



The Franciscan Times

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER HELPING MEMBERS OF
THE THIRD ORDER OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS SHARE
THEIR COMMON JOURNEY THROUGH NEWS FROM
FELLOWSHIPS AND INDIVIDUALS, REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND
TAPES, POETRY, STORIES, ESSAYS, REFLECTIONS,
MEDITATIONS, GRAPHICS, AND WHATEVER THE HOLY SPIRIT
MIGHT BLOW OUR WAY. ●

Simplicity, Reconciliation and Franciscanism

by John Brockmann

*'Tis the gift to be simple
'Tis the gift to be free*

*'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves in the place just right
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed
To turn, turn will be our delight
Till by turning, turning we come round right.*

It's a beautiful song that I have heard a thousand times and which, on some occasions, I have heard in the sing-song manner of a children's nursery rhyme which moves me to feel a bit of nostalgia and want to return to such a state of childhood innocence. In another way, we sang it in our wedding as a kind of Franciscan anthem with the feeling of righteous fervor about simplicity. In still another way, it makes me recall all the times I've heard Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, and in all the locations its notes resounded for me.

And then I heard it—to turn—in my mind again when I began to think about the sacrament of reconciliation and again recalled the meaning of the Greek *metanoia* (changing one's mind)—or the Hebrew word probably favored by Jesus *shuv* (a more concrete physical sense of returning, retracing, reversing one's direction). I recalled in James Burtchaell's wonderful article¹, when he talked about the penitent like the prodigal son in Luke 15 who "finally came to himself"—to come down where we ought to be—and the role of the minister of the sacrament who should be like the prodigal father and offer the valley of love and delight:

The last thing a Christian sacrament should do is invite us to imagine that reconciliation is offered us by the Father on condition that we appeal to him and earn his goodwill.... But in the parable, if anyone humiliates himself

it is the father. This is the sort of initiative which belongs rightly to the minister of this sacrament, not to the penitent. The minister must make the overtures. It is not the minister's role to sit and wait, ready to administer the protocols of forgiveness to those who have already come to terms with their failures. The minister must reach out... the minister will represent Christ and a Father who in no way will alter their love for a sinner. The Lord will not relent. The Lord will not be placated. The Lord demands no satisfaction, because it is not in him to turn away from us in the first place.

And as I continued to hear this song anew, I heard again the word *gift* and realized that this *metanoia* or *shuv*, this experience of the prodigal father is not earned or worked for, studied for, or a reward—but simply a gift, a grace. And, in good Ignatian fashion, when one discerns spirits to see if they are of God, this gift, this grace of turning results in freedom, love and delight—all wonderful fruits of the Spirit.

With all these associations of simplicity and the sacrament of reconciliation conjured up by the old familiar Shaker hymn, I considered again why it was that our Franciscan Third Order was first called "The Order of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance" by Francis². One of the earliest Franciscan texts alluding to our "Third Order", *The Legend of the Three Companions*, observed³:

Married men and women being bound by the marriage vow were advised by the friars to dedicate themselves to a life of penance in their own houses.

From the beginning, our Order has embraced the Tau cross which was the only way in which Francis ever signed his name. However the Tau preceded Francis and the Franciscans and was the symbol of the penitential movement out of which Francis drew the Third Order. From a Cistercian document of 1189, one can find the following⁴:

(continued on page 2)

Reconciliation (cont.)

Examine your thoughts, words, and works accurately and see if you have sinned in these things. If you believe that you have gravely sinned, take upon yourself the sign of the Tau, the sign of those who weep and lament their faults. The Tau represents the figure of the Cross, a sign of the passion of Christ.

Pazzelli in his history of the Third Order observes that this life of penance under the symbol of the Tau was refashioned by Francis not to describe a state of low self-esteem, but, on the contrary, to be a journey of greatness leading to God⁵:

Before God, man must certainly acknowledge being a creature, totally dependent on him and, at the same time, confess the infinite greatness of divinity and, by comparison, the depths of his own nothingness. At the same time, however, man also understands that his vocation is a call to greatness which can be reached by means of a continuous journey or passage towards God-likeness... This greater similarity is reached through a continuous *metanoia*, or conversion, a continual aspiration and ascent towards God.

Monika Hellwig in her book, *Sign of Reconciliation and Conversion: The Sacrament of Penance for our Times*⁶, suggests, however, that not only the Franciscan Order, but all monastic orders perform a special penitential role:

... monastic life can be seen as an entry into a state of penitence, an entry into the ranks of penitents, though without the implication that there's been the commission of grave personal sin. It is enough to be caught in the prevailing disorientation and to know oneself, therefore, as sinful and inclined to sin and called to a turning to retrace one's steps to the Father's house, that is, to reconciliation at the deepest levels of existence and of consciousness... This clearly envisages a life-long task, one which involves difficult discernments to be made, which call for guidance. This is the basis of the quest for an elder, a trustworthy, tried and tested holy person, as a spiritual father or mother. When one has found such, one opens all the secrets of one's heart and mind. This is not a confession of sins only, but a 'manifestation of conscience', that is, a disclosure of one's thoughts and feelings, fears and hopes, loathing and striving, temptations and inspirations. (p. 47)

The "prevailing disorientation," or sin, which is the lifelong task of a penitent to wrestle with, is elsewhere described by Hellwig in these words:

...sin can never be reduced to the breaking of rules or commandments. It can not even be reduced to a collectivity of specific, discrete destructive deeds. Sin is deliberate or unrecognized detachment from God, an orientation of human striving away from God. It is the placing of

ultimate trust in anything other than God, even the placing of trust in moral behavior or good conduct according to the Law of God. (p. 21)

Thus, in looking again at the parable of the prodigal son, one finds that the son, like all of us:

repents of not so much an act or even a series of acts as a condition, a state of affairs, an outlook on life, a total personal orientation in a false assertion of independence. (p. 15)

Is it any wonder, then, that in Chapter 10 of our new *Forming the Soul of a Franciscan*, there is this observation:

Many entering formation in the Third Order are surprised to find that their rule, which begins with Eucharist, next lists penitence, including expectations. There will be daily self-examinations and at least semiannual sacramental confessions. It is only after this that the section on personal prayer comes.

How is it that both the penitence—troublesome and surprising to many in the Order today—and the simplicity—treasured by most in the Order today—may come from the same stance before God.

I have learned that living a life of simplicity means holding everything and anything lightly—being ready for whatever is "held" by us to be transmuted by God into something else at a moment's notice. Those who live a life of simplicity attempt to live continuously acknowledging the power of God to move and control the universe—**To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed**. Moreover, the best way to learn to "hold" all of God's creation outside ourselves lightly is to learn to hold our own perceptions, our own stuck places, our own additions, our own missing of the mark (Chapter 10, *Forming the Soul of a Franciscan*, 2000) lightly within ourselves and to be prepared to have it too be transmuted by God⁷.

In a catechetical program presented by the Rev. Wayne Smith, *Reclaiming the Sacrament of Reconciliation: A Program for St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church*, Cherry Hill, NJ, Smith observes⁸:

I am continually amazed at how the minor sludge (I picture cholesterol-like deposits in the arteries) that builds up from daily living with its judgments of self and others, small envies, the sense of frustration about how I have let down myself, others, and God, impedes the free-flowing grace, acceptance, and love through me. It takes an act of will to bring these to consciousness, to feel sorrow for them (self-righteous is a more common feeling), to verbalize them to God and to ask for cleansing. The release and the experience of open-heartedness, human tolerance, and genuine affection which tumble after it is always startling.

One of the best ways to experience the whole process as a gift from God is to experience the sacrament of reconciliation in the depth and richness offered in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*:

There is, of course, as Chapter 10, *Forming the Soul of a Franciscan*, notes many ways in which reconciliation can be experienced. There are the daily acts of examen and the corporate experience of confession and absolution at every Eucharist. However, what both of these occasions lack, and what the sacrament of reconciliation includes as a key element is what AA⁹ and every 12-step program also holds as key to recovery—that after a searching and fearless moral inventory, we admit our wrongs to God, to ourselves, and to another human being:

Penance take on a new meaning. It's not a special piece of business by which you purchase something you couldn't get elsewhere, but a special party at which you celebrate what you have always had, but were lately, perhaps, guilty of neglecting. There are the two of two—priest and penitent, a couple of perpetually forgiven sinners—telling each other, from different points of view, incredibly old stories about what a friend you have in Jesus.¹⁰

The 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) rescued this action of penitent and minister from being simply an element of the rite of the visitation to the sick and restored it to its own separate existence as a sacrament—the first time since the first Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* in 1548. *Forming the Soul of a Franciscan*, talks of the difficulty of finding a confessor in the American Province (p. 32) and that “The importance attached to penitence may be a cause of concern as to what kind of discipline the Order expects” (p. 29)—we're all quite new at this experience and at this sacrament.

In addition, the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* went one step further in the revival of this sacrament and reached back to the early practices of the Celtic church in which penance said privately could be done with lay brothers and sisters as well as priests. This new element can be seen on page 448 of the *Book of Common Prayer*^{11, 12}

Declaration of Forgiveness to be used by a Deacon or Lay Person

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself to be sacrificed for us to the Father, forgives your sins by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the rubrics prefacing this rite, it is clearly stated that:

The ministry of reconciliation, which has been committed by Christ to his Church, is exercised through the care each Christian has for others...

and further,¹³

A parish is made up of a number of redeemed sinners who live in a society which is in large measure unredeemed... It is a body of people under a divine directive which is to reach out in love to those whose lives are torn and mangled by personal and social sin... It is a center of acceptance and relationships... The object of the parish in the history of the community which it encompasses is peace, salvation, wholeness, unity, and health.

Hellwig has a wonderful description of who would be the ideal lay person:

There is a person who is deeply prayerful, rooted in the loving presence of God, at peace with herself in her dependence and limitations and essential poverty, and at peace with the rest of creation. She is there, she has time, the coffee pot is usually on and her whole being speaks welcome. And people come, as they did to the elders in the desert, with their troubles, their anger, their hurt, and their shame. She hears them out with compassion, she counsels them from her experience and her prayer... she lets them know by her own response that God loves them and that they are welcome back. Always she accompanies them with her prayers when they have left. (p. 112)

Despite this recovery of ancient Celtic practice, the BCP rubrics, however, are careful to point out regarding “absolution” that

The absolution in these services may be pronounced only by a bishop or priest. Another Christian may be asked to hear a confession, but it must be made clear to the penitent that absolution will not be pronounced; instead, a declaration of forgiveness is provided.

A Suggestion—Lay Ministry in the Rite of Reconciliation

In the most recent Roman Catholic liturgy for the sacrament, *The Rite of Penance*¹⁴ there is a description of a way of offering it as a “Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution.” This communal rite of reconciliation includes the following¹⁵:

- Introductory Rites (Song, greeting, introduction, opening prayer)
- Celebration of the Word of God (first reading, responsorial psalm, second reading, gospel acclamation, gospel, homily, examination of conscience)
- Rite of Reconciliation (general confession of sins, litany or song, Lord's Prayer, individual confession and absolution, proclamation of praise for God's mercy, concluding prayer of thanksgiving)
- Concluding Rite (blessing, dismissal)

(continued on page 5)

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MINISTER PROVINCIAL
Anita Catron
EDITOR

R. John Brockmann
EDITORIAL STAFF
Anne LeCroy, Jane Eillen Traugott, Susan Gunn, &
Terry Rogers

Editorial contributions and all
correspondence should be sent to:
R. John Brockmann
P.O. Box 277, Warwick, Md 21912
jbrockma@udel.edu

Where to Send Changes—

For Name and address changes

For Convocation Dates

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To the Secretary of the Order:

Caroline Benjamin

PO Box 1030

Bandera, Texas 78003-1030

For chaplaincy matters contact:

Julia Bergstrom Chaplain of the Province
34A-23 Mountain Estates, St. Thomas, V.I. 00802
JuliaB999@aol.com

Br. John George on National Public Radio

Br. John George, SSF, was interviewed by Neil Conan of an NPR program called *The Connection*. The web site is www.theconnection.org. (number is 617.353.5327). It's on their website and can be downloaded using Real Audio. Br. John George discussed his life as a Franciscan in the modern age—especially how one can live a Franciscan life however many obstacles. He discussed his daily prayer life, and his work with the children and where he sees hope in these days of the terror of materialism.

Brother Wind, All in Brown (a poem)

by Helen Steinkampff

Swinging his cord around the town,
Knocking on windows,
Knocking on doors,
Calling a blessing from the purple moors.

(Helen, professed in 1965, wrote: "I've had cerebral palsy from my birth in 1931. I went to two cerebral palsy private schools where I went as far as I could go, with high school equivalency. I am a member of Zion Episcopal Church in Dobbs Ferry, NY, and I write poetry and ecumenical writings for my church.)

Franciscan Internet Resources

My Idea of Heaven: An Interview with Desmond Tutu

By Gyles Brandret of the electronic Telegraph (UK) Issue 2163, Friday 27 April 2001 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>)
In the last issue of the *Franciscan Times*, we included a photo of Archbishop and Third Order member Desmond Tutu. We are now informed that Archbishop Tutu has prostate cancer. His "last" interview made in April with the British newspaper, *The Telegraph*, and is available online.

"In Heaven," he whispers. "I would want to meet St Francis of Assisi. And I would love to encounter Mary Magdalene because I think she is a gorgeous creature. She was abused, you know. I believe she was a prostitute, and yet she could love Our Lord so deeply, passionately, extravagantly. She offered unconditional love, not for any utilitarian purpose, but for the sake of it. Quite fantastic."

Franciscan Poetry.NET

(<http://FranciscanPoetry.net/>)

There is a collection of Franciscan poetry on the World Wide Web in many languages and dialects with a translation in English. Here is poem by Murray Bodo that is included in the collection:

Making the Poem

You feel its tug on the line,
the knot of the leader slipping
and the hook swallowed
and gone.

You try to remember
the feel of what it was
that took the hook and worm
before you could
raise it to the surface
to see what it was
you hoped to lift
from deep water
and why.

What you imagine swimming away
with your bait
is the poem,
and all you have to go on
is the feel of the pull.

Murray Bodo, OFM (USA)
Added to the Web site: 3-28-2001

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

Sacrament of Reconciliation (cont.)

Hellwig comments on the novel communal nature of reconciliation:

The shape of the rite itself underscores the social and ecclesial dimension of sin and penance. The recitation of the Lord's prayer in connection with the confession of sin has solid warrant in the traditions of the ancient church. . . . It brings into focus that the ministry of mutual forgiveness of all Christians through the compassion of the Father expressed in Christ and the Spirit becomes actual and tangible in people's lives. Moreover, the choice of biblical texts, homily topics, suggestions towards examination of conscience. . . carries a direct challenge to discern the need of conversion in the community—in its life style, priorities and values, interactions among the congregants and relationship with others and with larger social structures.

Following the rubrics and rites of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, we could have such a liturgy in our own Episcopal parishes¹⁶; and the original Order of Penitents, the **Franciscan Third Order**, may be God's chosen vehicle to bring this awareness of forgiveness, metanoia, and deep, interior grace from God to our parishes and dioceses. In fact, we can move from simply being an appropriate vehicle, to the chosen vehicle of penance intended from the beginning by Francis¹⁷:

From this testimony of the primary sources it is clearly evident that for Francis 'doing penance' in the spirit of the gospel was the God-given beginning of his new life, that he expected his followers to have this as their basic attitude, and that he desired its preservation for all time.

Exactly how, however, would a lay person go about being a minister in this rite if even the ordained are having problems with performing it effectively? At the most base level, like all work in spiritual direction¹⁸, the "work" of spiritual direction or of the rite in this case is done by the Holy Spirit NOT by the confessor, the spiritual director, or the lay minister. So we can breath a sigh of ease knowing first:

- God does the work in the sacrament of reconciliation.

The rubrics of the BCP go on to explain:

The secrecy of a confession is morally absolute for the confessor, and must under no circumstances be broken.

This secrecy is crucial if the confession of the penitent is to be fearless and searching.

- Anything that goes on between the minister and the penitent is absolutely secret.

The rubrics continue to explain:

The content of a confession is not normally a matter of

subsequent discussion.

There is a certain blessedness of forgetfulness in which the minister of reconciliation models our belief about God putting away sins, turning the page, and closing the book. It does allow the possibility that the penitent might want further discussion of the content, but it suggests that this will happen only on the penitent's initiative.

- Anything that goes on between the minister and the penitent is forgotten and left behind unless the penitent initiates later discussion.

This third general point leads to the idea that "counsel and encouragement" will be given by the minister at the appropriate point in the sacrament. It's here that the idea of spiritual direction comes into play.

Counsel and Encouragement: Ideas for the Minister of the Rite of Reconciliation

Kenneth Leech in his book, *Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality*, observes that it is impossible to teach someone to be a good confessor, and that effectiveness in this ministry grows out of a deeply lived life with Christ¹⁹

. . . steeped in prayer, disciplined in his life, acquainted with human frailty, and endowed with the gifts of wisdom, and knowledge of the way of the Spirit.

However, Leech goes on in the Appendix to his book, "Spiritual Direction and the Sacrament of Reconciliation", to explain that there are some basic "do's and don't's" that are helpful:

- One should be familiar with the general movement of the rite which in the first case of Rite 1 includes: (a) penitent asks for a blessing to make their confession; (b) the penitent makes their confession at which time the minister primarily listens and listens well; (c) a time of counsel and direction; (d) the penitent makes an act of thanksgiving; (e) a declaration of forgiveness is given by the lay minister or absolution by the priest or Bishop.
- Since listening is crucial in (b), and active listening takes energy on the part of the minister, Leech counsels a pre-confessional preparation of prayer and rest for the minister: "A pre-confessional snooze" can help keep a priest alert and awake, and can be highly recommended!"
- If the primary work is done by the Spirit, the most important work may lie in the listening, the witnessing by the minister. In fact, Leech makes the point that penitents neither need to ask for advice and counsel nor should the minister feel obligated or insistent to give it (p. 211).

(continued on page 6)

- If advice and counsel is asked for, it should be short, direct, and centered on God (p. 211). In all the discussion, it must be clear that sin is not a matter of violating a set of regulations, but it's that which prevents our full-flowering as God's creation and delays our progress to perfection. But since the work of reconciliation is God's and the penitent, Martin Thornton observes: "If a confession lasts longer than ten minutes it probably means that English moral, ascetical, and pastoral theology is being overthrown for that of another tradition."²⁰
- Relevant, brief questions for clarification may be helpful if they help the penitent remain specific, but "masses of intimate details should be avoided." (p. 212)
- Since we know that over 90% of what we communicate is communicated nonverbally in our gestures, facial expressions and demeanor, Leech suggests that the minister maintain an open manner—unembarrassed, unshocked, and relaxed. (p. 214)
- When the penance is given it should be related to the sin, and should begin to undo some of the damage caused by the sin, and strengthen the person in the opposite direction, the direction of grace and holiness.²¹
- One of the great difficulties in the sacrament of reconciliation at times is for the penitent to truly realize God's forgiveness for their sins and the putting aside of all guilt. One of the great masters of spiritual direction, Jean-Pierre Caussade, wrote in summary response to this: "Abandonment! Abandonment! And then what? Abandonment again, abandonment without limit and without reserve."²²
Kurtz, & Ketcham, in their lovely book, *The Spirituality of Imperfection*, in discussing forgiveness make the point one can make to the penitent in this stuck place—forgiveness cannot be 'willed,' that [it] becomes more impossible the harder one tries to will it. Forgiveness, in fact, becomes possible only when **will** is replaced by **willingness**; it results less from **effort** than from **openness**.²³
- It is difficult and spiritually dangerous to hear confessions unless one is oneself a regular penitent. (p. 217)

Despite all of this, the minister must tread lightly and leave the driving to the Spirit.

In Closing

We began with the Shaker hymn extolling simplicity and came to see that so much of it is equally true of *metanoia* or *shuv*, forgiveness, and the fruits of divine

grace bestowed in the sacrament of reconciliation. Consider again the hymn's lyrics and see how it rings true for the sacrament of reconciliation with only two word changes:

"Tis the gift to be ~~simple~~ forgiven

"Tis the gift to be free

"Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be

And when we find ourselves in the place just right

"Twill be in the valley of love and delight

When true-~~simplicity~~ forgiven-ness is gained

To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed

To turn, turn will be our delight

Till by turning, turning we come round right.

¹ Burtchaell, James "An Ancient Gift, a Thing of Joy" in *Philemon's Problem: A Theology of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans), 1998, pp. 295-316; originally in *Notre Dame Magazine*.

² Pazzelli, Raffaele. *St. Francis and the Third Order*. Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989: p. 107.

³ Habig, Marion A. (Ed.) *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*. Chicago Franciscan Herald Press 1973, 943. See also Pazzelli, pp. 101-2.

⁴ Pazzelli, p. 36.

⁵ Pazzelli, p. 121.

⁶ Hellwig, Monika. *Sign of Reconciliation and Conversion: The Sacrament of Penance for our Times*. Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press, 1991.

⁷ Champlin, Rev. Joseph. "Why Go to Confession: Questions and Answers about Sacramental Reconciliation." Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996: p. 11.

⁸ The Rev. Noel Koestline as quoted in Smith, Wayne, Lamarr. *Reclaiming the Sacrament of Reconciliation: A Program for St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Cherry Hill, NJ*. March 1989. Dissertation, Theological School, Drew University, PA.: p. 82.

⁹ Kurtz, Ernst and Ketcham, Katherine. *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Modern Wisdom from Classic Stories*. NY: Bantam Books, 1992. See especially "Chapter 15, Forgiveness".

¹⁰ Capon, Robert Farrar. *Hunting the Divine Fox: Images and Mystery in Christian Faith*. New York: Seabury Press, 1974, p. 151 In Hyde, Clark. *To Declare God's Forgiveness: Toward a Pastoral Theology of Reconciliation*. Wilton, CN: Morehouse Barlow, 1984: 59-60.

¹¹ Hatcher, Marion J. *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*. New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1980: "The Reconciliation of a Penitent" pp. 448-458. See also Appendix B "A Brief History of the Rite of Reconciliation" in Martin Smith's *Reconciliation: Preparing for Confession in the Episcopal Church*, (Cowley Publications, 1985).

¹² McNeill, John T. *A History of the Cure of Souls*. NY: Harper Brothers, 1951. "Some of the early Christian Irish counselors were not in holy orders. ... Confession to layman was not uncommon in the Eastern church and was occasional in the West... In Ireland women occasionally acted as confessors. Both St. Brendan of

Clonfert and the great missionary saint, Columbanus of Bobbio, are reported in early lives to have confessed to women and acted on their advice." (pp. 117-8)

¹³ Myers, C. Kilmer. *Light in the Dark Streets*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961: 141-2.

¹⁴ NY: Catholic Book Publishing, Co., 1975: pp. 43-71.

¹⁵ A discussion of this offering of the rite of reconciliation is offered by Hellwig, pp. 84-6.

¹⁶ The link between the Roman Catholic post-Tridentine rite of penance and the 1979 BCP is more than casual; for example the contemporary statement of absolution is from a form drafted by Anglican Massey Shepherd and approved by the Roman Consilium of Vatican II. Hyde, p. 33.

¹⁷ Pazzelli, p. 6.

¹⁸ Hyde, p. 67: "John Gunstone argues that, during the Patristic Period, the canonical public form of penance had no real relation to spiritual direction. The rise of private penance made it easier to link the two, especially in the practice of the Celtic church, where penance was initially related to the work of the "soul friend." With the spread of private penance, it became more common to occur in the confessional. Today, among Roman Catholics and Anglicans alike, there is a concern that spiritual direction be confused with penance."

¹⁹ Leech, Kenneth. *Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality*. San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1977: 209.

²⁰ Thornton, Martin. *English Spirituality*. Boston, Cowley Press, 1986: p. 301.

²¹ Leech, p. 216.

²² Caussade, Jean-Pierre. *Abandonment to Divine Providence*.

Kurtz, Ernest & Ketcham, Katherine. *The Spirituality of Imperfection*. NY: Bantam Books, 1992:p. 213. "The memory of things past is indeed a worm that does not die. Whether it continues to grow by gnawing away at our hearts or is metamorphosed into a brightly colored winged creature depends...on whether we find a forgiveness we cannot bestow on ourselves."

²³ Kurtz, Ketcham, p. 216.

The House of Correction

By Scott Robinson

A figure in a paint-stained sweatsuit runs pell-mell into the neighborhood train station just as the R7 comes into view. "The prison just called," my wife says breathlessly. "They said you can't possibly do it this morning."

What was to have been the last of four creativity workshops at Philadelphia's House of Corrections has to be postponed. Bob Eskind, Public Information Officer for the Philadelphia Prison System, has been dispatched to a corrections-officer recruiting drive. Because I am using a tape recorder in the workshops, he must be present whenever I meet with the inmates, so his absence scotches the project for today. (The tape recorder poses a "security risk"—a misleading term, really, because it isn't prison security that's at issue, but job security; should the prisoners say anything untoward and the tape fall into the wrong hands, heads could roll.) My wife and I go home through the crisp December morning.

When I first telephoned the head of prison chaplaincy some six months previously, to inquire about doing a music-and-ministry project at the House of Corrections, I was surprised at his response. The project I wished to propose was part of the American Composers Forum's Community Partners Program. In these projects, a composer goes into a community traditionally underserved by the arts, such as a homeless shelter or urban community center. The composer uses input from participants as the raw material for one or more pieces of new music—pieces which will, when they are performed, not only serve as a first exposure to new music for much or most of the community, but will also bear the creative stamp of that community. The idea is to raise awareness of both the creative process generally and the creative abilities of the participants. So far, no one had done one of these projects in a correctional facility, and my plan was to involve a group of students from Eastern College—a small Christian college where I teach—who lead a worship service with the prisoners every Friday evening. I would write some "praise songs" for these services, using prisoners' lyrics. In addition, I proposed to write a larger piece of formal choral music for Eastern's touring choir Turning Point, also using inmates' texts, which the choir would premiere in the prison and then take on their summer tour.

I didn't get to say most of this to the chaplain. In fact, I hadn't gotten more than a few sentences out when he interrupted me, a note of rising panic in his voice.

"You'll have to talk to Volunteer Services about that." I explained that the Philadelphia Baptist Association, under whose auspices the group from Eastern does its work at the HOC, had already referred me to Volunteer Services, who had in turn referred me to him.

"I don't know anything about that. You'll have to talk to Volunteer Services." The conversation was over. Thus began my often-frustrating and—surprisingly—strangely fruitful association with one of the most paranoid and unresponsive institutions I have ever encountered. And despite all the foot-dragging and nonchalance of the prison system, the project turned out to be rewarding for the inmates, the students, and me.

To be fair, I can't say I hadn't been warned about prison work. At the mandatory volunteer orientation session I had attended in July, Volunteer Services Coordinator Johanne Anderson had briefed a large roomful of volunteers from all sorts of religious organizations.

"You have to face the fact that you aren't anybody's favorite people," she counseled us. Rather than seeing

(continued on page 8)

The House of Correction (cont.)

volunteers as an aid to rehabilitation, a bulwark against recidivism, or an inducement to good conduct, prison officials regard them primarily as a nuisance and a potential security breach.

Upon arrival on the morning of the rescheduled final workshop—when we are to discuss the process of copywriting, read through the texts I had pieced together from the inmates' writing in previous workshops, and sing through one of the new praise songs—I leave my coat, hat, wallet, change and keys in a locker in the visitors' area. When Bob Eskind arrives, we sign in at the front desk, pass through the metal detector and two sets of locked doors, sign in at the inside desk, and enter the main prison through one more barred gates. The House of Corrections is one of the last of a type of prison developed in Philadelphia, the cell blocks radiate out from a central hub like the spokes of a wheel. One of these spokes is the gym, where the worship services, and my workshops, are held.

When we get there, instead of the twenty-some participants I have become accustomed to seeing, there are only a half-dozen. It turns out that after the postponement, no one had bothered to tell the inmates that the prison had cancelled our meeting. The absent prisoners, assuming that I had simply failed to show up, were boycotting out of anger toward me. Because the concert was not to take place until April, I would never see many of them again.

If nothing else, this episode gave me some idea of how important the workshops were to the men, and how vulnerable they were to the caprices of those on "the outside." For the most part, they had responded to my workshops—which consisted mostly of periods of writing in response to catalytic phrases and ideas I proposed, and periods of sharing their work with each other—with vigor and candor that surprised me. I had expected that it would be difficult to get the men to write, and to write honestly. Instead, I left each meeting with a sheaf of papers documenting frustration, rage, drugs and violence, longing to be present for neglected children, and—in many cases—a highly developed faith.

In an interview on a local public radio station, one of the participants had this to say about his relationship with God: "He'll humble you, and He'll keep you—it's like they say: be careful what you pray for, because you just might get it! I always prayed first to keep God first in my life, second to be drug-free, and third to be jail-free. And when I was out, I was still using drugs, and I wasn't keeping God first. So God, in a

sort of roundabout way, said, 'Well, I gotta keep you drug-free, and you gotta be close to me, (so) if I have to, I'll put you back in jail.' Which is OK."

"The truth will set you free," this same inmate wrote in a poem I used for one of the praise songs, "because there are no boundaries to the truth. So you can be in jail, and still be set free." This kind of spiritual surrender impressed me over and over in a surprising number of the men's writings.

One of the greatest challenges I encountered was trying to get the men to understand the concept of art music. Like most of the population, they had only been exposed to commercial pop music, and the idea of music as a not-for-profit art form was outside their universe. This became a problem when it came time to sign the release forms.

I had consulted Rob Kapilow, a composer who has made a thriving career of community-based musical projects, on the issue of intellectual property. He encouraged me in my inclination to divide any hypothetical lyricists' royalties among the men whose texts I ended up using. The prison administration, however, citing the difficulty of keeping track of the inmates once they leave prison, persuaded me to devote any such royalties to the Prisoners' Welfare Fund. This decision was the cause of some dissension among the participants, with one party determined to "do it for God," and another anxious to keep their money out of the hands of the prison system. Though I tried to explain to them that no

Please excuse our missing photographs in this issue. Because Dee Dobson is our printer liaison in Florida, and she's been in Intensive Care for some weeks now, we tried to print the *Times* from a distance. Foolish us to have tried without Dee; the copy with all photographs was lost in the mail. Please keep Dee in your prayers.

one is in competition for the money—with a half-dozen pieces of choral music in print, I still make less than \$100 a year in royalties—it wasn't until I offered my own share of this hypothetical loot to the Welfare Fund that we were able to clear this obstacle. (I had never begrudged this money of course—I had simply never expected to make any.) The men who still had scruples about their share going to the prison simply left the appropriate line on the line-item release form unsigned.

Over the two months during which the workshops were held (the last workshop ended up happening much later than originally scheduled) some prisoners were released, some were sent "upstate" to a state prison, and a few drifted away. But for the most part, there was a core of a dozen or more men who were faithful to the project. (Although I had sent in flyers describing the workshops, they were not distributed, and the "call-out" for the initial meeting produced nearly fifty men, some half of whom were unaware of the project's religious nature. This, of course, resulted in the greatest attrition of the project.) A number of the men approached me after the workshops asking advice about continuing to write after they got out. I still see some of them on Friday evenings with the Eastern College worship team.

The men are very grateful to these young people who spend their Friday evenings singing in a prison, and I have been asked to speak (translated from the Baptist, that means "preach extemporaneously,") on several occasions. This experience has been extraordinarily enriching for me, giving me some inkling of what Paul and Barnabas must have felt like in the synagogue in Antioch. Being exposed to this style of largely African-American evangelical "praise-centered" worship has also been very broadening for me, and my first attempt at writing in the pop idiom of "praise music" did more for me as a composer than I would have supposed.

Most inspiring, however, was watching the members of Turning Point during the concert at which the music was premiered. Unlike the worship team, they had never been in a prison before. They were very collected about the whole thing—all that evangelical surrendered-ness does make a difference—but, as I learned later, many of them were deeply moved by the experience. As one of them put it, "That was definitely outside my comfort zone, but that's good." When I went back the week after the concert to help the worship team, I noticed that one of the choristers had joined them, which was especially gratifying.

It is from the worship team that I learned the most, though it would probably surprise them to learn that.

Some of them make the weekly trek to the HOC as part of a credit-bearing course, but many of them do it purely as a ministry—something that would never have occurred to me when I was 19 years old. Some of them are "missionary kids," and one of them, in fact, spent several years of her childhood doing prison ministry in Bolivia. And all of them, as far as I can tell, are as entirely surrendered to the will of God as I hope some day to be. I can still hear the pre-departure prayer of their student coordinator on the first night I accompanied them to the prison; charged with the artless and effusive praise so strange to most Anglican ears, it seemed to give voice to a spiritual condition ideal for ministry in a place where you never know exactly when you'll get in or when you'll be kicked out, and where you're treated as an inconvenience by those in authority and as a blessing by the powerless.

"Father, we only ask that whatever happens—no matter what—that it be in Your will."

Upcoming 2001 Convocations Information

- **Southeast:** 9/28-30, 2001, Ignatius House, Atlanta. Contact Jacqui Belcher.
- **Western:** 8/10-12, Contact Joan Kidd.
- **Midwestern:** 8/17-19, Marytown Retreat Center (Libertyville IL). Contact Julia Acker.
- **Northern Mountains and Plains (NE-WY) none scheduled.**
- **Northeastern:** 8/24-6, Graymoor Friary (Garrison NY). Contact Don Josephs.
- **Southwest cancelled.**
- **Guyana none scheduled.**
- **South California:** 9/14-16, Spiritual Life Center, Onmza. Contact Wai-Wah Hillam.
- **Order of Ecumenical Franciscans:** 6/28-7/1, Contact Fred Ball.

CONVOCATION NOTES

ATTENTION CONVENERS:

The Franciscan Times will reach interested and/or isolated tertiaries in your region (and elsewhere) who might make plans to attend your gathering. Advance notice and a name of a person to contact will be helpful to them. Please send the details to:

R. John Brockmann TSSF,

P.O. Box 277, Warwick, MD 21912-0277.

**Sermon at the Funeral of Elizabeth Ann,
CSF— April 28, 2001 St. Aidan's
Church, San Francisco**

By Sr. Pamela Clare, CSF

In this second week of Easter, we remember the blessed hope of our calling as Christians in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and we gather here today to recall and send off a blessed Child of God, one who indeed walked as a child of the light, in the words of Elizabeth Ann's favorite hymn.

"See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children." This reading from the First Letter of John which we heard a few minutes ago assures us of God's great love and tells us that we are children of God. This is something Liz knew deeply in her heart and taught to other people through her compassion and welcoming acceptance.

Liz was an ENFP (in Myers' Briggs parlance, an Extrovert, Intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving person). She always enjoyed sharing the joke about the ENFPs prayer "O God, help me to keep my mind on one thing — look at the bird! — at a time."

And speaking of birds..... Liz used to have a very characteristic walk. It seemed like her heels rarely hit the ground. It was as though she was attached to a set of helium balloons. I think it related to her love of birds— especially the cardinal who so proudly displays her favorite color red. Liz had a great desire to fly like a bird. In her joyful enthusiasm for life, she seemed always to be on the verge of take-off. One of her favorite images of God was God as a great mother eagle. She loved to tell how eagles fly under the eaglets as they are learning to fly. The mother eagle swoops down under and lifts up her young into the sky. This was Liz's image of her relationship with God.

"In my Father's house there are many rooms," Jesus says in John's gospel. Heaven is as wide as the heart of God with room for all. Just as well.....lots of room for diversity..... perhaps even enough rooms to encompass Liz's many different and enthusiastic arenas of life and work and friendship.

I can image her through the eons of eternity, sampling the various rooms in heaven. No one is going to be able to keep her in just one I guarantee you! She would be warmly welcomed and find herself at home in many, many rooms. First, she would look for the restaurant, where spaghetti would be featured on the menu. She always said she was sure spaghetti would be part of the heavenly banquet. Any room with children would

feel at home to her after her many years of elementary school teaching. The room with People who had suffered from Cerebral Palsy in their life would welcome her as a loving teacher and advocate. She would undoubtedly drop into the Spanish-speaking room just to keep up the language she spoke with more vigor than comprehensibility. She would search out the choir practice room and happily sing or play tambourine or volunteer to usher for the concert.

She would be thrilled to meet with folks who had been prisoners. After all, she taught adult literacy skills to men in jail in Pennsylvania, wrote letters for prisoners of conscience through Amnesty International, and worked Kairos and Kairos Outside with prisoners and their families. As she swoops on her eagles' wings around the Heavenly Dwelling Places, the many people she had been connected to through her intercessory prayer, her healing ministry and her work as hospital chaplain will be calling for her to stop by for lunch.

The formerly hungry and homeless would give her an enthusiastic welcome, since she had special concern for these suffering people through her work on the Diocesan Hunger Commission, writing letters for Bread for the World, her work at Fr. Tom's Soup Kitchen, and her beloved Martin de Porres House of Hospitality. And then of course, there is the room where Francis and Clare will greet her joyfully as a faithful daughter.

The Final Judgment scene in Matthew chapter 25 comes to mind very powerfully when I reflect on Liz's life: And the King will say, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and we took care of you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

In early March Liz took to her bed and never really got out except for some meals, an occasional Eucharist in the house, a few offices, two trips to Oakland for her acupuncture sessions and one last visit to St. Aidan's. But despite her weakness, she kept saying that perhaps she would feel well enough to go to work the next day. This was somewhat frustrating to us who were caring for her because we saw that she couldn't possibly get to work, but were afraid she would insist on trying.

Finally we asked her, "Why do you want to go to work?" Her answer was simple. "To serve."

Back to John's epistle: "See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children." It is not yet clear what we shall become. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is." In her spiritual journey Liz spent much time contemplating the face of Christ and the beingness of God, both in her prayer and in her ministry. We here knew Liz and can say with some certainty what she was, but, in truth, it is not yet clear what she will become. But, as the scripture assures us, we know that when Christ appears, she will be like him.

In her letter requesting to make her first profession of vows in CSF back in 1988 she wrote: "I realize more and more that this process of being a Sister is a life-long commitment to spiritual growth and change. In a world that seems to be living "perfectly well" without God, it is good to be part of a community that is attempting to live out a life of prayer, a life of study, and a life of work side by side. I can say with my life that God matters, people matter, and how I spend myself matters..."

You can see that there is a candle on Elizabeth Ann's casket. It is the custom in our community to receive a candle at our novicing, when we first receive the Franciscan habit. The candle is lit at First Profession of Vows and Life Profession of Vows, and at the funeral, the candle is left to burn out.

Dom Helder Camera, the great Roman Catholic Bishop and servant of the poor people of Brazil wrote: " God, permit that the symbol of my life be a candle that burns itself, spends itself, consumes itself while there is still wax to burn."

" I can say with my life that God matters, people matter, and how I spend myself matters..." Yes, Liz, it did matter how you spent yourself....

Thanks be to God!

RIP: Wendy Dunn, 12/25/ 00

(reprinted from the Third Order Network online newsletter, #5, March 2001)

Wendy was the Provincial Secretary of the TSSF African Province - and much else besides. She died suddenly on Christmas Day at about 8.00 PM after a wonderful day. She will be sorely missed by African tertiaries, and in particular by the Durban Group where she was the life and soul of every gathering.

Additional material from *Pax et Bonum* (the newsletter of the African Province, March 2001 newsletter) has this

to add. "In the Durban group, Wendy will be lovingly remembered as the person most likely to lead the singing, the one who always came armed with a box of paper plate holders, some knives and forks and various other necessities to facilitate our shared meal. Wendy was also the one who pursued truth. She was not afraid to speak out and, at times, initiated lively discussions. She also had a great sense of humor and dry wit which brought a sense of fun to the meetings."

Elizabeth Ann, CSF

RIP: Dee Finnell, 3/15/01

By Francesca Wigle

Dee Finnell died of a massive coronary on March 15, 2001. Dee was especially called to work with the elderly, and her presence will be missed deeply by the members of the Heart of Texas Fellowship. Please keep her brother, Glen Keightly, for your prayers. May she rest happily in God's presence.

African Province, Central Region: Chapter 2001

By David Bertram

The annual Chapter of the Central Region (Zimbabwe) was held on Saturday 23rd June 2001. Attendance was light because the notices were sent out late, and there was a postal strike, and a fuel shortage. While Harare was awash with petrol and diesel, thanks to provision for tourism during the solar eclipse, the fuel for Bulawayo was lying in a derailed train and was in very short supply.

We were due to start at 10.00 am. At about 10.30, the Harare contingent arrived. This comprised Philip and Judith Dhliwayo, Salathiel Madziyire, Gladys Wauchope, Maureen and David Bertram. Our hosts

(continued on page 13)

Glenn McClure's "St. Francis in the Americas: A Caribbean Mass"

A Review by Scott Robinson

One of the charming courtship rituals of bygone days was the young woman's parents' questioning of the young man about his intentions toward their daughter. Until these intentions were declared openly, the parents had no way of knowing what to make of the suitor. Composer Glenn McClure's *St. Francis in the Americas: A Caribbean Mass* (www.earthsongsmus.com) labors under the same handicap. I just can't figure out what the composer's intentions are.

The piece is scored for mixed choir with soloists, steel drums, hammer dulcimer and a battery of Latin American percussion. This combination makes for some beguiling textures, and the instrumental writing is idiomatic and effective. But while the various Latin rhythms and simple harmonies point to some sort of "folk mass," the level of difficulty in the choral writing is out of reach of the groups that perform such music.

McClure has supplemented the Ordinary of the Latin Mass with settings of St. Francis' writings. The ambitious scale of the piece makes it seem designed for concert performance or for a special-occasion mass. But in this context, a Kyrie with a bossa nova beat and a Gloria set in a torchy lounge-blues style seem out of place. The introit, a setting of "Altissimo, onnipotente bon Signor," is reminiscent of the Ewoks' song from the original finale of "Return of the Jedi," and it's difficult to imagine when, where, by whom and for whom it is intended to be performed.

The piece begs comparison with two other liturgical works: David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus* and Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*. But while Fanshawe transfigured the field recordings of African music that he wove into his Mass setting, and while Bernstein transcended the pop-idiom song McClure trooped into his seeming to have assimilated his source material without really digesting it. The work as a whole misses both the gravitas of concert music and the simplicity of liturgical folk music.

There are some attractive parts—the Memorial Acclamation, a vocal solo with dulcimer accompaniment, is quite pretty in a Taize sort of way, and McClure uses the dulcimer to good effect. With a professional-quality recording, this piece might serve well as a CD; it is difficult to tell what its destiny might be as a work for live performance.

Third Order European Province Reorganised (Part 1)

by Robert Dimmick

Two or three years ago the Provincial Chapter decided to hold a review of how the Third Order European Province was organized. At that time, it consisted of a number of regions (I think about 20), each with up to about four or five areas. Areas could have "small groups" for informal meetings, but the area (not the group) was the focus of a tertiary's commitment. An average area might have had something like 30-40 members. All the regional Guardians were on the Provincial Chapter, which (as I understand it) made the meetings rather cumbersome.

The decisions arising from the review were to get rid of the regions and to reorganize the areas so that a typical area contains 50-100 members. The focus moves from the area to the larger local group. However, novicings and professions take place at area meetings; the area is expected to meet at least once a year at Francistide, and can meet more often. The Provincial Chapter now consists of the main functional officers and eight "link tertiaries" elected from a "cluster" of areas.

The European Province is very much based in England; four of the areas are in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, one is in Sweden, and all the rest are English. We now have 37 areas and 115 groups on the provincial intercessions list, which I've recently taken over maintaining, and some 2300 members. Some areas haven't notified any groups, and I don't know whether they act as a single group or haven't told the administrator about their local structure.

At the local level, the titles and terms of reference of area officers have been redefined, so in theory we now know who should do what. We certainly didn't at some times during the changeover. The same goes for working procedures, such as accepting new postulants and novices.

The system was set up during last year and officially came into operation at Francis-tide. A substantial minority of tertiaries found themselves moved into new areas, and not all of them were very happy about it. Some have decided to retain links with their previous friends and not join their new areas, and others might have preferred to.

Was it worth it? As Mao said about the effects of the French Revolution, it's too early to tell. I think that in time it will settle down, and that the typical group will be a more manageable size than the typical area used to be. We have grown fast in recent years.

All this is an unofficial perception from somewhere near the grass-roots.

Third Order European Province Reorganised (Part 2)—A Link Tertiary; What's That?

Michael Daws,

Link Tertiary, North East and North West. (reprinted from the Third Order Network online newsletter, #5, March 2001)

Asked by John Fox (a friend, I might add!) to write a few words about the role of the Link Tertiary, my inner self groaned at yet another task to do before I can settle down to even thinking about Easter and this special time in our lives when we look forward to celebrating the resurrection of our Lord in our world, in our neighbor and in ourselves. I teach and I guess like so many of us, the work keeps piling in with more and more to do in less and less time. And of course that is the greatest contradiction for me; the increasing intensity and pressure of my own work life needs to be counter balanced with the strength and support of my own faith system that I have as a Christian and my continuing inner personal struggle to remain faithful to my vocation as a member of this Third Order of St Francis. Peace and quiet, time for reflection and prayer are the oxygen and life-blood that maintain this contradiction of continuing engagement with my neighbor and those around me; yet also of keeping apart, of discovering my Lord's need for me, of being myself. And knowing that I am not alone is very important to me. I am in company of so many other travelers who might not be physically with me at this moment in time but who I have met and come to know and who are with me spiritually as I continue my own journey – they are with me, I am with them. It is all of this that helps to keep my own inner flickering candle of faith burning strong and bright.

So as a beginning, a few words about who I am and why I need the Third Order. Perhaps my own story relates to your story but perhaps it may not (why should it?). The lesson from my own valued membership within the Third Order, is how wonderfully different we all are. The scale and magnitude of our Lord's creative being is manifest in the diversity, width and depth of our living membership. We all have our own reasons and our own life stories that bring us to faith and to our own vocation following in the footsteps of Blessed Francis.

For me, this is why we have tried to reorganize our Order in the European Province, to return us to the roots of what we are about. We are undeniably an Order – and all that that means – but primarily, I believe, we consist of individuals attempting to live out a Third Order vocation that belongs to our own experience, our own context, our own self and who we

perceive to be our own neighbor. Individual life stories that are lived out and held together under the overarching umbrella of membership and discipline of 'Order'

We have, as an Order, a responsibility to facilitate the growth and development of each one of our members and those yet to join the Order. We have now a renewed focus on what may be considered the regular sustainable dimension of community – the Local Group, and we have attempted to create our extended, albeit infrequent, community contacts by combining Local Groups into Areas that again, hopefully, are sustainable and meaningful.

The challenge is there for all of us – to keep our differences as individuals living within a dispersed membership of an Order and yet maintain our similarities that allow us to be identified as an Order and to be called an Order. We still have to act and live as an Order, we still have to communicate and work as an Order, we still have to provide study, prayer and other support material as an Order, we still have to call on our membership to come forward and share their talents for the benefit of the Order.

This then brings me to the real focus of what these few words should be about and that is the role of the Link Tertiary. The Link Tertiary, as a member of Provincial Chapter, has the formal responsibility of trusteeship, but also is part of the 'dynamic' of the Order ensuring that the Order as a whole is continually moving along its own journey together with its members; all the while communicating and sharing our corporate vision of how St Francis bids us to live our lives. There has to be, within the Order, some process of bridging and bringing together all our separate needs into one being; there has to be channels of communication within the Order to allow listening and understanding to take place between the needs of the Local Group, the Areas and Provincial Chapter. It is hoped that by grouping our Areas together into Clusters, the Link Tertiary will be able to provide a 'grass roots' input that allows Provincial Chapter and all our individual Tertiaries to journey together.

African Province, Central Region: Chapter (cont.)

were two other members of the Harare Group, Thomas and Marggie Madeyi. Travelling with the Harare Group were two members of the Bulawayo Group, Judith and David Smith, who had been visiting relatives in our area over the eclipse. Later, Sarah Mwanza and Justin Muzunze arrived by bus, not being able to find fuel to drive to the Chapter.

African Province, Central Region: Chapter (cont.)

The venue was St Paul 's Church, Rimuka, and we received a big welcome when we finally arrived. Finding their church is an adventure in itself, but we made it after spotting two postmen on bicycles, who gave us directions. We began with Holy Communion. David as Guardian celebrated in place of George Wauchope (Regional Chaplain), who was in the USA. As about twenty members of St Paul 's Church congregation, including most of the choir, were present, we had a homily about St Francis and the aims of the Third Order. The service was in Shona and English, with Shona hymns and canticles, and it was a truly joyous occasion. It was now quite late, so we went straight in to lunch before the meeting.

The Chapter began with a reading from the life of St Francis and a prayer for the Third Order. Apologies were recorded from some members, not forgetting those out of the country. David, as Acting Minister Provincial, declined to give a message, as he had given the homily at the service. Reports from the Bulawayo and Harare groups showed that regular meetings are being held. Contact has been made with Roman Catholic Franciscans: the Bulawayo Group met with the Secular Franciscans, and the Harare Group met with Fr Gildea OFM during the past year. The problem of venues for retreats was discussed, and the Bulawayo Group decided to join the Harare Group at the Christ the Word Monastery in future. The Treasurer 's report was well received. The main project discussed was the Elizabeth Graham Nursery School. This had been having financial problems, but owing partly to a loan from the Central Region funds is now operating satisfactorily.

We then discussed the arrangements for APTOC (African Province Third Order Chapter), which will take place in Johannesburg at Francistide. The delegates will include the representatives from Harare (Salathiel Madziyire) and Bulawayo (Felicity van Jaarsveld), the Guardian to be elected shortly, and David as Acting Minister Provincial and Assistant Provincial Chaplain. In addition, Salfina Dube, Thiyiwe Khumalo and the Dhlwayos want to attend. The proxy voting system was discussed, and we noted that those attending APTOC would have an opportunity to meet people and assess their character and ability, but those sending in proxy votes would not. We agreed that proxy voting was not necessarily an improvement. This is still to be decided at APTOC.

Elections were held and George Wauchope was elected the new Guardian, with Justin Muzunze as his deputy. As George will be in the USA, Justin will attend

APTOC in George 's place. If George declines to take up this post, David will continue as Guardian, but only for one year, and in either case, Justin will be at APTOC. Bishop Elijah was elected as Bishop Protector, and Philip Dhlwayo as Regional Treasurer. He was authorized to close the existing account and move it to another bank or building society which would charge lower fees. It was also decided to increase the annual subs from \$50 to \$100 as a minimum. Chapter was closed with a prayer by Archbishop Tutu. We then had another cup of tea, took some photos of the members, and returned home.

Francis and Islam by J. Hoerberichts: A Review by Terry Rogers

I lived in Jerusalem and the West Bank from 1991-1992. While there I was told that Samir Kafity, the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, used to pay a formal call on the Islamic Grand Mufti every year, and the first thing Bishop Kafity would do, every year, was to apologize for the Crusades.

I thought of this story while reading *Francis and Islam*. Its author had been a theology professor in Pakistan and was moved to study extensively in Franciscan scholarship on this topic. He begins by reminding us that Francis lived at a time when the European church was summoned to Crusades over and over again. Christians were urged to become crusaders, to give money, to preach sermons and pray for the crusaders, and to make peace in Europe so as to release funds and soldiers for the Crusades. It is significant that nowhere in his own writings, however, does Francis mention these Crusades.

For me the heart of the book is the careful exploration of Chapter 16 of Francis's Rule of 1221. It gives instructions for any brother "who by divine inspiration, wishes to go among the Saracens and other unbelievers." Chapter 16 states, "The brothers who go, can live spiritually among them in two ways. One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake, and to confess that they are Christians. Another way is to proclaim the word of God when they see that it pleases the Lord, so that they believe in the all powerful God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that they be baptized and become Christians."

The author believes that the first way mentioned is the primary way for Francis. He asserts, "Preaching and baptizing do not have first priority. In itself this fits very well in Francis's vision, for according to him the witness of life always holds priority over the witness of the word."

This picture of Francis startled me at first, since it's hard for me to imagine Francis and his brothers not preaching. But preaching came later, says the author, and represents a "clerical" departure from the original Franciscan lifestyle. And he states that the brothers were not allowed to preach without the permission of their minister and their bishop, but that "all brothers should preach by their deeds" (Rule of 1221). His contention is that Francis's primary mission for his brothers is a lay calling - one of humble service in imitation of Christ.

There is a radical implication in Francis' first way of living among the Saracens, when he asks the brothers to be subject to every living creature. These words actually conflict with many provisions of the canon law of his day, which forbade Christians to be the servants or slaves of Moslems or Jews.

I think Francis would rejoice at the humility of a Christian bishop apologizing for the Crusades. Living among Moslems revealed to me, within myself, terrible stereotypes of these brothers and sisters of mine, cruel distortions that go back to how I was taught about the Crusades. I wish I could share with you the reality of day to day life there - the faces, the voices, the hospitality I was given, the food and the music, the chanting call to prayer, the love of parents for their children. This is why I was so moved by Francis's vision of simply living in an Islamic world.

And that is also why I was so grieved to see the reflection of the Crusades in the Collect for King Ferdinand in our *Devotional Companion*. I searched for an alternative and found Pope John 23rd, which the Third Order Chapter approved last fall.

In conclusion, here are the author's words explaining why it was "for God's sake" that Francis wished his brothers to be subject to every living creature. "This God invited the brothers to imitate the humility of Jesus in their lives and thus make it a foundation of a new world of peace by being subject to the Saracens, staying among them without any feeling of superiority and sharing work and food with them. By living in this way in the midst of the Saracens in the Spirit of the humble Lord, the brothers confessed that they were Christians and not crusaders. In other words, their life of being subject to the Saracens was their declaration of identity, that they were followers of Jesus who did not come to lord it over others and make his authority felt, but to be their servant and slave." He speaks of the brothers "identity" as followers of Jesus, but I think it is also declaration of "identity" as "identification," as one with those they serve, as made, like them, in the image and likeness of God.

From The Chaplain: The Daily Office and Sacramental Confession

By Julia Bergstrom

The Daily Office is an important part of our spiritual discipline. It primarily consists of scripture, which we want to read every day to "put on the mind of Christ." It contains all aspects of prayer: praise, thanksgiving, petition, intercession, and adoration. It is the prayer of the Church, and keeps us firmly anchored in the Church's tradition - something that Francis insisted on. We say it in symbolic community with our Franciscan family. It often leads us quite naturally into contemplative prayer, as scripture often does. If we feel the pull to contemplative prayer during the office, we can answer that call and then finish the office after contemplation.

Saying the office, whether we "feel like it" or not, is a fruitful way of surrendering our wills to God. Anyone who has moved to the American province from another province may continue the practices of their former province.

I think we all go through times when the Office is mere drudgery. Sometimes we really can't do it at all, but we shouldn't feel guilty. Francis didn't always keep his rule. There are times when other parts of the rule become difficult as well, but they all play their part in a healthy spirituality. Even when we don't keep all parts of our rule equally, we know it is there to return to. The particular role of the Office is in helping us put on the mind of Christ by daily steeping us in Scripture. It also contains the various parts of prayer that we need to keep in mind to keep balanced.

I don't think that we should drop the Office simply because the other Provinces don't require it. (Just because it's not part of their rule doesn't mean it's not a good thing to do, but you don't have to leave TSSF because there's some part of the rule you're having problems with.) When you report, you just talk about not being able to do the Office, or whatever it is. You can vary how you do it, take it apart and put it back together in a way that is better suited to you, or do different parts of it at different times of the day. I often like to do just the readings from the Bible in lectio divina style. A good book on that is *Too Deep for Words, Rediscovering Lectio Divina*, by Thelma Hall, Paulist Press. You can tape the rest of the Office and just listen to it. If none of that is possible right now, report that you can't do it for now. As I said, we all have problems with some part of our rule at one time or another.

Sacramental confession is an important part of our spiritual practice, because it brings us the power of God's healing love and union with God, in a special
(Continued on p. 17)

Episcopalians Join Protest Against Drilling in the Arctic Refuge

by Jan Nunley and Jerry Hames of the Episcopal News Service

Three Episcopal priests were among 22 religious activists arrested on May 3 at the Department of Energy Building in Washington, D.C. during a public protest of the Bush administration's energy policy and its support for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Police moved in as the protestors stood or knelt in prayer at the entrance of the federal building after a public service that drew about 150 supporters from as far as California and Alaska.

In February, the group issued "A Call to Religious Witness for the Arctic Refuge," which declared that ANWR "must be forever protected as a sacred place for the Gwich'in, a haven for wildlife, and a cathedral for the human spirit to glory in God's handiwork. To drill for oil there would be a sacrilege.

"Every religious tradition teaches us to hold sacred the wonders of creation, yet wantonly we desecrate them," the declaration says. "Every religious tradition cautions us to temper our cravings for sensation and material things, yet we pursue them addictively, vainly hoping to fill our spiritual emptiness. Every religious tradition forbids theft, yet every day we live unsustainably, we steal from our children and our children's children. Throughout the world, poor and working people, and especially people of color, are pollution's first victims. When we see the earth and its creatures wounded, we cannot pass by on the other side." Episcopalians signers of the Call include Bishop Mark MacDonald of the Diocese of Alaska [and our Third Order brother].

Francis of Assisi by William Cook and Ronald Herzman: A Review

An Audio-tape Course (Course 615) by The Teaching Company. 12 tapes and a guidebook 1-800-832-2412

From the Scope in the Course Guidebook:

Francis of Assisi is probably the best-known and the most often depicted Christian saint other than biblical figures such as the Virgin Mary, St. Peter, and St. Paul. He has been the subject of some of the greatest art in the Western tradition, but he is also a favorite figure in backyard shrines, key chains, and all sorts of popular religious trinkets. For many people, he is a warm and fuzzy figure, known as a lover of animals or something of a thirteenth-century hippie. Despite his continuing popularity and a relatively large body of texts about him dating from his own time, Francis remains an elusive figure in history. The purpose of these lectures

is to examine carefully the history and legend of this remarkable man and to follow his influence from his era to ours.

Finding the man who, at about the age of twenty-five, renounced his family and inheritance to serve his God in poverty, simplicity, and obedience is no easy task. Sources are plentiful, at least by medieval standards, but they are hardly consistent or complete. Although we have a body of Francis's own writings, they are not autobiographical and reveal less of the man to us than we might expect or hope for. Despite the numerous visual images of Francis produced in Italy in the years immediately after his death, we do not even know what he looked like, because none of the images was a portrait in the modern sense.

To discover who this man was and what he meant to people of his own time, we need to use the two types of sources that are most plentiful—written narratives of his life and images created for the walls and altars of countless Franciscan churches. Not only are these categories of sources quite different from one another, but they also were largely intended for different audiences. In general, the narrative works were composed in Latin, largely for the friars' own edification and instruction, while many of the works of art were for the purpose of instructing a more general and largely lay audience about Francis of Assisi.

Francis is not simply the sum of the cultural streams that converged in him. Before trying to know this man well, however, it is vital to know something of the cultural, religious, social, political, and geographical contexts for his life. Then we can try to reconstruct Francis's life and to understand what that life meant in thirteenth-century Italy.

In seeking to understand Francis's importance from his time to the present, we must look at his thought and actions. Claims were made in Francis's own time that he was the Christian who most completely imitated Christ, and there are those today who argue that such a statement remains true almost eight hundred years after his death.

Francis is perhaps best known today as a lover of nature, and indeed, his relationship with all creatures is an important part of his legacy. However, he was more than a man who talked to birds and petted wolves. Francis recaptured a part of the biblical view of creation that had been downplayed, at least in part, because in the Middle Ages untamed nature so often seemed more an enemy than something to embrace.

In a hierarchical world in which those at the top were often prideful and in an emerging world of commerce in which the "winners" were avaricious, Francis practiced humility and poverty. In an increasingly

often prideful and in an emerging world of commerce in which the "winners" were avaricious, Francis practiced humility and poverty. In an increasingly complex world that loved subtlety and argumentation, Francis practiced simplicity. Perhaps observing how he lived in thirteenth-century Italy can be at least a partial guide for living today. Francis's embrace of the outcasts of his society, especially lepers, is certainly relevant in a world that contains so many marginalized people. And Francis's joy, which was never smothered by his own physical ills and failures, is a model, especially to those who find themselves overcome by the world's problems and people's failure to solve them.

Comments On the Tape Series by John Brockmann

Having read over the years all the biographies and studies of Francis that I could find, I approached this "academic" presentation of a study of Francis with fear and trepidation. And I was pleasantly surprised to find my low expectations denied. I learned a good deal with this series especially in the way that the authors put Francis in context not only of those I was familiar with: the Bible, the institution of the Church, the Crusades, and chivalry, but also in terms of the new money economy that was just beginning to take off and of which Pietro di Bernardone was a prime exponent. Francis tried to move the church to a new understanding of wealth as it was shifting its base before his very eyes from land to money—money which was liquid and mobile. The authors also place Francis in the context of the conflicts that such a new economy produced: the conflicts between the new urban wealthy and the feudal lords; between city-states such as Assisi and the Holy Roman Empire; and between the visible urban poor and the inadequate ways the Church had at the time for dealing with them. Our Third Order, Clare, and the various movies about Francis all make their appearance in due course. I would give the series three and a half stars.

From The Chaplain: The Daily Office and Sacramental Confession (cont.)

way, as all the sacraments do. For those who have never done it, it can seem a daunting task, but it is important to make it a regular part of our spiritual practice, because it is such a powerful instrument for healing and growth. The very reason we resist it, is the very reason to do it. We make ourselves vulnerable, humble, naked before God, facing our deepest hurts and fears, and in that condition tell the truth and commit to changing direction. And in that moment of absolution we accept God's unconditional love and are given the power, through the cross of Christ, to amend our lives. Normally Franciscans make use of Sacramental Confession at least once a year. If it is difficult to do, availing ourselves of it more often can ease our discomfort. If your experience with a particular priest is less than helpful, try a different one. Prepare yourself, because what you bring to it, as in anything, makes a difference.

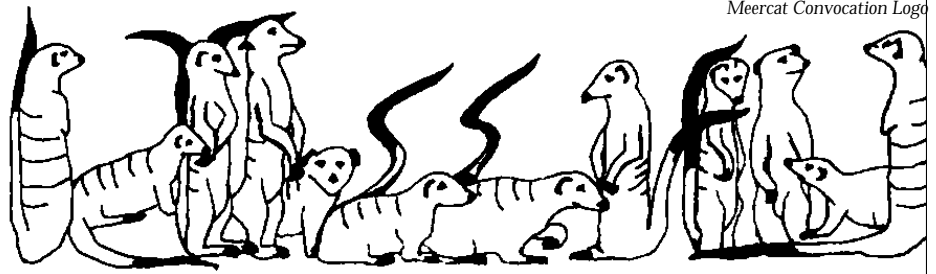
Anne LeCroy Ordained Deacon

by Ray Escott

Anne LeCroy was ordained at St. John's Cathedral in Knoxville, Tennessee on June 16th. Two Fellowships (Land of the Sky of Western North Carolina and Portiuncula of Eastern Tennessee) gathered and headed off to Knoxville. What a wonderful service it was!

Don't Forget! 2002 Provincial Convocation: 6/25-30, 2002 (Santa Barbara California).

Get those proposals ready for talks, art, exercises, plays, etc. that you would like to offer to the rest of the TSSF community at the 2002 Provincial Convocation. Remember that our theme for the Convocation is **Discernment in Community** and that Susan Farnham, author of *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (Morehouse, 1-800-877-0012) will be our keynote speaker.



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