



# The Franciscan Times

Lent 2002

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●

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## Pilgrimage to Ground Zero

*Phillip Geliebter (pictures on back page)*

*I was both excited and was apprehensive about our trip to New York. As a police officer and former US Navy corpsman, and firefighter/paramedic, I felt helpless watching the events unfold in New York. Like most other cops and firefighters outside of New York, I felt as if I should be there lending a hand, but couldn't. This was my opportunity to actually DO something.*

I was one of eleven parishioners along with our rector, The Rev. Phyllis Taylor, who traveled from Trinity Church, Oxford to St Paul's Chapel in New York City. We were to staff the rest center at ground zero. We left Philadelphia at 4:30 p.m. to staff the 8 p.m. - 8 a.m. shift, traveled by train to New York City and took a subway to lower Manhattan. We walked from the subway stop to a meeting place a few blocks away from St Paul's and ground zero. Enroute we passed a person holding a poster-size color portrait of a missing relative, still hopeful. As we approached St Paul's Chapel one of the first things I noticed were the bright lights flooding the work area at ground zero. You could see the remaining portion of the facade of one of the World Trade Center buildings standing like a bizarre monument at the end of the street. A mostly collapsed building stood in the foreground. Partially damaged skyscrapers stood in the background. Cranes were lifting debris, and, almost three months after the attacks, smoke still poured from the rubble. Every so often you could smell the odor of burning plastics. The magnitude of the attacks cannot be adequately described. Whatever you have seen on TV or in photographs does not prepare you for actually seeing it in person.

### Seeing It In Person

A large group of people stood in front of the police barricades, some taking photographs, some just taking it all in. I saw a few posing in front of it, getting their picture taken: a sort of macabre tourist attraction,

*(continued on page 2)*

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## September 11 - The Franciscan Path

*Christine Peterson, n/O.E.F. (excerpted from Fiddlesticks, Epiphany 2002, p.4)*

On September 11, our nation was thrown into a state of shock and confusion. Many people were not sure how to react. Should we respond to the terrorist attack with military force, or should we not respond at all? Is there a third alternative? This was the question on the minds of a small group of novice friars who gathered at Lourdes Franciscan Friary in Cedar Lake, Indiana on November 5 to hear a presentation on the Franciscan approach to peace and justice. The speaker was Shell Balek, O.S.F., the North American Regional Coordinator of Franciscans International. She came to the friary on this fall day to revisit a subject she addressed at the 2001 O.E.F. Chapter, in light of the current war on terrorism.

She began with a story about a young girl who always walked on her hands, and how being forced to conform to "normal" walking ultimately crushed her spirit. Balek said that many people in the current world culture feel forced to conform to a violent way of life,

and are searching for their true peaceful selves which have been lost. Balek also made the point that all Christians have been called by the Scriptures to work for peace. She said that she agrees with author Michael Guinan, O.F.M., who wrote that human beings were given dominion over creation, but that this is often misinterpreted. The word dominion in the biblical

*Balek said that many people in the current world culture feel forced to conform to a violent way of life, and are searching for their true peaceful selves which have been lost.*

*(continued on page 4)*

**Pilgrimage to Ground Zero (cont.)**

(these were the exception, not the rule). People flowed past the front of St Paul's, its large wrought iron fence covered with memorials, photographs and notes of sympathy from around the world.

**Into St Paul's Church**

We were escorted through the gates and into the church. We sat in the first few pews and were told someone would be back to give us an orientation. I saw police officers and firefighters resting, eating and getting supplies. Everywhere there were hundreds of cards, letters, artwork, and photographs posted in the pews, on the walls and on every available space. I read thank-yous from grade school children to the firefighters, police, and rescue workers. The thought of all the people killed, the rescuers, the victims, and all their families brought tears to my eyes. I knelt and prayed. This is truly holy ground.

After an orientation, we split up for various assignments. Dave, a fellow police officer, and I took the first stint providing security at the front gate. Some imposters posing as police officers and firefighters had tried to gain entrance over the past few days, and we were instructed to check IDs carefully. I did this for the first two hours. It gave me the opportunity to talk to some of the police officers and fire fighters.

**Our Job At The Message Banner**

I was then asked to relieve The Rev. Taylor out front. There were three large tarps / banners on which people could write messages to the rescuers. Our job was to pass out markers and ask people if they wished to leave a message. In addition to the banners there were candles, flowers, shirts, hats, crosses, and photographs all attached to the wrought iron fence. When we asked people to sign, or if they wanted to sign, we could see a flood of emotions. Some people, with tears in their eyes, shook their heads no. Others said, "I wouldn't know what to say." We told them, "Just write what you feel." Many seemed surprised but grateful for the opportunity. More women than men came forward to leave a message; often the thoughts were very moving. Many who turned around after signing to give their pen back were crying. I thanked them all. Very often, to my surprise, they would say "NO - thank-YOU!", and grab my arm or put their hand on my shoulder. This was obviously something that the public had to do. To come here and show their appreciation and be able to DO something.

Many of the posted notes and banner messages were from children. One was from a young man from England who was keeping the rescuers in his prayers and

prayed for no more bombs. Another boy from Texas talked about his teachers "freaking out" after learning about the bombings, and talking about taking revenge and killing the terrorists. When he got home his mom read him two Bible passages. One was about loving the sinner but hating the sin; the other was about forgiveness. People from other countries signed the banner. One man wrote in Norwegian, one woman in Italian. A man told me he couldn't leave a message because he was from Mexico. I told him, "Yes you can." He left a long prayer in Spanish. Two men in their early twenties, wearing yarmulkes, left a message in Hebrew.

They were tourists from Israel. The one man told me he was flying back to Jerusalem the next day. He was unsure

*They talked about taking revenge and killing the terrorists. When he got home his mom read him two Bible passages. One about loving the sinner but hating the sin. The other was about forgiveness.*

what future lay ahead for him at home. A man wearing the dress of a Hasidic Jew left a message. I told him about the man from Israel. I asked him if he could tell me what they wrote in Hebrew. He said it was a prayer not to have any more bombings ... anywhere. I spoke with an Episcopal priest from California who was there showing his grown daughter around. He was serving as a chaplain at the morgue. His daughter from Connecticut seemed to be taking it all in. It was all very powerful stuff, extremely moving. Several times I saw police officers and fire fighters stop and read the banner on their way in or out of the church.

**Helping the Rescuers**

Inside, rescuers were eating, resting in pews and sleeping on cots on the second floor. Our volunteers helped give out work boots, gloves, and clothing. Others dispensed over-the-counter medications and personal hygiene supplies. Some worked in the kitchen cleaning, and still others served hot meals. I watched a construction worker open a pair of work gloves. Inside one of them was a note from a grade school child. He read it to himself, smiled, and read part of it out loud. It obviously made his night. These guys really do see, read, and appreciate all the cards and letters.

We were allowed to look out the rear door as the steeplejacks got ready to go to work. Ash was still evident in the graveyard. We could see the remnants of the towers were just past the cemetery through the

trees that were in the cemetery. In the trees hung twisted remains of Venetian blinds. The steeplejack told of how, while doing his work, he found someone's last will and testament behind the clock in the steeple. It had apparently fallen from the towers. It made the hair on the back of his neck stand up when he found it.

#### Ash Everywhere

There was still ash in crevices all over outside. I picked some up and held it between my thumb and forefinger. I rubbed it back and forth. I felt it and thought of all the things it might be, that it might contain, and that it represented. I thought of the live images I saw on TV of the people hanging from windows, of the towers collapsing, and the ash enveloping the city. I prayed. It was almost an indescribable emotion.

As I walked back into the church, I noticed something I hadn't seen before. It was a small piece of scrap paper. On it was written, "These were found in the church yard." They were two bent, mangled and partially torn photographs. Both were dirty. One still had ash caked on it. Both were moments frozen in time saved by different people in the towers. Had they been displayed on someone's desk, pinned on a cubicle wall? One was of a group of well dressed men in their fifties, a group portrait taken in the office. The other was of a woman in her late twenties at the refrigerator in a kitchen. At her feet were her young son and their dog. Were they still waiting for their loved one? Had their loved one returned? I thought of my own family, my children. The raw emotion, the overwhelming enormity of the tragedy, the disbelief of the whole event swept over me, and I cried.

It amazed me that, without exception, every volunteer, every firefighter, police officer and construction worker—all heroes in their own right—thanked US for what we were doing. They obviously appreciated it but it was almost embarrassing compared to what they had seen, done, and were doing. We thanked each one of them.

#### Finding Franciscans

I saw a Franciscan who had been coming and going all evening. He was dressed in the familiar brown habit and white knotted cord. I asked him if he was from the Holy Name Province? Holy Name is the Roman Catholic order (OFM) that the NY Fire Department chaplain, Fr. Mike Judge was from. Fr. Mike was the Franciscan priest killed while administering last rites to a victim at ground zero on 9/11/01. As it turned out, I was speaking to Br. Justus from the Society of St Francis. I had spoken to him once on the phone and now recognized him from photos in *The Little Chronicle*. Br. Justus was there serving one of his

volunteer shifts as a chaplain at the morgue at ground zero.

In the middle of the night, I and a volunteer from a Colorado were sent to get 50 pounds of ice. I was given keys to the church van, directions and off we went. What an adventure. I hadn't been in the city in fifteen years. The directions were bad. We stopped and asked the police, but their directions were no better. Many of the streets were closed and barricaded. After a lot of driving and map reading, we got to the meat market where we were to pick up the ice. We got the ice and drove back. The closer we got to ground zero, the more surreal it became. It looked like a bad Jerry Bruckheimer movie. State Police, National Guard and their vehicles blocked some intersections while guarding others.

Every one of us worked very hard, but nothing like these people. They had been doing it for almost three months, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. One firefighter told us he had been there every day save one since September 11<sup>th</sup>. That day he was hospitalized for twenty-four hours. Again, their gratefulness towards us was unbelievable. I would say that if you have visited the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, this was similar in its emotional impact if you multiplied it by ten.

It occurred to me later that ground zero was sort of like a stigmata for us. It was an open wound both literally in the ground and figuratively in the public's souls. It was also a reminder of Jesus' presence among the rescue workers, the volunteers and all the people across the country trying to support them. It was indeed a privilege and an honor to have volunteered at this ministry. I am grateful for the opportunity to have helped in my small way. May God bless the United States. Pray for peace and justice for those who died on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.

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*Phillip is married with three children. He works as a police officer in suburban Philadelphia, and before that as a career paramedic/firefighter. He volunteers with the St Francis Inn soup kitchen in Philadelphia and as a lay chaplain at St Christopher's Hospital.*

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of Balek's message to the novices was that Franciscans today are called to the same type of action in response to the current world situation. She said, "Our responses must be context-specific." She called for creativity in a refusal to participate in the usual behavior of the culture, listing six ways this can be done:

- Respect for all others as brothers/sisters;
- Dialogue, not diatribe - open communication and sincere listening;
- Denounce and announce - respectfully point out what is not in right relationship with creation, then quickly move on to suggest alternatives and empower the other;
- Franciscan joy in small gifts and in one's work;
- Counter-cultural - refusing to participate, going against cultural demands and finding peace in the moment, setting an example by one's quiet refusal;
- Focus on the process, not the product, being present in the here-and-now and responding appropriately.

The response of the novice friars was overwhelmingly positive. They shared ways they could see these principles being useful. Patrick, who began his one-year novitiate in June, said that he found the content "extremely relevant," especially since the September 11 tragedy. "This whole idea of separateness has to stop!" As for the speaker, Patrick said, "You can tell she really believes what she is saying."

Patrick continued by observing that Franciscans International is one organization that lives up to this philosophy. He

pointed out that F.I. has members across national and religious

**"You can tell she really believes what she is saying."**

boundaries who work together to find the third alternative that Balek spoke about. They are especially active in the aftermath of September 11th.

So, the question remains, Is there a peaceful alternative to our current response to terrorism? Our own history shows the success a little peaceful defiance can have in changing cultural injustices. We must defy the culture of terror and injustice in the way we live, by insisting on fair treatment of people who are different from us. We must be the example. We must reach out to those who are persecuted by others. We must forgive. We must live our lives without fear. This is the answer proposed by Shell Balek. Perhaps this is the answer America has been searching for. Franciscans can lead the way.

**September 11 - The Franciscan Path (cont.)**

context means to build, maintain and care for, not to exploit. To be at peace with creation means to be in a right relationship with Creation.

In the Gospels, Balek said, Jesus was trying to teach people how to create this right relationship by refusing to participate in cultural injustices. Balek shared information from "The Powers That Be" by Walter Wink. Wink states that Jesus' famous teaching of turning the other cheek was meant to encourage cultural defiance, but was also misinterpreted. A slap to the right cheek in Jesus' culture was a backhanded slap used to humiliate an inferior. Turning the left cheek was a defiant act necessitating a slap with the palm of the right hand, a gesture reserved for equals. According to Balek, this was Jesus' way of refusing to participate in an unjust culture. It gives a third alternative to the fight-or-flight response to confrontation.

**Citing St. Francis**

Balek also cited the teachings of St. Francis regarding poverty and simplicity. Franciscans are called to reject wealth. Balek said the reason for this was originally to reject the unfair monetary system of Francis' time; it was a peaceful attack on the status quo. A major point

## Franciscan Mission to Anglican Churches in the Diocese of Mexico, January 2002

Anita Catron, Provincial Minister, American Province

Of the five dioceses of the Anglican Church of Mexico, the Diocese of Mexico, centered in one of the largest cities in the world (20 million inhabitants), is perhaps the most dynamic. It was here that Brothers Thomas Carey, Clark Berge and I, honing our Spanish, traveled ten days to offer preaching, presentations and fellowship to designated churches. We went representing the Society of St. Francis as guests of the bishop, the Rt. Rev. Sergio Carranza. Each of us had been to Mexico before as students, visitors, workers or on the last Novice Mission of SSF in 1999.

We had a different experience in each of the 12 congregations we visited—from San Miguel de Allende to Mexico City to Toluca and environs. Our system was for one of us to preach and, after the Eucharist, for all of us to share our Franciscan journeys. We told what brothers and sisters “do” on a daily basis as Franciscans, and shared that in the Anglican/Episcopal Church there really are religious orders of various spiritualities. That alone brought many questions, and in some cases wonderment about the catholicity of our church.

### We Gave Our Message in Spanish

The churches varied from pure English parishes of elaborate structures to very humble temporary buildings waiting for real churches. On the previous mission, one of the “churches” we visited was a converted garage or “puesto,” a neighborhood store stall. Regardless of the structure, we gave our message in Spanish and were well received. In addition, many of the *damas de la iglesia* had special meals or receptions for us. In a few cases, we were invited to parishioners’ homes for a meal or to visit the sick to pray with them.

As for the fruits and rewards, the Holy Spirit seems to be working among the Mexican Anglicans. Several people approached us to ask for more information about all of the SSF Orders and the Associates. Some said since the prior mission 3 years ago, they had been praying about a vocation. Such good news! We were happy to be a part of Jesus’ good news. We also spent some time with our tertiary Mrs. Graciela Alvarez in Mexico City. When my husband David and I lived there with our two daughters 20 years ago, Graciela became a tertiary. We began to spread the news about SSF, and there were four tertiaries in place. Some have now moved to the USA.

It was a remarkable mission this time, filled with joy, and confirmation that our personal Franciscan journeys are fruitful, and that the Holy Spirit chose us to be among those to honor the Holy Trinity in the manner of Saint Francis.

## Finding God in The Lord of the Rings

By Kurt Bruner and Jim Ware Tyndale House. pp.120 and end notes. \$12.99. ISBN 0-8423-5571-5

Review by Anne LeCroy (first appeared in The Living Church, 2/3/02, p. 5)

Quoting J.R.R. Tolkien’s statement that “the Gospels contain a fairy story but a story that has entered into history.” Kurt Bruner and Jim Ware offer this small book of reflections. Each chapter consists of a summary of some portion of an event in the journey-quest of Frodo and Sam. This is followed by an analogy with the biblical story of hope, faith, redemption and salvation. The fantasy of mythic quest reflects the truth in the story of God Creator, sacrificial Lamb, and Redeemer.

*Finding God* reminds us that we are created with both rational and imaginative mental skills; such a work as the Tolkien trilogy allows us to see how the symbolic, emotional, and creative can reflect our encounter with the divine.

The Hobbits, almost like the servant figures that were part of Jesus’ teaching, are ordinary creatures, struggling wise fools who undertake the perils of the quest, of the Dark Forest, the Mountain of Shadow, orcs, the spider Shalob, and the monomaniacal Gollum to show us, as the Bible so often does, that eventually evil itself will ultimately serve the good.

That there is need to examine the human spiritual journey in these times of fear, suspicion, and violence, is attested certainly by the number of books offering ways to take one’s spiritual journey. This small book, using the fantasy, provides a succinct guide for such a journey. For those familiar with the trilogy, this text will add a powerful dimension to their understanding. And those who have not read the trilogy will seek it out, to find not only a wonderful fantasy but a treasure for spiritual enhancement.

### Please Note.

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

## Kairos: Turing Prison Life into “God’s Time”

Fr. Mike Cassell

I remember the first Kairos week end on which I served as Spiritual Director. It was at the Glades Correctional Facility in Belle Glade. I must confess to feeling a bit uncertain as they opened the door to access the 30 inmates who had been selected by the chaplain at the prison to be our candidates. What would I say to them? How would they respond to me? After all, most of my priesthood has been spent serving polite Episcopalians in proper Episcopal parishes. What did I know about men whose lives had been significantly different from mine? These men had murdered their spouses, beaten their children, sold drugs, robbed stores, and committed all sorts of mayhem. What could we possibly have in common?

All those doubts were arrested in one nanosecond when I was introduced to “my candidate,” the one assigned to me to develop a special relationship and to mentor through the weekend. He was a big man but with a gentle, almost shy, smile. I could sense he was feeling as uneasy as I. But within no time at all we realized we were exactly the same, except he was wearing the *required* prison blue. Other than that, we shared a common humanity. Even the age discrepancy (I am a retired priest and he was a youthful city boy) made no difference. All seemed to melt as we sensed we were in for a special shared experience. So began one of the most amazing spiritual experiences of my life.

Kairos means “God’s Time” and introduces both candidates and team to looking at life from God’s perspective. Many candidates discover new meaning in their prison stay, and see it as an opportunity for sharing Christ with others at the correctional facility, or as a preparation for a new life that, hopefully awaits them some day. On the conclusion of the weekend, one said: “My time here was not wasted. I came for the promise of food and just to do something different than usual and I am leaving a whole new man.”

There are 60 prisons in the state of Florida with 64,000 inmates. Florida has the fourth highest number of prisoners per capita in our country. One in three is serving time because of difficulties related to drugs and alcohol. Recidivism is one in four for Kairos candidates, four out of five for other inmates—that statistic alone says volumes about the effects of Kairos.

Kairos is completely ecumenical. Teams invariably consist of a rich mix of Christian traditions. Our focus is clear. We are there to share our faith in Christ and all He has done for us. He is the magnet that draws us all

together as one. The three-day weekend follows the Cursillo format fairly closely, with talks on basic Christianity, much singing of contemporary Christian music, lots of prayer and worship experiences, art projects that foster cooperation, good snacks, plenty of laughter, and maybe a few tears. Counseling opportunities abound.

After the weekend, team members are encouraged to return to the prison on a monthly basis for reunions. This and regular grouping of three or four inmates on a weekly basis keep the spirit alive.

Weekends are also planned for female inmates as well as the spouses and significant others in what is called “Kairos Outside.” Currently, Kairos is serving 140 prisons nationally with 23 in Florida.

Jesus is discovered in many ways. He comes to us uniquely in His very real body and blood under the form of bread and wine. He comes to us when two or three gather in His name and when His Word is proclaimed. But as He has told us in His own words, He comes to us in yet another way — in the poor and in prisoners.

For more information about Kairos, e-mail [kairosnat@aol.com](mailto:kairosnat@aol.com), visit their website at [www.kairosprisonministry.org](http://www.kairosprisonministry.org), or write to Kairos, Inc., 140 N. Orlando Ave. Ste. 180, Winter Park, FL 32789.

Father Mike notes—

I suspect I am one of the longest professed tertiaries, although I really haven’t checked lately. After 44 years in the parish priesthood, I work full time for *Food For the Poor*, a wonderful organization that raises funds for the destitute of the Caribbean. I also give time to Kairos, an ecumenical ministry dedicated to prisoners. I am so blessed to be able to live out this aspect of my Franciscan commitment in this special way at this stage in my life.

## Prison Ministry Franciscan Style

Kermit Bailey

A few years ago, I had the privilege of attending the “Prayer Breakfast” each Wednesday morning at the Greensboro Homeless Shelter. During this service of prayer, praise and singing, a young black woman, Sister Bernice, often was called on and promptly would stand up and begin singing, clapping, and praising God heartily.

She asked several of us to give her a ride to the Monday night prison ministry called *Yokefellows*. I finally made arrangements to pick her up for a ride to the Monday night meeting.

One of the first things we did was gather with the inmates in the mess hall and form a circle, holding hands. Various leaders prayed and encouraged others to join in. We sang and introduced ourselves.

During this prayer time, Sister Bernice began to pray and testify. Her praise and thanksgiving went something like this:

*Lord Jesus, I just been so 'fraid and so frightened. You told us we should visit the prisoners.*

*You told us that when we visit the prisoners, it be the same as visiting you.*

*Lord, what a glorious thought that is that we could in fact find a way to visit you. And to visit you here in this prison, it just frightens me something awful.*

*I been 'fraid cause I been so long not coming here to this prison to visit you, Lord.*

*I be 'fraid I goin' die and come face to face with you Lord, and you be askin' me why come I ain't visited no prisoners yet, after all these years you done give me, Lord, I been having plenty time to visit de prison, but Lord, I ain't don' so.*

*But now Lord, Here I am. I be here in this place with all my brothers and sisters, visiting this prison.*

*Lord and Lord, I know you here cause you promise to be wif us always, even to the end.*

*Lord, I just thank you, Lord, and praise you, Lord, for making these arrangement to help me get here to this prison to visit you Lord, and Lord I know you here 'cause I done seen you here tonight, face to face, Lord. Thank you, Jesus."*

This wonderful testimony from this simple, Franciscan-like woman has never left my memory. It was probably 12 years ago. I am constantly reminded of the Gospel message. It is not that a few of us are called to visit the prisoner, feed the hungry, clothe the naked. The truth of the Gospel is that every one of us is called. True, we are called in different ways. Some of us go physically to the prison, some prepare and serve a meal there. Others correspond with prisoners by mail as I do, but none of us is exempted. Especially if we wish to come face to face with Jesus, hold Him in our arms, and kiss him on the cheek. It is Christ himself who offers us this opportunity, not the penal system!

### **Ode to Desmond and Francis**

*By Lindsay Warren*

*Their laughter transcends that valley where deadly shadow would mire in despair children meant to shout hopscotch victories.*

*Desmond and Francis float like eagles swooping down to waters yielding up fish to save their brood from hunger. Little ones feast again.*

*Lady Poverty released from gross anchor tenders tender grace*

*free to feed and satisfy those hungry eaglets solid food and fish enough.*

*A holy roundup has convened, Desmond and Francis have met together Francis and Lazarus*

*have kissed each other.*

*Bread shall spring up from the ground and Wine shall flow in our veins.*

### **Critical Race Theory and White Privilege**

*Finn Pond*

A well educated, professional black woman stood at the cashier's desk in an upscale department store, her hand outstretched to receive change. With a dismissive flick of the wrist and hardly a glance, the clerk tossed the change onto the counter. The coins rattled and slid across the polished surface, but the hand remained motionless—a silent accusation. After many uncomfortable minutes a manager appeared to investigate why the woman had not moved and why the clerk continued ignoring the woman.

*"She refuses to hand me my change," the woman explained.*

*"I'm not going to touch that woman's hand," the clerk declared.*

The clerk was fired on the spot, but the manager's apologies to the customer did little to relieve her hurt.

Is racism fading from our society? Are the occasional racist acts reported in the media exceptions to the norm, with racist individuals only fringe elements of society? Most discussions with people of color will dispel these notions.

Blatant forms of racism - profiling by the police, violent acts and speeches by white supremacists - elicit public outrage and calls for action. But for each racist act severe enough to draw media attention, there are

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*Critical Race Theory and White Privilege*  
(cont.)

numerous ones that go unremarked. Questioning stares, curt responses, cold shoulders, and such are "microaggressions" that damage the fabric of our communities. They contribute to racial tension by creating a sense of unease, distrust and resentment.

In the 1970s, a group of legal scholars, believing that the civil rights movement had lost effectiveness, began to consider the problem of racism in America. What factors were preventing our transformation into a non-racist society? The scholars argued that white privilege is so deeply embedded in our legal and criminal justice systems that an entrenched bias against racial minorities exists both in the courts and social institutions. This was the birth of critical race theory.

Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic have been associated with the movement from its inception. Their book, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, is a comprehensible primer on the subject. The authors provide a good overview of the movement as well as discussing its major themes, contemporary issues, criticisms and future.

The movement's basic tenets are that racism is an integral part of society and our racial conceptions or stereotypes were constructed to sustain the advantages of those in power – the white, heterosexual male. Critical race theorists argue that these deeply embedded, near invisible racist ideologies and assumptions still shape our laws and social policies in ways that promote the advancement of the dominant white culture. Social advances for minorities, they claim, only occur when they coincide with benefits to the dominant culture.

Believing that those who wield power construct society and even our sense of what is true, critical race theorists question whether the concepts of fairness or equality have any real meaning; the very idea of an objective legal system is dismissed. They discount the idea that if we could ignore skin color, discrimination would disappear. As a result, the movement relies heavily on analysis of the American legal system and court cases to show discrepancies in the treatment of minorities and whites. They continue to argue that the liberal agendas of the past, based on color-blindness and equal rights, were not enough to move us toward a non-racist society. The focus of individual's rights

*Even more widespread are the almost invisible "microaggressions," questioning stares, curt responses, cold shoulders, that people of color may experience on a daily basis.*

under the law has limited effectiveness against racism because with such an emphasis, only the most egregious racist acts will be addressed. White privilege can too easily continue even while society proclaims fair treatment under the law; microaggressions go unchallenged because people of color lack real power.

The movement has been considerably criticized for their unorthodox reliance on storytelling and personal accounts to support their cause. Critics contend that legal actions and policy making require an analytical rigor that an anecdotal approach cannot provide. More significantly, they insist that the movement lacks a standard of objective truth, and demand solid evidence in support of theorists' claim that the legal system is biased. This brings both sides to an impasse, for the critical race theorist claims that objective truth does not exist in the realms of social science and politics.

I confess I balk at the notion that objective truth is up for grabs, and that the highest bidder can define fairness and equality. However, I recognize that critical race theorists are voicing the frustrations and discontent of

marginalized people, and the Church – if no one else – should be listening. It's not always clear what role Christians should play in societal restructuring, but ignoring the issues is not a choice. To the

extent that we understand the underlying causes of injustice, we are obligated to correct the problem.

Delgado and Stefancic strongly contend that white privilege permeates much of society; however, the movement has yet to distinguish adequately the roles of white privilege and the privilege of wealth in the injustices they discuss. Nevertheless, the issue of white privilege is one that touches many of us. Recognition that, as an educated white male, I operate from a position of prestige and privilege carries with it the responsibility to exercise power in such a way that, at the very least others are not negatively affected and that, ideally, my community benefits. We know that our overconsumption of material goods has adverse consequences for those living in developing countries. Shouldn't we also consider the consequences on others when we take advantage of privilege? Critical race theorists maintain that even the benefits of privilege that seem trivial may have significant consequences for others. When I pull strings to obtain a summer job for my son, might it take a job away from an inner-city teenager?

Critical Race Theory: An Introduction doesn't attempt an in depth analysis of the issues, which some readers might find frustrating. It may not convince you that this theory adequately explains why racism still exists or that it will guide us toward a non-racist society. But what this book does – and does well – is introduce the reader to the issues and questions asked by the critical race theorists. I have no doubt it will challenge you to take seriously the notion that racism is still deeply imbedded in our society.

For the moment, I will contemplate the cost others pay for the privileges I enjoy.

To pursue the ideas of critical race theory further, see

- a very accessible primer (which includes questions for discussion at the end of each chapter) is Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. 2001. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*.
- a more in depth treatment is: Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (eds). 1999. *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*.
- criticisms of critical race theory is found in: Daniel Farber & Suzanna Sherry. 1997. *Beyond All Reason: The Radical Assault on Truth in American Law*.

### **First Order Provincial Honored By Philadelphia-New Jersey Fellowship**

On Saturday, November 17, 2002 John Scott, First Minister Provincial of the independent Third Order of the Society of St. Francis, was honored in Philadelphia PA. Seventeen Third Order members and guests/inquirers of the PA and NJ fellowships attended, including Anita and David Catron from UT. In the early days, John was known as the "Guardian" of the Order.

The gathering was organized by Joan Bedell at the home of John and Fran Scott. After enthusiastic greetings were exchanged, each of us shared experiences of how we met John and how we came to find the Third Order. We all learned something new and touching about the other. The Eucharist followed with a fabulous buffet lunch served.

In the early 1970's, John was encouraged to make the Third Order independent from the First Order, to have its own governance and to develop more Franciscan vocations. Until this time the Third Order had been closely aligned with the First Order friars in spirituality as well as church matters. The first step was taken, not without its challenges, and today we are a separate 501 (c)3 organization incorporated in the State of New York, and recognized by the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops as a Christian Community under the appropriate canons of the National Church. In the American Province we number about 600 and are part

### **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.

of the world-wide Third Order of the Society of St. Francis.

John Scott has been a priest for more than 40 years, and a Franciscan for more than 49 years. In every way John is an active Franciscan, if not an activist. He saw the Vietnam War in the 1960s as unjustified; he upheld the rights of homosexuals; he supported the ordination of women from the very beginning; and he helped establish a Respite Center for families whose loved ones were affected by HIV. And his influence continues...as shown at the November gathering.

Congratulations and much love to you, John Scott. John, your life is a witness of peace, justice and love for all.



John Scott (l.) with Henk Koning (r.) at Bill Breedlove's Ordination in 1992. (Fr. Koning has now returned to the Netherlands.)

**Third Order Franciscan Couples**

By Anita Catron, Provincial Minister (first appeared as Focus article in *Episcopal Life*, 1/12/02)

In 1213 an Italian wheat merchant, Luchasio, heard St. Francis preach, and the encounter changed his life forever. Where before Luchasio had been greedy and ambitious he soon began performing random acts of charity. To the surprise of his wife, Buonadonna, he simplified his life and paid attention to the needs of others.

After a time, Buonadonna felt the same fervor as Luchasio did for a simpler lifestyle and for caring for the less fortunate. They sold their business, farmed only a portion of their land to provide for their immediate needs, and, it is said, they distributed the rest to the poor.

Like many people—both then and today—they lacked an essential ingredient in their lives. After meeting St. Francis, they fervently wished to follow him, as many others in their social circles did. There was one problem, however. They couldn't join the Order because they were married. There were no provisions at that time for married couples to follow St. Francis in the same way as the friars and sisters did in joining Franciscan communities.

St. Francis, prompted by the desire of this fervent couple, was inspired to form the Third Order to accommodate individuals who had obligations and possessions but who wished to undertake a Franciscan journey. Hence an Order for lay men and women began. It was designed to set a standard of simplicity and devotion for them. In the beginning, the Order was known as the "Brothers and Sisters of Penance." In 1221 the formal rule of the Third Order was approved. Today, we are called the Third Order, Society of St. Francis, and we are a worldwide Order.

Now as then, there are numerous married couples who cannot leave family or job to take literal vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Instead, Anglican/Episcopal Third Order members serve God in the spirit of these vows, living their lives among their families and communities but making their spiritual journeys after the example of St. Francis. The Rule of the Third Order enables all members, including married couples such as my husband and I, to meet the duties and conditions of our daily living to be carried out in the spirit of St. Francis.

*"Beloved Lord Jesus, thank you for blessing all walks of life and allowing lay and professed, married and single, to find a deeper walk with you in the very midst of our earthly challenges, duties, and joys. Give us who live in the secular world grace to remember that we care for you when we care for our brothers and sisters. Amen."*



Archbishop and Tertiary, Desmond Tutu Visiting with Anita Catron After the Archbishop Finished Carrying the Torch in for the Opening Ceremonies of the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City—Anita's home.

**Yes, Confession Is A Sacrament of the Episcopal Church**

Joan Kidd

I was born and raised in a low church area of the north of England. Said Communion was the norm, and I never heard the word, "Eucharist." Confession was something that they (the Roman Catholic Irish among us) did.

When I was 18 or 19, I remember my surprise when, visiting in the south of England, I saw times for confession listed at Tewkesbury Abbey, an Anglican church. Until that time, I did not know that confession was a sacrament of the Anglican Church. If it was mentioned during my preparation for Confirmation, it certainly had not registered with me.

**Beginning to Write My First Rule of Life**

Many years later, living in California, I became interested in the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis. When I began to write my first Rule of Life, I discovered that regular use of Sacramental Confession was not an option, but a requirement. So, sometime during my postulancy I made my first confession. It was not easy. Metaphorically speaking, I was dragged kicking and screaming into the rector's office. However, I discovered the wonderful healing and peace can come from the words, "The Lord has put away all your sins." The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a tool for a deeper relationship with a loving God, a way of accepting and

acknowledging oneself as a sinner and yet beloved. It is not easy to sit down and examine one's life, to acknowledge where we have missed the mark; those times where, in St. Paul's words, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."

#### **I Still Don't Find It Easy**

After more than 15 years, I still do not find it easy to prepare myself for confession each Advent and Lent. In truth, I usually put it off until the very last minute. But when I have taken the time to review my life, and prayed to discern those areas in my life where I need reconciliation and healing, and met with my confessor, I experience once again the peace and healing power of God's love.

#### **Real Healing**

*Joan A. Shelton*

By fall, 1996, as a member of the Third Order, I'd long felt an urge to give some time to mission. For some years I'd been responding out of one environment, the comfortable, familiar world of the rich nations; now I believed I had been called forth to respond in Haiti, a very different climate demanding a very different kind of living.

This is a preliminary report on some discoveries I didn't expect to make. Moving into a new ministry was the usual mix of offering and receiving; I found myself sometimes steering, sometimes steered. As the poet Rainer Rilke says to God,

*You are a wheel at which I stand  
whose dark spokes sometimes catch me up  
revolving me nearer the center.  
Then all work I put my hand to  
widens from turn to turn.<sup>1</sup>*

Into a new setting, still steered by Christ the wayfarer, it remained to be seen how faithful I could be, and how many of the pleasant mansions and entitlements of my life back home would be disallowed, maybe forever. I suspected I would find out presently. Apart from the opportunity to serve as teacher or priest, I realized that part of any expedition to Haiti was an expedition into myself.

#### **Being Called Out of a Dives Nation to Serve in a Lazarus Nation**

At the same time, though, and on another level, I knew I was being called out of a Dives nation to serve in a Lazarus nation.<sup>2</sup> Looking back, I now understand that I was really called to move deeper into that world where Lazarus needs what Dives can give him from the mansion... but Dives also needs what Lazarus can give

from the gate. For although misery and failure obviously need some transformation, so do mastery and success. It's disturbing to acknowledge this truth because it threatens whatever comfortable lodgings we've built up within ourselves. Because mastery and success are comfortable foundations for identities, some of us defend them, using our strengths (which are real) to project our own miseries and failures (which are likewise real) away from us and safely onto those we've come to help. Americans are particularly prone to this, I believe: a big part of our national identity is "problem solver." So we're often tempted to concentrate on what we *can* do; as citizens of rich nations healing and caring for the poor and weak, the miserable and failing, with our superior coping skills.

Thus it seems to be human nature for volunteers to begin with a spirituality founded on achievement or competence; from time to time I naturally discovered it lurking in me, too. I've also noticed the tendency to "deal with" people in classrooms, sickrooms, dysfunctional families, unemployment centers, ghettos, in fact wherever Christians obey their particular call to help others who are in weaknesses, or trouble, or who seem to have botched things up.

#### **Over-reliance on Spirituality Rooted in Mastery or Success**

However, to the extent that we rely strongly or exclusively, on spirituality rooted in mastery or success, it blunts our perceptiveness, our personal growth, and the resulting usefulness of our work. This is because it positions us on the outside—safe, unconverted, and, in the last analysis, superior—as we "deal with" those we've come to help. We don't share much "poor in

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#### **T S S F Publications**

*The Principles of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis for Daily Reading* (\$2.50)

**Order of Admission** (\$1)

**Spiritual Director Guide** (\$2.50)

**Statutes** (\$1)

*Devotional Companion* (\$4.50)

*Way of St. Francis* (\$2.50)

*Source Book* (\$2.50)

*Directory* (\$3)

(available from John Tolbert

4503 Grace Drive

Kingsport, TN 37664-2913)

**Real Healing (cont.)**

spirit," because it seems to apply mostly to those others—until we realize that we can achieve very little. In face of massive affliction and tragedy, we're profitless servants, and affliction can send us home broken hearted.

The other side of projection, which also comes out of our need, is to imagine a poor nation—or child, or invalid, or inner-city ghetto—as a sort of Eden, superior because of its simple worth or any unfamiliar truths it introduces us to. This is a step in the direction of "poor in spirit," opening us to receive gifts from those we're serving. However, projection from this direction can support a spirituality just as limiting as the first one. It is good to step into a society less driven by consumption than our own, but until we can bear to see everything God sees, our spirituality isn't complete. I, too, felt the urge to sentimentalize Haitian lives until the hideous malnutrition of the small children, and the nightmare destitution of the adults, stopped me cold.

**Lazarus Nations and Individuals**

Lazarus nations and individuals aren't a sort of spiritual health farm; they need food, sores bound up, relief from whatever feeds on their distress, every kind of concrete attention. But as we set about healing them we can also open ourselves to a wider and deeper, and so a more realistic, spirituality. Not only Dives but also Lazarus, is me; I am what I rely on, but also what I reject and fear. Dives also is healed as he searches the eyes of his counterpart Lazarus, who is suffering the afflictions any comfortable person fears, nightmare afflictions which don't bear looking into without God's help. Ministering to others isn't safe; but with God it can heal both them and us.

As our reliance on our mastery and achievement (or on sentimentality) faces harsh realities—inner or outer realities—we are moved to rely on them less. Often a certain depression follows this shift in focus, and it's real. For a while a volunteer can lose the early, natural buoyancy a fresh setting engenders. We can return home cynical or broken by the tragedy we've seen. But freedom and joy are real, too, even though they sink out of sight for a while. When they return, the sense of love and companionship more than balances out the heaviness.

I believe that's why my voyage continually readjusted and shifted emotionally from one channel to the other, sometimes steering, sometimes steered, alternately refocusing the worker and then her work. God's Grace is widening both together.

The shifting, turning mood says, "There you are! You

were there all the time!" Or, "I no longer need to steer: carry my heaviness, steer for me." In the presence of tragedy we're learning to rely on God's competence and good judgment, not ours. Or, again, we're learning to recognize that internal stress, like depression, is a symptom of some trouble-spot deep in the center, which one of the steering wheel's "dark spokes" has touched and which God needs to heal. Voyagers who have moved across the shifts and turns of the voyage even dare to echo St. Paul when he says, "It has taught us not to rely on ourselves but only on God, who raises the dead to life."<sup>3</sup> Even them. Even us.

Mercifully God leaps across that dizzying disproportion between our longings and His boundlessness. And the healing process, which St. Paul calls "comfort" or "consolations," continues its work in ourselves and others, making itself known long after the work itself has ended.

Trust Him. The journey out is also the journey home; He is a partner who works by paradox. Ultimately all human mission is praise.

This article builds on insights from Lavinia Byrne's "And Who Lies Broken at my Gate?" *The Way*, October 1988, 323-331.

1. Rilke, Rainer Maria. "The Book of Hours, 1." *Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*. Trans. Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy. New York: Riverhead Books, 1996, 81.

2. *Luke* 16:19 – 31. The application of the parable to the problems of nations comes from my friend the Rev. Carl Spitz.

3. *Second Corinthians* 1: 9b.

**Persevering By the Grace of God**

*By Jacqui Belcher*

At Little Portion last October, Chapter's ad hoc committee on communications, of which I was a member, discussed the visibility of the Order. Can and should we do a better job of advertising our existence? This seems to be an ongoing debate; at least it has been in the 14 years since I entered.

The consensus of this committee – and Chapter as a whole – was that we can and should. So where do we start? Perhaps, we thought, it would be good to find out who we are. The committee recommended that we survey the membership. And so we would pose two basic but probing questions: what drew you to the Franciscan Third Order and what keeps you in the community? Let's add to those a third, suggested by Ruth Duncan in Ontario: what struggles do you face in order to stay? The answers to these questions could be the very inspiration others need to serve our Lord

through a Franciscan vocation.

Ruth, who read about the survey in the Chapter minutes, wonders if the reality of the Order meets members' expectations. Surely, she writes, staying in goes beyond mere obedience. Holding office certainly gives one a sense of belonging and servant ministry; but how are most tertiaries fed? What keeps those with lagging spiritual energy in the Order? Ruth ponders the role faith, belief and spiritual experience play. "It should be God all the way," Ruth Duncan says.

In Ruth's understanding of vocation, it should be God all the way. She writes that she entered grumbling and complaining with "God's knee in [her] backside." She followed her Rule; however, her obedience wasn't to the Order but to God. Once professed, Ruth was made a novice counselor. And it was only after many years of counseling that she, herself, caught the Franciscan spirit. "It's definitely," Ruth says, "the novice counseling that keeps me in." She appreciates our system of reporting that not only holds us accountable, but also keeps us in communication with one another – "we are forced open." And in opening up, we grow.

So what brought you to the Third Order?

What keeps you in and what, if anything, tempts you to leave?

Jot down your ruminations and send them to me, if you will, and we'll compile the findings. Will there be a common thread or will we be so diverse that the job will be near impossible? Whichever it is, the results should be ready by Provincial Convocation!

Email your responses to jacquibelcher@att.net or mail them to her at 2119 Alabama Avenue, Savannah, GA

### Third Order, Society of St Francis, African Province, Central Region Chapter 2001

*David Bertram*

The annual Chapter of the Central Region (Zimbabwe) was held on Saturday 23rd June 2001. Attendance was not great because the notices were sent out late and there was a postal strike, which means that all Tertiaries in Zimbabwe will receive their agendas a week or two after the event. Fortunately, it had already been discussed by the Harare Group, and the Bulawayo Group had received an email, and had a chance to organise attendance. The other blow was the 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 a. m. At about 10.30, the

Harare contingent arrived: Philip and Judith Dhliwayo, Salathiel Madziyire, Gladys Wauchope, Maureen and David Bertram. Our hosts 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.

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 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 Dhliwayos want to attend. The proxy voting system was discussed, and we noted that those attending APTOC would have an opportunity to meet

*(continued on page 14)*

**African Province Chapter (cont.)**

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.

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 Dhliwayo as Regional Treasurer. He was authorised 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.

**Flowering of the Dogwood**

*Dianne Varty (From the Canadian Franciscan Newsletter)*

I am a mother, teacher, volunteer, and devote time to intercessory prayer. My daughter is 36, and works and lives in Switzerland. My son is 34, is married, and lives and works in Vancouver, where I live.

I am a Special Education teacher and have spent many years teaching children who have many different types of challenges. At the present, in BC, we have total integration of all disabilities, physically, emotionally, psychologically, and intellectually challenged. Therefore, my Gr. 3 class is comprised of a wide diversity of pupils. It is a very interesting, rewarding, and thoroughly enjoyable adventure. I have done a wide variety of volunteer work at my church. My most involved work is with the Sanctuary Guild and the Guild of St. Francis of Assisi, which is a group at St. James, New Westminster who wanted to study and learn about Francis, do charitable works, and share with others of like mind. None of the members wanted to be TSSF or Associates. The Rev. Loyd Wright, an Associate of SSF, is also a member. I have been a counter (of envelopes) and a reader at the Eucharist. I have also filled other positions as a Trustee, on the Stewardship Committee, and on the Finance Committee. This past year however, I have had to limit my activities due to illness, but look forward to a much more productive year.

I made my life profession in the TSSF on Oct. 3rd, 1999. My main ministry is intercessory prayer, which is my way of interceding for those people around me who are

experiencing some difficulty in their lives, for TSSF, for the church, and God's world. I basically ask God to look down on them with grace, and to help them through their trials. Through meditation, specific prayers, and the rosary, I hold them up to God. If it is a death of someone, I pray for him or her for seven days, both the person who has passed away and the person who is close to me. For those people who are gravely ill or experiencing some travail in their lives I keep them in prayer until the situation has passed. This part of my Daily Office usually takes 20 to 30 minutes.

We here in the Vancouver area have just received notice that we have been accepted as a Fellowship. At present I am the convenor of the Dogwood Fellowship. The dogwood, the Provincial flower of BC, is representative and inclusive of all our members. Being a TSSF member, has been a wonderful, blessed, and soul inspiring journey, and I am thankful that this society is in my life.

**"The Joy of Francis of Assisi**

*Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell (excerpts from an article in the Practice of Ministry in Canada (PMC) Magazine, 18 (3) (Fall 2001).*

In my search for divine joy, I am challenged by the teachings of Brother Francis of Assisi who emphasized two aspects of divine joy. For Francis there was, first, the joy of not owning anything, but knowing rather that we have been given all of creation in which to revel and work—thanks be to God. The second aspect of divine joy that Francis emphasized was the deep permeation of God's love and compassion into all of our being, so that even at the darkest times in our life we can feel the divine joy and be empowered to walk in the dark. As a member of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis I have struggled with my relationship with God and creation in our unbalanced, exploitive society. Do I live a balanced life within creation? Am I at peace? Am I working to spread the love and harmony of God? Do I know the divine joy of God in every aspect of my life from the deepest darkest valleys to the tallest brightest peaks? Amidst the chaos of modern life, I am reminded that the Franciscan way of life is a simple one. The three notes of TSSF are humility, love and joy. It is ironic, or perhaps providential, that I am writing this article on the Franciscan Spirituality of Joy, since this is the note with which I have the greatest difficulty. *The Principles of the TSSF* explain Joy as follows:

- Tertiaries rejoicing in God always, show in their lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. They remember that they follow the Son of Man, who

came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed the little children, who was a friend of tax collectors and sinners, and who sat at the tables of both the rich and the poor.

Tertiaries delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in God's world, its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing uncommon or unclean. They mix freely with all people, ready to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring joy into the lives of others. They carry within them an inner peace and happiness which others may perceive, even if they do not know its source.

- This joy is a divine gift, coming from union with God in Christ. It is still there even in times of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment, and an inward serenity and confidence through sickness and suffering. Those who possess it can rejoice in weakness, insults, hardship, and persecutions for Christ's sake, for when they are weak, then they are strong

#### **The Principles, Days 28 & 29**

God's divine joy can be a life force that enables us to thrive in the pleasure of a job well done or to survive through the despair of a job that has terminated. God's divine joy can be the life force that enables us to take a moment to listen to the song of the cardinal or to productively use the anger we experience in the face of inadequate government programs for the poor. We can engage in restoring the whole balance of creation with the deep conviction that can result from a divine joy that permeates the universe. God's divine joy is the same life force that moves through the shadow of Jesus' suffering into the bright morning of resurrection and new life. The Good News is that there will be New Life.



*Julia Berstrom,  
Provincial  
Chaplain with  
Fathers Jones  
Richards and  
Charles Roland*

### **Meet Our Guyanese Amerindian Brothers at the Santa Barbara Provincial Convocation**

*Julia Berstrom, Provincial Chaplain*

In January, Barbara Baumgarten and I traveled to Trinidad, Tobago, and Guyana. We attended the Caribbean Convocation in Trinidad and Tobago along with Br. Justus, SSF. The welcome was as warm as the weather.

Convocation opened with introductions, sharing, and singing. The program centered around healing of fellowships, formation, life after profession, provincial convocation, worship, and song. The closing Eucharist included novicing, renewal of vows, and anointing to go out and serve in the world.

Barbara and I continued to Georgetown, Guyana, not knowing what would await us. Our first surprise was Fr. Charles Roland welcoming us at the airport. The following day while planning a visit to the Pomeroon River to see Jones Richards – who should walk into the room but Fr. Richards. Earlier in the day, Eunice Edwards came in from the coast to meet us. Then Fr. Winston and Dorina Williams arrived in Georgetown from the interior. The day before we left, we had a meeting of tertiaries and others we had just met who showed interest in TSSF. At the closing Eucharist, there were two renewals and four professions.

The Franciscan rule, and Franciscan humility and simplicity, are generating great interest in TSSF in Guyana. With care, attention, and local leadership, Guyana will be a growing, active region.

Here in the St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, where I live, I have met a businessman with a private plane and interests in Guyana who is willing to fly me to Guyana as often as I like making it easy for me and the TSSF budget to visit more often.

Here is a list of supplies our Amerindian brothers need for their ministry. If you can send any of these items to me, I can get them there. I am going there again on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. (Parcel post takes two months to the Virgin Islands, and priority mail can take up to two weeks.)

- Money to bring three Guyanese to the Provincial Convocation
- Manual typewriters
- Envelopes
- *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* (video)
- *Book of Common Prayer* (West Indies)
- Guitar music and instruction books
- Battery operated lamp with batteries
- Sunday school materials, (coloring books, crayons, pencils, paper
- Franciscan prayer book
- Children's clothes including warm clothes for those who live at higher elevations.

**St. Francis and the Collect for Purity**

Charles McCarron

This title may at first strike one as an odd juxtaposition. Hopefully, this little Lenten reflection will help the reader see that it is not so strange after all. In fact, it may open a rich path of prayer for us as Anglican Franciscans, in this Lenten season.

We are all familiar with the prayer which opens the Liturgy of Rite I Eucharist, and which may be used to open Rite II:

*Almighty God, to you all hearts are open,  
all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration  
of your Holy Spirit, that we may  
perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your  
Holy Name; through Christ our Lord.  
Amen*

It is known as the Collect for Purity, Thomas Cranmer placed it in the original *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549. However, most of Thomas Cranmer's Collects aren't purely his composition, but take their origin from the earlier medieval usage of the Church. This is certainly the case with the present prayer. The Collect for Purity was originally the vesting prayer for the priest in the English medieval liturgical tradition. Cranmer "brought it out" and made it a public prayer, said by the priest on behalf of the gathered assembly. It helps to center us, and remind us that we are now entering into a different reality as we enter into these sacred mysteries.

One hundred and fifty years or so before Thomas Cranmer used the prayer in the *Prayer Book*, we find the anonymous English author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* prefacing that work with his version of this same prayer:

*To you, O god, every heart stands open  
and every will speaks; no secret is  
hidden from you. I implore you so to  
purify the intention of my heart with  
the gift of your Holy Spirit that I may love  
You perfectly and praise you worthily.  
Amen*

Here it acts as a prayer for the grace to have a pure intention before entering into the "work" of the *Cloud*, namely, the practice of a deep personal prayer life. It was as a private prayer of discernment, 150 years or so before the *Cloud*, for young Giovanni Bernardone as he knelt before the cross of San Damiano, searching a direction for his life:

*Most High,  
Glorious God,  
enlighten the darkness of my heart*

*and give me  
true faith,  
certain hope,  
and perfect charity,  
a sense and a knowledge,  
Lord,  
that I may carry out  
Your holy and true command.*

Most scholars now believe that the source for this prayer of Francis, which has come to be known as "The Prayer before the Crucifix", derives from the same liturgical source as the Collect for Purity. Some believe Francis may actually have read it on the medieval version of altar cards, which might have been left on the altar at San Damiano. These were permanently affixed boards where common prayers were printed to aid the priest, and often this prayer appeared upon them. Cranmer, Francis, and the author of the *Cloud*, thus turned to the same source, but each used it in his own way. All three focus on the idea of the heart. Stephen Sykes, in his *Unashamed Anglicanism*, gives some valuable insights into Cranmer's intentions in using this prayer in a chapter entitled "Cranmer on the Open Heart". But what of Francis' use of this prayer?

Francis displayed freedom in adapting the prayer and making it his own. It opens with a favorite effusive greeting, "Most High and Glorious God..." belying the fact that though this prayer arose in the pain of his conversion, it nevertheless was a moment of great joy. In this Lent it may be good for us to revisit the scene.

Carlos Carretto, in his *I Francis*, describes the event of San Damiano in these words:

*I [Francis] made my first retreats [in San Damiano]. As I sat, or knelt on the floor, praying, in that little church, I could see the considerable chinks in the wall and holes in the roof. The church was gradually crumbling down. But in the Gothic arch over the altar was a marvelous wooden crucifix, Byzantine in style; and what spoke to me, what pleased me about it was Jesus' so royal regard – especially the look in that pair of extraordinarily humble and tender eyes.  
I passed hours in gazing, praying and weeping.  
I wept so much I grew ashamed. I would say to myself, "Francis you are a baby."  
But I continued to weep, and the tears were good for me. One day, as I gazed at the crucifix, I had the altogether clear impression that the lips were moving. At the same moment I heard a voice: "Francis, repair my house! You can see, it is all in ruins!"  
I shall not attempt to convey the effect this had upon me. It was like a message linking me to the invisible world, and it sealed a long period of wavering, enthusiasm and searching....*

**Discernment:  
Seeking the Mind of God in our Franciscan Life**

**Third Order, Society of St. Francis  
American Provincial Convocation**

**You are invited!**

**Mark the date.**

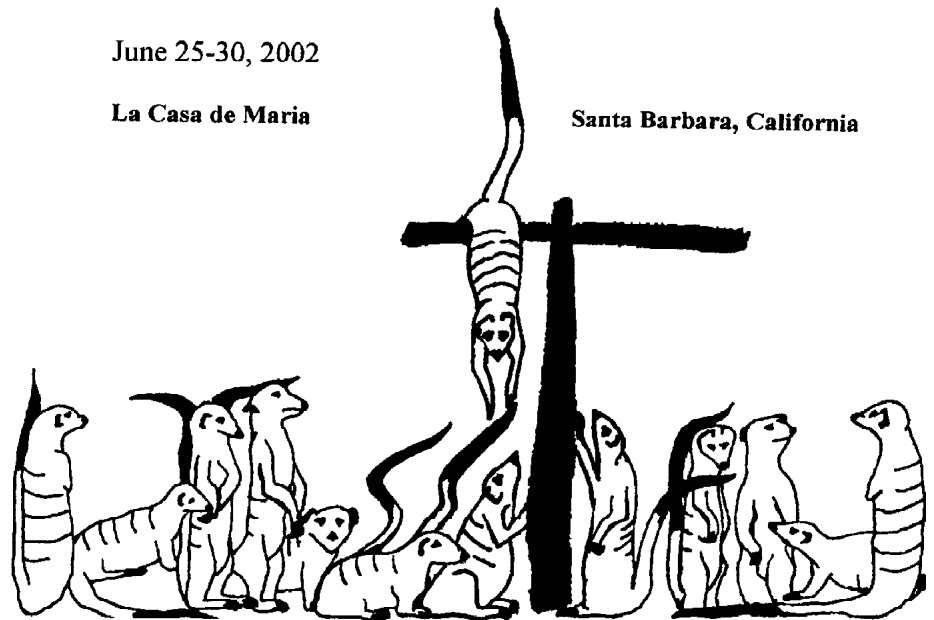
**Send in your registration.**

**Come and enjoy your Franciscan brothers and sisters.**

June 25-30, 2002

La Casa de Maria

Santa Barbara, California



**St. Francis and the Collect for Purity (cont.)**

*Jesus was the epitome of all: in him heaven and earth resolved all their contradictions in one stupendous, vital act of divine unification, and satisfied all the thirstings of humanity.*

*From that instant at Saint Damian, I felt actualized in Christ, understood, interpreted and most of all – happy.*

*Jesus' cross was humanity's happiness, love's answer to all the whys, the resolution of every conflict, the overcoming of every tension and polarization, God's victory over death.*

How, then, does this prayer of Francis and his experience at San Damiano say to us this Lenten season? Francis' version of the Collect for Purity embodies within it the call to action heard from the Cross of San Damiano, and Francis' response. It asks for purity of heart and enlightenment so that God's will may be known and lived out. In a way it embodies the petition found in the Prayer Book's General Thanksgiving, "...give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts, we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days." The Prayer Before the Crucifix calls us to conversion, then, not just for our own sakes, but also for the building up of God's people, the Church. A Franciscan Lent, can't just be about us. It cannot be about feeling comfortable in our selves and where we are with God, or about successfully completing our Lenten regimen. It must be about whether our hearts have become enlarged, enlightened and opened to the needs of the world. Thus as Franciscans, when we hear the Collect for Purity prayed a Eucharist this Lent, we should hear within its prayer "... To perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Name," Francis' own experience of what that means, at the foot of San Damiano's

**Peace In Our Hearts – What Does It Take To Be A Peacemaker?**

Our country has spent a lot of time and thought in the past few months on how to wage war on terrorism. What can we do? What is our part? It seems to me that we need to put at least as much thought and preparation into waging peace and understanding as into waging war. Probably most of us now think of Osama bin Laden as the most evil man we know of and our chief enemy. As Christians, Jesus calls us to respond to our enemies in a revolutionary way that is so difficult and uncomfortable. I know I would rather rationalize away these teachings of Jesus:

*We love because God first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. (1John 4: 19)*

*But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...Be compassionate, therefore, as your heavenly father is compassionate. (Matt. 5:44,48)*

**Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist monk who has written on the parallels of Christianity and Buddhism, gives us some thoughtful and practical insight into how to practice love of enemies. When asked in an interview carried on Beliefnet.com, how he would deal with Osama bin Laden, he responded:**

*The first thing I would do is listen. I would try to understand why he had acted in that cruel way. I would try to understand all of his sufferings that had led him to violence...I would need several friends with me, who are strong in the practice of deep listening, listening without reacting, without judging and blaming. In this way, an atmosphere of support would be created for this person and those connected so that they could share completely, trust that they are really being heard.*

*Only when we felt calm and lucid would we respond. We would respond point by point to what had been said. We would respond gently but firmly in such a way to help them discover their own misunderstandings so that they will stop violent acts from their own will.*

*When we react out of fear and hatred, we do not yet have a deep understanding of the situation... Yet, if we wait and follow the process of calming our anger, looking deeply into the situation, and listening with great will to understand the roots of suffering that are the cause of the violent actions, only then will we have sufficient insight to respond in such a way that healing and reconciliation can be realized for everyone involved.*

**Peacemaking requires the active voice! As a Franciscan, I can become an instrument of the Lord's peace by taking the initiative – I do not need to wait for someone to make the first move. I do not need to wait to be understood, consoled and loved – I can take the risk to offer understanding and love. And if I am rejected, I do not need to respond in anger, but in forgiving.**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...



Scenes from *A Pilgrimage to Ground Zero* (Above Left) Working at the Message Banner; (Above Right) The Police Barricade Outside St. Paul's Church; (Below) Ashes Everywhere in the Churchyard and Debris Hung Up In the trees.



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**Send in your contributions to the Pentecost issue! The deadline is May 15.**