lovely diocesan Bosque Center where we stayed. Far from being padlocked in glass cases, the volumes were displayed on tables

throughout the meeting area for us to admire and handle; we were even invited to rub our fingers on the hand-textured illuminations! “The donors of the Saint John’s Bible,” Mark told us, “said that if they came back in 50 years and these volumes were still in pristine condition, they will have wasted their money.”

### **An Artist’s Vision to Bring This Convocation to Fruition**

The prime mover behind this convocation was tertiary and artist Cece Evola. A few years ago when she visited the Cathedral of St. John to view the St. John’s Bible with her Milagro Fellowship, she was intensely struck by the beauty and power of its images. “As an artist,” she said, “I was particularly taken with the illuminations and by the fact that the art spoke of current issues and social justice themes. It was like reading Midrashic literature to me. The illuminations brought the past and the present together in the now. I knew that more people needed to see this Bible.”

*cont. on page 29*

*“I was particularly taken with the illuminations and by the fact that the art spoke of current issues and social justice themes. It was like reading Midrashic literature to me. The illuminations brought the past and the present together in the now.” Cece Evola*



*SWRC Convocation,  
cont. from p. 28*

*Right, The Very Rev. Mark Goodman prepares to celebrate our concluding Eucharist in the Bosque Center. On the altar are the olive wood vessels he purchased in Assisi. Seated behind him is Dianne Lowe, who served as deacon.*



Immediately she proposed building a convocation around the St. John's Bible, but her exuberance was met with considerable nay-saying. Cece, however, was not to be deterred. She pursued her goal so determinedly, lining up Mark as speaker and securing the approval of St. John's Abbey, that when registration failed to meet expectations, the convocation was opened to anyone within the diocese who wanted to attend. "This might be a good way to introduce others to the Third Order and 'rebuild my church,'" she noted. "And so it happened. We had half Franciscans, including three Companions, and half others who came from all over."

### **A Scriptorium for Our Own Illuminations**

A unique and playful feature of the convocation program was the "scriptorium," where participants could create their own illuminations of favorite Bible verses in between sessions. Cece generously stocked the room with paper, pens, paints, imitation gold leaf, patterned papers, stickers, scissors, books on calligraphy, and more from her own personal supplies. Demonstrating the use of these materials, and sharing with us her own illuminations, she encouraged and assisted us to become "scribes," engaging with scripture through art.

While some participants came from as far away as Washington State, South Carolina, and Texas, most were from New Mexico's Diocese of Rio Grande, including several who were neither tertiaries nor companions. Most were present during our concluding Eucharist, when Third Order members and companions witnessed to the richness of our Franciscan liturgy by renewing our vows in front of the altar.

### **A Profoundly Meaningful Retreat**

This was one of the most meaningful retreats I have ever attended. Thank you, Cece and the Milagro and Four Corners Fellowships, who organized and sponsored the convocation; to Father Mark Goodman, who proved such a sensitive and knowledgeable spiritual guide; and to those who led our worship and devotions throughout.

And deepest thanks to the artists, scholars, and patrons of the St. John's Bible for giving such an important gift to the world. ♦

#### Editor's Note:

*For a remarkable example of the contemplative practice of visio divina, read Henri Nouwen's book, The Return of the Prodigal Son, an intensive meditation on Rembrandt's painting by the same name.*

# NEWS FROM CHAPTER

## Francistide 2019 Chapter

*John Rebstock*

*Right, Present at Francistide 2019 Chapter meeting were (seated, left to right): Brother Desmond, SSF, First Order Visitor; Celso Franco de Oliveira; Sister Jean, CSF, First Order Visitor; Empty Chair for Francis.*

*(First row): Liz Peacock, Verleah Kosloske, Alison Saichek, Janet Fedders, Desirée Archer, Tracey Carroll, Rick Simpson, and Jeff Golliher.*

*(Second row): Charlie McCarron, Assistant Minister Provincial; Lucinda Dyer, Secretary as of December 1; Jotie Noel; John Rebstock; Linda King Watkins, JPIC Observer; Janet Strickler; Bruce James Kay, OEF Visitor; Peter Stube; Masud Ibn Syedullah, External Relations Officer.*



**T**wo words in particular come to me as I pray and reflect on this year's Francistide Chapter meeting: *compassion* and *generosity*. One of the major benefits of spending time together is to better understand one another and the world in which we live. With such understanding, we can continue to turn our lives Godward so that we engage the world with compassion and generosity. This is what Chapter seeks to do, both among itself (with representatives from all over the Province) and in how we lead and equip all our members, wherever we live. Minister Provincial Janet Fedders led our annual, in-person meeting in Connecticut from October 7-11, 2019.

### **Some Statistics**

Janet provided numbers about our Province of the Americas. We have 507 members: 34 postulants, 50 novices, and 423 professed. Geographically, the Province covers 18 countries, with most members in the United States, followed by Brazil, Canada, Trinidad/Tobago and Guyana. After those, the numbers fall in most places to single digits. We have 47 Fellowships in the US and Canada. In addition, we have three virtual Fellowships. We have 35 area chaplains for the US, Canada, Trinidad/Tobago, and Guyana. Brazil has its own Chaplain. So we are in good health, but geographic dispersion remains a challenge.

### **Sacred Ecology**

Over the past year, climate change has emerged as a major concern among many tertiaries worldwide. At their August meeting in New York this year, the Minister General and all the Ministers Provincial

*cont. on page 31*

*Francistide Chapter, cont. from p. 30*

issued a statement urging tertiaries and others to help our troubled Creation. As Franciscans, we share a special call to lead with humility, love and joy.

Steve Blackmer and Teresa Gardner, representing Church of the Woods and Kairos Earth, helped lead Chapter in a two-day retreat to guide us deeper into communion with Creation. Assistant Minister Provincial Charlie McCarron also shared his knowledge about the Franciscan spiritual and intellectual traditions that ground our sense of oneness with Creation. Further, Charlie shared the characteristics of early tertiaries, including how they embodied their theology in their lives of service, and nurtured an empathic spirituality of devotion to the crucified Christ and his manifestation among those who experience suffering.

An important outcome of this focused time is an initiative that will move our Province into an action phase. The initial goals are two-fold:

- 1) To inspire and equip tertiaries on how to lessen the human impact on climate change by identifying local needs, by changing our own lifestyles and by helping to lead others in our local communities;
- 2) To support tertiaries using our Franciscan spirituality in facing future environmental disruption with love, hope and joy, assisting them in their work with the poor and those most affected by climate change.

Janet will appoint additional members to our existing Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) team. They will be charged with developing and presenting workshops at regional convocations and Zoom convocations in 2020 in support of these two goals. Building on these experiences, a potential Phase II would provide followup during 2020-21, and possible convocation presence again in 2021, to assess how tertiaries are doing and to provide additional inspiration. These two phases

*Click here to view a video in which Janet Fedders talks about the discussions around climate change that took place at Chapter.*

would culminate in a major JPIC presentation at Provincial Convocation 2022. Watch for more!

### Formation Working Group

Chapter agreed that how and why we engage in formation is due for reexamination. Charlie McCarron will have oversight of a formation working group to be chaired by Jonathan Lloyd. Janet Strickler will be the Chapter representative to this group. The group will look at the point where the discernment of persons who feel a call to TSSF and the discernment of the community intersect. They will also look at a number of other practical issues. Details will be fleshed out about the working group's makeup and charge, to be reviewed by Chapter at its November meeting. Please touch base with Charlie, Jonathan, or Janet S. if you have concerns or suggestions.

### Working Group on Ministry with the Incarcerated

A number of concerns have emerged recently about how TSSF can better nurture a Franciscan spiritual expression with those who are incarcerated. Jotie Noel, Liz Peacock, and Peter Stube will put together a working group of tertiaries who minister with prisoners. They will look Province-wide to make recommendations about how the Order can support this evangelical ministry.

### Hispanic Ministry

Jim Hagen reported about progress being made in Spanish-speaking areas of our Province. Growth is occurring in a number of countries. In a couple of dioceses, the bishops are looking to TSSF as a source of renewal. There is a lot of cross-fertilization between Brazil and Cuba. Will Wauters is replacing Barbara D. Bennett as formation director for Spanish-speakers.

### Companions

The Companions are experiencing a renewed sense of community and vitality. This is a result of hard work among a group of 17 people working with the Companions. There are 101 Companions and the number is growing. A new section will be added to our Directory to include the Companions.

### External Relations

TSSF is part of a large family of Franciscan and other religious organizations. Masud Ibn

*cont. on page 32*



*Francistide Chapter, cont. from p. 31*

Syedullah continues to work on our behalf with these other groups. Chapter also received news about the ongoing work of our First Order sisters and brothers in SSF and CSF, and from the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans.

### Principles-Based Rule Experiment

Our Province completed the first phase of the experiment to reformat our rules around the Principles. (*See article, right.*) The experiment was successful, and at their meeting in August the Ministers Provincial extended the experiment for another two years. Next steps in our Province will be shepherded by the Chaplaincy program.

### Some Chapter Housekeeping

Chapter expressed its gratitude to Verleah Kosloske, who will soon end four years of dedicated service as our Provincial Secretary. Lucinda Dyer will replace her and will be assisted by two new clerk positions. An IT Guardian will handle electronic communications; the Directory Editor is responsible for the Directory and will manage updates and issue Hot News.

Peter Stube appointed Jotie Noel and Tracey Carroll as assistant fellowship coordinators to help promote ongoing formation for the professed.

### We Are Your Servants

For the past year Chapter has been meeting almost monthly via videoconference, in addition to the extended in-person meeting every Francistide. You are always welcome to express your hopes, ideas and concerns to any member of Chapter. Our names are listed in the Directory (for 2019, see page 6). As of October, Desiree Archer, Claude Berkley, John Rebstock, and Janet Strickler have replaced Phil Geliebter, Millicent Ramcharan, Masud Ibn Syedullah, and Joan Verret. All other names in the Directory are current. In addition to your comments and questions, we welcome your prayers. ♦

## Report on the Experiment With a Principle-Based Rule

*Rick Bellows*

**T**he 2017 Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter called for all provinces to experiment with tertiaries basing their personal Rules of Life on the Principles instead of on the nine points mandated by the Constitution. Our Provincial Chapter approved a limited experiment to see if having one's Rule of Life inspired directly by the Principles was worth further consideration.

One invitation was sent to all professed, directing those participants to sign up with the Minister Provincial. She passed the names of the 31 professed on to the team keeping track of the experiment. Participants began to change their rule and live it by the fall or early winter of 2018. In May of 2019, participants responded to a questionnaire. Based on the 24 responses, a report was written for our Minister Provincial to present at the Provincial Ministers Meeting this summer. This article is a summary of that report.

The questionnaire asked six questions; the report presented each question with excerpts of people's responses. Here are the questions and a sample of the responses.

1. *Reflecting on your experience in the experiment, what has been working?*
  - The Principles-based rule "breathed new life into living a Franciscan life."
  - "Helps me lead a more fully Franciscan life."
  - Is "harder, but deeper,...requires more creative thought and prayer...At the same time more flexible.... [It is] like writing a poem, while the old version felt more like prose."
2. *Why has that been working for you?*
  - "I feel empowered to look deeper. More in alignment with Franciscan charisms."
  - The Principles balance prayer and action.

*cont. on page 33*



*Principle-Based Rule  
Experiment, cont. from p. 32*

*The Ministers Provincial and the Minister General at their August meeting agreed to continue the experiment for another two years. Details on Phase Two are being worked out. If you wish to be a participant when the time comes, just let our Minister Provincial know. If you wish to see the whole report (edited so respondents will remain anonymous), please email a request to Rick Bellows.*

3. *What has been less than optimal?*
  - “My rule is now too long.”
  - Length made the specifics of the rule hard to remember.
  - Formation materials are based on the 9 points, therefore those in formation can’t participate until the [formation] materials are edited.
4. *What would be the ideal?*
  - Several respondents commented on their desire to write and live the rule with “community support,” and with participants supporting each other.
  - “Share with others,” “with my fellowship,” “someone to support me.”
5. *What resources, information, or supports would be needed to make it closer to ideal?*
  - Introductory materials should be shorter and better directed.
  - Fellowships should provide opportunity for discussion of this experiment.
6. *In one word, how would you describe your experience in the experiment?*
  - 19 of the 24 participants answered with a word, and each was different.
  - Activating, Awesome, Better, Challenging, Contemplative, Creative, Exemplary, Inspiring, Joyful, Life-giving, Miraculous, Perplexing-but-worthwhile, Refreshed, Re-invigorating, Rejuvenating, Soul-Searching, Synthesis, Useful, Waste-of-time.

Almost all the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Only one response was consistently negative.

These led to drafting possible next steps for Chapter to consider in Phase Two. Possible next steps include:

- Continue the experiment, and allow new participants to join it.
- Provide models of rules that include some short samples.
- Provide models of a rule and its supplement: the rule with just the action points to remember, and a supplement with the Principle or Bible passage that inspired each action point.
- Focus and improve the introductory materials.
- Build community of those in the experiment, and discuss it in fellowships. ◆

## Sidebar

The Principle-Based  
Rule of Life:  
A Dissenting View

Alice Baird

Editor's Note:

*This article is a response to the previous one and did not originate with Chapter, as do all the other articles in this section. As such, it represents one individual's personal views.*

**A**s a recently professed member of TSSF, I have been puzzled over this idea of reimagining our Rule of Life as an elaborate, almost academic exercise. Although invited to participate in the initial experiment to recast our individual rules on a foundation of the 30 Principles, I declined. Here's why.

My foremost objection is that the exercise is *complicated*. To my mind, it runs counter to one of the essential wellsprings of Francis's spirituality: *simplicity*. The nine areas upon which we currently structure our rules of life align with the classic spiritual disciplines. While adaptable to differing needs and aspirations, these disciplines are straightforward. We have an intrinsic understanding of what penitence should look like in our lives, what personal prayer means, what the concept of self-denial entails (and if we don't really grasp this, Formation Director Liz Peacock will set us straight). *The 30 Principles seem to me to have a different purpose and that is to embody our Franciscan charism. That is not the same thing as the underlying disciplines we use to enable us to express that charism.*

My second objection derives from having grown up in the Roman Catholic tradition, before Vatican II concepts had taken hold at the parish level. Salvation was taught as a personal project that involved "following the rules"—lots of them. It felt legalistic. It bred scruples. It elevated God's justice above his everlasting love. It let the mystery out of religion like air out of a balloon. It encouraged a religious practice characterized not by love, joy, and humility but by anxiety, fear, and the exhaustion of never measuring up.

Now, I am not saying that the exercise of conforming our personal rules to the Principles is quite as deadening as all that. But there is the aspect that elevates following our rule above the innate practice of *love, joy, and humility*. Will our rules become so complicated we cannot remember all their stipulations? I don't believe that is in the spirit of St. Francis, and I would hate to see that as one outcome of this movement.

My final objection is that this presents itself as such a daunting task that it may dissuade aspirants from following through on vocations to the Third Order. I recognize that it is less daunting than it at first appears. But those of you who have been tertiaries for a long time may have forgotten how intimidating all the requirements of formation initially seemed. Formation is about discipline, yes, but it is the heart's disciplines that must prevail, not the head's.

For all these reasons, I hope that the Third Order will continue to make a Principle-based Rule an option for professed tertiaries only. (Perhaps only for tertiaries who professed five or ten years ago!)

Remember St. Francis's first Rule. It was one line: *"To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps."* It expressed, in utmost simplicity and completeness, how he wanted the members of the Order of Friars Minor to live.

He said it all in just a few words. ◆

## TSSF Province of the Americas Financial Summary 2018-19

*Alison Saichek, Provincial Bursar*

<b>Fund Balances</b>	<b><u>9/30/2018</u></b>	<b><u>9/28/2019</u></b>
Operating Fund	62,302.00	39,085.00
Savings Accounts	30,207.00	55,715.00
JCFU Account	2,617.00	2,672.00
Medical Mission Fund	8,550.00	9,426.00
Tom Johnson Mission Fund	775.00	1,300.00
Memorials	2,794.00	2,175.00
Companions Funds		1,528.00
<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019 As of 9/28/19</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Contributions	65,000.00	63,882.00
Other Income (Amazon Smile, etc.)	100.00	74.00
Total Operating Income	65,100.00	63,956.00
Operating Expenses		
Servants (Ministers, Chaplains, Officers)	21,850.00	18,316.00
Formation	3,400.00	1,233.00
Outreach (Support for other Orders & Organizations)	16,334.00	12,200.00
Communications	4,450.00	2,439.00
Meetings (est.)	12,500.00	15,000.00
Overhead (Insurance, bank charges, website)	1,900.00	3,248.00
Total Operating Expenses	60,434.00	52,436.00
<b>Income less Expenses</b>	<b>4,666.00</b>	<b>11,520.00</b>

## New Assistant Minister Provincial Position

*Janet Fedders*



*Charlie McCarron, appointed Assistant Minister Provincial.*

**A**t its September 2019 Zoom Meeting, Chapter approved the establishment of an Assistant Minister Provincial (AMP) position for the remainder of my service as your Minister Provincial. The AMP will have oversight over specific projects within the Province as well as provide administrative support for the Minister Provincial when needed. I joyfully share with you that Charlie McCarron has agreed to fill this position. Many of you will remember Charlie from Provincial Convocation 2017, and of course many of you already know him. I am quite sure he will be introducing himself to you in the days to come, but let me just share with you what he brings to this servant-work. He is a contemplative first of all, grounded in prayer. He brings deep knowledge of Francis and Clare to our work. He is also a priest and a lawyer. You will hear more about Charlie's specific involvement for the Province once October Chapter is over. Please pray for him and welcome him! (His new email for this purpose is [Charlie.tssf@aol.com](mailto:Charlie.tssf@aol.com).)



## New Assistant Fellowship Coordinators

*Peter Stube*

*Right, Tracey Carroll, and far right, Jotie Noel. Both were named Assistant Fellowship Coordinators.*



**J**otie Noel and Tracey Carroll have been named Assistant Fellowship Coordinators and will join me in serving you all. Tracey, as you know, is the visionary who has created fellowships on the web. We will be working together to provide you with video conferences, resources, and counsel so that we are more able to do the work of lifelong formation in our fellowships.

We will have more on this as we pray our way through it and see where YHWH is leading us in our service to you, Francis, Clare, and Christ. We welcome your wisdom and prayerful advice. ♦



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Meeting of the Ministers Provincial and Minister General  
of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis, August 19–24, 2019,  
Cenacle Retreat Center, Ronkonkoma, New York

*Janet Fedders*

*From left to right, Janet Fedders, Province of the Americas; Blair Matheson, Province of the Pacific, Michael Twum-Darko, Province of Africa; Tim Higgins, Acting Minister Provincial, Province of Europe; and Godfrey Fryar, Province of Asia-Pacific.*



**F**or an entire week this last August, the Ministers Provincial of all five TSSF Provinces met on Long Island, New York. Present were our Minister General John Heberton; Godfrey Fryar, Province of Asia-Pacific; Tim Higgins, Acting Minister Provincial, Province of Europe; Blair Matheson, Province of the Pacific; Michael Twum-Darko, Province of Africa; and Janet Fedders, Province of the Americas.

The atmosphere was energetic and prayer-filled. Our time was spent in deliberation and discernment. We worshiped together daily, ate together and thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. The Long Island Fellowship provided transportation offsite for a wonderful meal. They also brought us music, a very moving Celtic Mass, and opportunities for fellowship.

For the Ministers Provincial, spending a week while immersed in each other's work, concerns, and joys was invaluable. We quickly saw how the same Franciscan ideas get implemented in very different ways in each Province. We also found opportunities for assisting and cooperating with each other.

## **The Climate Crisis**

Much of our time was spent on the Climate Crisis. The Ministers went into prayer and then met to create a statement from the Order, expressing our particular charism of Francis and Clare. Called "Hearing the Cry of the Earth," (*see page 4 this issue*). These deliberations were facilitated by Jeff Gollither, our own Assisting Minister Provincial for Sacred Ecology, who presented a quite detailed presentation. He brought together the science and the spirituality around what is happening to our planet.

## **Ongoing Formation and Fellowships**

The Ministers committed to deepening Ongoing Formation and finding means to make that work fruitful in each of the Provinces. A presentation from Peter Stube about his work with the Fellowships gave all of us much to think about. All the Ministers agreed that the Fellowship is the most basic part of being in the Third Order. Our American Province's emphasis on Contemplation/Community/Missional Action was prevalent in all ensuing discussions on this topic. The Ministers

*cont. on page 38*

*Ministers Meeting, cont. from p. 37*

have asked Peter Stube to head up a global initiative for TSSF, based on points he presented.

There was a lot of discussion about tertiaries who transfer from one Province to another, and we created a Statute so that we'll have a common protocol when it happens.

*David Rice, our Bishop Protector, was an integral part of the meeting, exhorting us to stay true to who we are and to focus on what happens in fellowships, as they are where community happens.*

David Rice, our Bishop Protector, was an integral part of the meeting, exhorting us to stay true to who we are and to focus on what happens in Fellowships, as they are where community happens.

The Ministers assert that TSSF is a family; we must guard against professed members feeling they have to leave the Order for reasons of sickness, infirmity, or other life circumstances.

Franciscan Aid is available for projects under the sponsorship of TSSF. (The sponsor cannot be the person doing the project, however.) Franciscan Aid supports small on-the-ground projects, particularly those involving refugees.

**The Rule Experiment**

Our agenda also covered the Rule Experiment (see page 32, this issue). Three Provinces have participated in the experiment. One more has done a modified version, focused only on their novices. The experiment will be continued for another two years in preparation for reporting to IPTOC in four years.

You'll be pleased to know that the Lambeth Conference next summer will again have a TSSF prayer presence. Even though only the European Province will be physically present, all Provinces will be "praying the Conference."

**Principles, Day 31**

There will now be a trial run of a Day 31 in the Principles. The trial will last two years, up until the next Ministers Meeting, which will be held in Brisbane, Australia, in the spring their fall, of course) of 2021.

In a sense, you were all a part of this meeting. Our Province has an enthusiasm and energy that was noticeable to the others. That's not to boast, but only to point out how each Province contributes to the whole, to the global expression of Francis and Clare, a vibrant expression with relevance for the world today. ♦

**MILESTONES**



*Newly Professed*

**Buscar "Joy" Agotescu**

*From Romanian refugee to a Parisian transformation to life as a Franciscan in the United States.*

**I** am from Birmingham, Alabama. I was baptized as an infant in the Orthodox Church in Romania where I was born in 1941. My family fled the persecution by the Communists. Leaving one's homeland is always difficult even when circumstances dictate it a necessity.

*cont. on page 39*

*Buscar "Joy" Agotescu,  
cont. from p. 38*

*Prior to 1975, it was customary for novices in the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) to profess wearing the Franciscan habit and white cord cincture and to be given a medallion with the Tau Cross and crossed arms of Francis and Christ as well as a scapular showing the stigmata. The SFO abandoned the practice about 1975. Dianne Lowe, TSSF (Formation Counselor)*

*I give thanks to God for all my Franciscan brothers and sisters. I am so happy to have made my profession in TSSF.*

I first went to live in Paris, France, for about 2+ years while I waited on my immigration status so I could move to the US. That journey from Romania to the US was both difficult and transformative. I can't say too much about the details of that process. My family did immigrate successfully and we were settled in Detroit.

I was trained in music in Romania, but I knew I would need vocational courses to help me find a job when I arrived in the US. I did not speak English and that was an obstacle that was not easy to overcome. First, I worked on the assembly line at the Ford Motor Plant for 10 years. Then I went to the community college and earned an associates degree in science and learned to be an electrocardiography (ECG) tech in a hospital.

I retired in 2012. My partner, John, and I have been together for 42 years. We moved from Detroit to New Orleans to escape the cold of Detroit; but after Katrina, we relocated to Birmingham to be closer to John's sister.

### **A Franciscan Wearing Sandals in the Snow**

My formation counselor asked me how or when did I first know I was called to be a Franciscan. While trying to figure out how to get to the US during the time I was waiting on immigration papers, I was given a room at a monastery where I did odd jobs. I remember a very cold winter day when there was snow on the ground in Paris. I looked up, and I saw this big Franciscan friar in full habit walking toward me; he was wearing only his sandals, and he had bits of snow in his beard. He had left the monastery that morning to distribute food to the poor. I don't know what happened, but I wanted to help the poor like this Franciscan friar. I didn't know how God was going to use me. I asked God to help me help others.

Much later, in Detroit I happened upon a Capuchin Monastery in my neighborhood. They hosted a Secular Franciscan Order fellowship. I was welcomed into fellowship, which was great, and, after three years in formation, I was professed. I had so many friends there, and My mother was there at my profession. I wore the habit, was given a medallion, and, of course, the white cord with knots symbolizing the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.<sup>1</sup> It was so moving, I cried, and my mother cried tears of joy.

There was no Romanian Orthodox Church that had a Third Order, which is why I joined at the Roman Catholic Capuchin Monastery. After Katrina, we relocated in Birmingham, where I looked for a church and found a nice Episcopalian church. I didn't even know there were Episcopal Franciscans. But I found them through my church, and they welcomed me into their fellowship.

Now, I will be professed in TSSF on September 28, 2019. I have learned to pray the Franciscan Crown Rosary, I help with the soup kitchen when I am physically able. I am still moved with compassion toward the poor. I doubt that friar in Paris knew what a change he made in my life. ♦

## Newly Professed

Don Bernhardt



### *Ordained to Full-time Ministry, “Doing What I’m Supposed to Be Doing”*

**B**orn and raised in Manitoba, Canada, I have spent my entire life here. In my early days I attended church, got involved in the choir, but, as is so often the case, after I was confirmed, I drifted away.

As a teen, I felt a strong pull towards Law Enforcement, so I joined the Canadian Armed Forces and served as a Military Policeman. I later moved to Municipal Policing, but, after a while, I realized that this was not “what I was supposed to be doing.”

I moved into the world of Information Technology, which had been a hobby, but sometimes making a hobby into a career isn’t a good idea! I was troubled by the fact that I just didn’t feel like I was where I was supposed to be; I wasn’t fulfilling my true purpose.

When I turned 35, my wife and I were blessed with a son. I had not been to church for years, but my mother insisted that we baptize our son. As a result, we went to the Cathedral in Brandon to enquire about it, and the Dean said something that would forever change my life, “Baptism is not a magic bullet. You need to live the promises you’re going to make.” After being unable to poke holes in his logic, we decided to start attending church again.

On that first morning at the cathedral, as I walked in the door and stood in the narthex, I had what I can only describe as an encounter with God. I started to realize what it was that was missing from my life. Worship and service became central to us and, after a few years, I recognized that maybe God, with his amazing sense of humour, was calling me towards ordination.

I moved forward in my discernment, curious to see how things would turn out. Eventually, I found out! I was ordained a deacon in 2004 and to the priesthood in 2005. Since 2006, I have been involved in ministry full-time, and I now feel, without any hesitation, that I’m doing what I’m supposed to be doing.

Ministry has been amazing, but when I discovered the Third Order, as part of my Lenten discipline in 2016, I felt that this too might be a part of who God is calling me to be.

As I started to explore the Order, I found that the idea of humble yet joyful service was something to which I could aspire.

The story of Francis and the evolution of the Order he founded has given me a sense of community, purpose, and discipline that has been so very critical in my journey. It has strengthened me and allowed me to (I hope) better walk alongside those I meet along the way. ♦

*...the Dean said something that would forever change my life, “Baptism is not a magic bullet. You need to live the promises you’re going to make.”*



## Newly Professed

## Steven Eubanks



*NASA Engineer, Musician, Farmer, Chaplain, Convener*

**I** am a retired NASA communications engineer now living a more contemplative and “simpler” life with my wife, Jane, on an old hill farm in central Vermont.

I’ve always loved being outdoors, with a fascination for all living things, and had an equal level of ease and contentment in churches since my youth. I met my wife Jane searching for a church choir during my college years while working toward my engineering degree—she happened to be the choir director! After a 15-year stint with NASA and actively pursuing musical interests and outdoor activities in my spare time, my wife and I moved from suburban Cleveland to rural Vermont to be closer to the rhythm of the seasons and the beauty of the land. Surrounded by rolling meadows, mountain brooks, forested hillsides, and dirt roads, we found ourselves with new skills: raising chickens, ducks, gardens and bees, tending dogs, cats, a horse, and learning more fully how to become a steward of God’s creation on a property conserved by the Vermont Land Trust.

In Vermont we quickly found a small parish to call our spiritual home—and joined the choir. My life in the church deepened in a prolonged tenure as our local parish’s Sr. Warden following the retirement of our beloved rector of 30 years, vastly expanding the breadth of ministries in which I thought I would ever be involved. Following a brief, but eye-opening illness and hospital stay a number of years ago, and witnessing the incredible compassion of the hospital staff to myself and all those around me, I discerned a call to become a volunteer hospital chaplain, dividing my time between the hospital ward and an affiliated nursing home. These days I spend most of my chaplaincy time at the nursing home offering a listening ear, reaching out to those who are in need of consolation or encouragement, doing my best to confirm their beloved-ness,

*The active portions of my life are balanced and fed by the solitude of the surrounding countryside, hikes across fields and forests, reading and prayer, to which I devote most of my mornings...my “first fruits” of the day.*

and sharing communion with them monthly as a Eucharistic Visitor.

The love of music that originally brought my wife and me together continues as we provide a variety of musical

skills to our parish and community, playing a wide variety of instruments, singing, and teaching music. Over the years we’ve played for local theater productions, dances, and coordinated a few choral workshops.

The active portions of my life are balanced and fed by the solitude of the surrounding countryside, hikes across fields and forests, reading and prayer, to which I devote most of my mornings...my “first fruits” of the day.

*cont. on page 42*

Steven Eubanks,  
*cont. from p. 41*

It was my privilege to be asked a year ago to become the convener of the oldest of the Order's virtual fellowships, the Cloud Fellowship, following the initial convenership of Jeff Bonner, and later Martha Knight. The Cloud Fellowship has been my principal connection to the Order. It's wonderful to have such a vehicle to knit together those of us hailing from distant points of North America, as well as those unable to travel longer distances to the nearest Fellowship on a regular basis. It has also been inspiring to become involved in the periodic meetings of conveners throughout the Province and to learn from their example.

My recent profession took place at my home parish of St. John's in Randolph, Vermont, in the company of my sisters and brothers of the Cloud Fellowship and a scattering of friends from across the country joining via Zoom, and seventeen close friends and mentors sitting beside me in the pews. How wonderful it was to make my profession in company of all these friends who had supported, nurtured, and guided me these past three years of Formation! ♦

*Newly Professed*

Jonathan Lloyd



*Priest, Family and Mental Health Social Worker Serving Individuals, Social Justice Causes, and Churches in London, South Africa, Denmark and Canada*

**I** report the joyful celebration of my TSSF profession September 12, 2019, at Bethlehem Retreat Centre, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada.

It was wonderful to have the participation of Bishop Remy De Roo, Canada's longest-serving Catholic bishop. He is one of the last living "Vatican II Fathers" and was a personal friend of Archbishop Oscar Romero. The link with Romero was very special for me because it was his life and death in 1980 that deeply nurtured my Christian journey and Franciscan vocation. Both Bishop De Roo and Archbishop Andrew Hutchison (retired 12th Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada) presented my TSSF cross, and over 40 people connected to the liturgy via live streaming.

I was born in Somerset, England, and have lived in Vancouver, BC, Canada, for the last three years with my wife Sue. We have two adult daughters: one lives in New Zealand and the other in England. WhatsApp keeps us connected, and this summer we all gathered in England for the wedding of our eldest. It was a great day—no rain, but 55 mph winds and hats flying off everywhere!

Francis and Clare have been important influences on my spiritual journey throughout my life. After leaving school I was invited by Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, CR (Community of the Resurrection) to spend a year before university working in Namibia with the Anglican Church. Upon arrival, however, I was arrested by the South African secret police and deported back to England. (I was one of 20 church workers deported by the *apartheid* regime in

*cont. on page 43*

*Jonathan Lloyd,  
cont. from p. 42*



*In my profession picture left to right (back row) are Andrew Twiddy (newly admitted SSF Companion), Christine Muise (newly admitted SSF Companion), Jonathan Lloyd (Dogwood Fellowship), Sarah Lloyd (daughter living in New Zealand), Fr. Ayoub Adwar (former Chaldean Catholic monk and priest in Iraq, now an Anglican priest in Canada). Front row (left to right) Bishop Remy De Roo (retired Roman Catholic Bishop of Victoria) and Archbishop Andrew Hutchison (retired 12th Primate of The Anglican Church of Canada).*

the 1970s.) Returning to England, I then worked with refugees from Southern Africa and with the anti-apartheid movement in London.

I returned to South Africa in 1993 as an ecumenical monitor in two large townships in KwaZulu/Natal sponsored by the World Council of Churches.

I trained as a family and mental health social worker at the University of London and worked for ten years with children and families in East and South London. I was appointed Principal Social Worker at St. Christopher's Hospice in London, specialising in psychosocial aspects of palliative care and bereavement. After serving there for five years I responded to a calling to ordained ministry—a calling I had resisted for many years, partly because both my parents and my brother were Anglican priests!

I was ordained deacon in 1990 and priest in 1991 in the Diocese of Southwark (south

London). I worked closely with Br. Colin Wilfred, SSF in HIV/AIDS ministry in London. After a curacy and a diocesan post in social justice ministries, my family moved to Bath in the southwest of England where I served as university chaplain and then rector of two parishes. Here, I came into close contact with Hilfield Friary SSF in Dorset, and my family became part of their summer family camp. I also had the opportunity to work closely with Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM as his UK speaking/retreat tour organiser for three trips. In 2002 I participated in the men's rites of passage retreat led by Fr. Rohr in Santa Fe, NM.

In 2009 Sue and I moved to live in Copenhagen, Denmark, where my ministry included leading the Anglican Church congregations in Denmark and being archdeacon for the Church of England parishes in the Nordics, the Baltics and Germany. I connected with TSSF while I was in Sweden and Denmark.

Returning to England in 2014, to rural ministry in Canterbury Diocese, I trained as a spiritual director at the Franciscan International Study Centre in Canterbury. It was in Canterbury that I became a TSSF postulant and novice, and then transferred from the European to Province of the Americas. I participated in the TSSF Centenary Convocation in Cincinnati and found it inspiring and exciting.

I am delighted to be part of the TSSF Dogwood Fellowship, which is slowly growing. This month we have admitted three new SSF Companions, and we are linking up to people who live too far to travel to our monthly meetings by live-streaming technology.

Thank you for having me in the Province of the Americas. It is good to be here. ♦



*Newly Professed*

Hugo Padilla



*Priest and Evangelist for the Third Order in Latin America*

**H**ugo Padilla is the priest at San Juan Baptista in the center of Guatemala City. A former Roman Catholic First Order Franciscan of many years, he was made postulant in the Third Order in 2017 and noviced in June of the same year. In a special Eucharist at the recent clergy retreat during the week of renewal, Hugo was professed in a moving ceremony on September 4, with his bishop, The Rt. Rev. Silvester Romero.

Hugo has been instrumental in building the Third Order in Guatemala. Along with Laurel McMartin, a deacon and also professed, he worked with the bishop to design and carry out a week of spiritual renewal.

Hugo has expanded the Third Order with four additional members and several others interested in exploring. The Bishop has said that his hope is that the Third Order, along with Cursillo (called Turnos in Guatemala), will serve as an ongoing basis of spirituality for all that happens in the diocese.

Hugo is one of seven professed during the three years the Order has initiated work in Latin America. ♦

*Rest in Peace*

Mark Edward Waldo, Sr.



*Professed 13 Years*

*WSFA News Staff and others*

**T**he Rev. Mark Edward Waldo, Sr., 92, died peacefully surrounded by his family on September 9, 2019. In 1961, Mark accepted a call to become Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Montgomery, Alabama. He would serve as shepherd of this flock for the next 28 years until his retirement.

Mark's call to serve in Montgomery came at a time of intense unrest as the civil rights movement gained momentum here. Having great sympathy for the movement, he pursued work as a quiet reconciler within Ascension parish and the larger community throughout the historic events in Montgomery, but lived with a deep inner doubt about whether he had done enough during those years. He was among the founding members of One Montgomery, a group dedicated to building trust between peoples of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Waldo is particularly remembered for his leadership following a devastating fire that nearly destroyed the Church of the Ascension in 1984. The congregation worshiped outdoors and at other religious institutions while Waldo led the renovation effort.

*cont. on page 45*



Mark Waldo, Sr., cont. from p. 44



His love for God and for all God's people defined his life, his marriage, his parenting, and his pastoring.

Waldo is survived by his wife of 69 years, Anne, along with six children and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. Two of his children followed in their father's footsteps, becoming Episcopal priests themselves. ♦

*The Rev. Mark E. Waldo, Sr., in 2017, seated, is surrounded by other members of the "Waldo Family Clergy." From left to right, The Rev. Mark E. Waldo, Jr., Rector of the Episcopal Church of St. Michael & All Angels, Millbrook, Alabama; The Rt. Rev. W. Andrew Waldo, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina; and The Rev. Mark "Bo" Shippen Waldo (ordained PCA), currently serving as the Deputy Regimental Chaplain (CPT) to the 75th Ranger Regiment in Fort Benning, GA.*

*Photo provided by Bishop Andrew Waldo.*

Rest in Peace

Remembering  
Mark Waldo

Lucy Dunn McCain

**T**he Rev. Mark Waldo, Sr., and I had a history. He was my priest for 15+ years, and my EFM (Education for Ministry) mentor for four. In that safe, Christian, EFM environment, by God's grace, soul transparency was nurtured, and individual ministries came forth. Mark was a scholar and enjoyed wrestling with ideas; it was fun to watch his mind work. Under his tutelage our little group probably wrote more letters to EFM's Sewanee's School of Theology with recommendations on how to improve things than any other. However, he not only taught, but was also teachable.

### Gifts of Spontaneity and Hospitality

There was a refreshing innocence about Mark, a childlike spontaneity. I remember running into him in the busy main hallway of our church and telling him I needed prayer. He instantly stopped and started going down on his knees, for he felt that comfortable in public with his Father God. I, on the other hand, suggested we go into a private little side room. (*Pitiful on my part!*)

He and his wife Anne had a wonderful gift of hospitality. They lived just a street over from my home, and we both lived a block from

*cont. on page 46*

*Remembering Mark Waldo, cont. from p. 45*



*Mark, surveying the damage to his church in 1984.*

*Photo provided by Bishop Andrew Waldo.*

the church. There was nothing more fun than to go to one of their gatherings. You always knew the food and drink would be plentiful, and the conversations enlightening. There would always be a joyful party atmosphere in which music was included for both were talented musicians. It made perfect sense that when planning Mark's 1989 retirement party from the Church of the Ascension, they requested a garden party—a tea dance kind of reception (*aka elegant Appalachian hoedown*). It was truly a celebration of an amazing gift of a 28-year ministry to the Church of the Ascension. Appropriately, the gifts given were an engraved silver antique teapot and the creation of a Waldo English Garden on the parish grounds.

Mark's and Anne's ministry (*for you cannot separate the two*) flowed not only to the parish, but to the whole community, the city of Montgomery, and the whole Diocese of Alabama. Their open-door Franciscan ways were always apparent. Even when none of us knew about the Third Order, he was already a member. We all rejoiced in learning that in their retirement, they were opening a Bed and Breakfast (the Red Bluff Cottage Bed and Breakfast in Montgomery's historic Cottage Hill District),

which they did, with great success. There I spent my first night as a wounded divorcee. I knew it would be a safe haven to begin a new life. It was.

### **A Joyful Celebration on the Feast of the Holy Cross**

On the Feast of the Holy Cross, 2019, my husband and I made the three-hour drive from Decatur to Montgomery to attend his funeral at our old church.

In my entire life, I have never experienced such a joyful celebration. Thank goodness, we arrived early. We learned that there would be a 30-minute Prelude given by the choir and organist. I asked my darlin' if we could please move up closer to the pews right near the chapel. From that viewpoint, I could see the choir, of which I had been a member for 20 years. Many faces I recognized; others I fondly recalled. Memories of worshipful moments flowed over me, and I continue to be drenched, even now as I write.

*In my entire life, I have never experienced such a joyful celebration...For 1½ hours we celebrated his life, his amazing witness to his love for the Lord and how it blessed so many.*

The church was overflowing. It brought tears to my eyes. I remembered the church when it burned in 1984, and Mark had to hold services in the yard. He celebrated Holy Communion and gave thanks that the pigeons had returned to the belfry. I remembered

*cont. on page 47*

*Remembering Mark Waldo,  
cont. from p. 46*

*...during the tragic season of church and house burnings with the civil rights protests, Mark Sr. would go to the destroyed structures and gather nails and make them into crosses.*

hearing the hurtful news of the church splitting over the ordination of Gene Robinson in 2005. Mark, although retired, was the mainstay in keeping this ship afloat.

For 1½ hours we celebrated his life, his amazing witness to his love for the Lord and how it blessed so many. It was like a fragrant bouquet being formed. Each song sung, each story told, each prayer prayed, gave off a sweet scent.

Priest-son, The Rev. Mark Waldo, Jr., gave the homily. It contained some new gleanings for me. I learned that during the tragic season of church and house burnings with the civil rights protests, Mark Sr. would go to the destroyed structures and gather nails and make them into crosses. I learned of gifts he gave, even when suffering years from Alzheimer's. You could hear laughter and see tears throughout the church as his son recounted these humble, transparent moments when Mark Sr.'s *Godlight* continued to shine even though there was mental darkness.

### Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

He ended by bringing out his ukulele and explaining that he wanted to play one of his father's favorites, to which his father had always responded. He began, "Swing low, sweet chariot ~ coming for to carry me home," and the entire congregation joined in. So moving, so unbelievable, and I haven't even gotten to the best part!

Holy Communion for all, I mean all! After receiving from one of the two Bishops (including bishop-son, The Rt. Rev. William Andrew Waldo, Bishop of Upper South Carolina), each communicant exited down the side steps located in the chapel and walked through the wooden screen back to their pew. The line quickly backed up, for most wanted to stop and speak to Anne Waldo. I am so glad they did, for it gave me the opportunity to see most everyone from our location. What I could not get over was the grand mixture of all sorts and conditions. You could just feel reconciliation covering these hallowed grounds like honey. It was good. It also was good when his Bishop-son and Priest-son together took the elements out to all those physically infirm. (*Their father always did that too.*)

### The Real Thing

The Reverend Mark Edward Waldo, Sr., was the real thing. I thank the Lord that I knew and know him for all eternity, and he knew and knows me for all eternity.

*Pax et Bonum*, my dear brother. We returned home. I know Mark did too. Thanks be to God! ◆

# POETRY

## For Francistide 2019

*Rick Pearce*  
*(with apologies to Wendell Berry)*

Come, come all who are created as unique in time and space  
And wish to follow Francis:

- Kiss a leper
- Rescue a worm
- Give your possessions away like you are crazy
- Take from the church and give to the poor (it is theirs anyway)
  - Confess to a tree
  - Transform pain; be a midwife for the Holy Spirit
  - Be healed by Sister Earth
  - Heal Sister Earth
  - Break a statue
  - Rest joyfully in God's love
- Remember that love is measured by sacrifice and love extravagantly

Above all:

Listen to yourself, your loved ones, your enemies, the poor, sick, and homeless...

and ask,

*"Who are you, O God, and who am I?"*



## Drink This Cup

*Alice Baird**There is rain in my coffee,*

hay, breath and steam  
 from the milking barn—

there are wet seasons,  
 cool mountain air  
 riffling through hills—

aromas of  
 fire and dung,  
 roasting house and farm—

and there are hands,

there are hands in my coffee,  
 gnarled brown fingers  
 seeking ripeness—

Surely, here is goodness—

my morning brew  
 a sacrament, chalice  
 of blessing,

awakening me  
 to now, to life—  
 holy gift held

in an ordinary cup. ◆

## A Minor Life

*Mary Tarantini**To those who live a minor life*

Appraising all interior spaces

Hiding out below the radar

Seeking all the lowly graces

Humility, a badge of honor

Hide it in your dresser drawer

Tailor habits plain and gracious

Layer life in robes of sameness ◆

The next issue  
 of The Franciscan Times  
 will be published in Spring 2020.

Send your news,  
 reflections,  
 and poems to  
 R. John Brockmann at  
[jbrockma@udel.edu](mailto:jbrockma@udel.edu).

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