

# The Franciscan Times



*Lord, Make Me An Instrument Of Thy Peace*

**A quarterly newsletter; whose purpose is 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.**

Fall 1997

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## New Orleans 1997

adopted from Cheryl Holmes

The Convocation at Loyola University in New Orleans, the first held since about 1981, was attended by 141 Franciscans including Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Ecumenical religious orders from the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, England, and Australia. Six days of worship, study, small group discussions, and fellowship centered on the theme "Rebuild My Church." And, there was free time to kick back, visit with old friends, and make new ones, and visit exciting and beautiful New Orleans.

The Convocation began with a traditional worship service at historic Christ Cathedral. Br. Brian, Minister General of the Society of St. Francis, presented the homily. Victoria Jicha, the organist, wrote one of the pieces used in the service; her sister joined her as violinist. John Snyder, the moderator of the TSSF on-line chat group, ANGFRAN-L, made his first musical appearance as Choir Director in this service. He offered his talents as instrumentalist or singer in all the other Eucharists during the Convocation. *(continued)*

*The Convocation Participants One and All!*

*Professions During Caribbean Liturgy: Chaplain David Burgdorf Receiving Rick Bellows's Vows; The Rev. Carol Tookey, Formation Director Assists.*

## New Orleans 1997 (continued)

Those attending were also privileged to participate in different Eucharistic worship styles: Praise, Taizé Chant, Caribbean Drum and Dance, and Jazz. Gay Crouch, professed during the Convocation, led the Praise music, and she, like Victoria, contributed a few of her own compositions. Masud Syedullah led a practice for all in Taizé chant; the candles, icons, and chants of the service reached so deep into the souls of all participants that Rick and Danielle Bellows who brought their two children, Jacob and Elanna, reported that Jacob (the four-year-old) continued to chant the *Magnificat* from the service when he prepared for bed some eight hours later. The drumming during the Caribbean-style service led by Gloria and Hugh Waldron was so infectious that when those about to be professed (Rick Bellows, Gay Crouch, and Elizabeth Armstrong) danced up to the Chaplain, David Burgdorf, it all fit! Ken Watts and his trumpet had played supporting roles at many of the other services; he shone when he led the final Jazz service with Bishop Protector, The Right Reverend Jerry Lamb, as celebrant and preacher. Other preachers at the daily celebrations included Br. Justus Richard, SSF; Father Masud Syedullah, TSSF; and Br. Robert Hugh, SSF.

One of the featured presentations was a St. Francis play entitled *An Experience of Saint Francis in India* written by Arthur Little and performed by Br. Jon Bankert with sacred puppetry in the style of Japanese Noh theater. Another featured presentation was Creation Spirituality based on Matthew Fox's *Original Blessing*, presented by Sisters Pamela Clare and

Jean of the Community of St. Francis. (Sister Jean took some time at another point in the Convocation to bring everyone up to date on the SSF Associates whose organization she coordinates. She told us that they are now about 100 strong in the US, Canada, and Caribbean. Although they do not have vows nor are an Order, they all maintain their own Rule of Life.)

Honored guests included Roman Catholic Poor Clares and Brother Steve, OFM, Secular Franciscans, and Dale Carmen, founder of the Order of the Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF). Dale explained that there are 42 members in the OEF representing 17 denominations with a third from the United Church of Christ and another third from the Methodist Church. A quarter of the OEFs are Canadian.

The backbone of the Convocation was a series of small group presentations offered at different times of the day, and repeated so that as many as possible could get to hear those in which they were interested. Among the many leaders and sessions, Alden Whitney, our TSSF Minister General, moderated a group entitled, "The Science of Desire: Genetics vs. Choice in Homosexuality," while John Scott, the first Guardian of the TSSF back before there were Provincial Ministers, moderated a group with Pam Moffat on "Personal Peace Making." Gloria Waldron, our Chaplain in the Caribbean, led a workshop on "Making Christ Known and Loved," Julia Bergstrom, a member of the Steering Committee and Assistant Chaplain of the Order, led a discussion on "Spiritual Friendship." John Tolbert—of Br.

Heretic fame (see related article, page 6)—and Lynn Herne in full clown costume led a small group discussion on “Humor and the Absurd.”

As if that were not enough, there was the Franciscan Convocation Store coordinated by Betty Wood; there were organizational meetings for those in Formation, for Area Chaplains, for Fellowship Convenors, and for Novice Counselors; a celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Order with a cake, and a talent show with songs, jokes, and a wonderful story told with puppets by Lucy Blount called “Lamkins J. Flock, Get Off That Heap!” (The story is reprinted elsewhere.)

There was also time to wander over to the Zoo in Audubon Park across St. Charles Street from Loyola University, to take the streetcar down to the French Quarter, and to just walk underneath the Spanish moss-covered Live Oaks of the streets surrounding the University.

**A Wyoming PS From Betty Wood**

Brief assessment: IT WAS FABULOUS!

Now for more detail. Several of us were powerfully affected when we realized that we prayed regularly for each person there—and all of them prayed for us. Actually being with all these people gave us a stronger sense of community, and made “praying the directory” a true joy.

And what a wonderful group! The diversity was truly inspiring. I tried to spend time with as many different people as possible, and feel I gained a lot from each one.

The accommodations were comfortable, the food varied and good. The liturgies also had great variety, and were all quite meaningful. My only complaint was that I could only attend four of the small groups—I wanted to get to them all.

If this sounds like a rave review, it is. I have never yet been to a Franciscan gathering that wasn’t a joy, and this one, by virtue of its size and duration, tops them all.

The Franciscan Convocation Store was successful beyond my expectations. I felt rather overwhelmed at first, but others helped, and I soon settled down and had a blast. I look forward to the next time. Franciscans are great people!

**Some Comments from the Provincial Convocation Feedback Form**

- Now I know this community is real and there. I had not felt it and was so isolated.
- Just knowing how we are all connected with one another—to know that we are of one heart if not always one mind. The wonderful spirit-filled and varied worship was great!
- I wanted to meet living, breathing people in the TSSF to help me decide whether or not to pursue Postulancy. My expectations were more than fulfilled.
- Meeting all those people I have been praying for and who have been praying for me.

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**T S S F B A S I C S**

available from Dee Dobson  
4001 S.W. 5 Terrace, Miami Fl. 33134-2040

suggested prices are:

**The Rule of the Third Order  
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Bishop Jerry Lamb, Bishop  
Protector at Convocation Jazz  
Liturgy: From His Left Br. Justus,  
Fr. Alden Whitney, TSSF Minister  
General, Rev. Clair Linzel; To  
Right of Altar, Rev. John  
Brockmann

### New Orleans 1997 (continued)

- [My vocation was supported] by the presence of so many “old timers” and so many “new folks.” I know that the T.O. is very healthy across the Province.
- I was called back into a renewed commitment after a period of being somewhat lackadaisical.
- The variety of worship and music was greater than I have ever experienced.
- The overall atmosphere of prayer and worship; the rhythm of liturgies and music throughout each day were an obvious central focus, and this set the tone for the Spirit of love and inclusiveness which I encountered here.
- Very impressed by the many gifts and talents of the members.
- The liturgies did become a seamless garment! Wise and wonderful sermons while being funny, full of tears, and hugs, but deeper and more mature than some meetings have been.
- Being among this multicultural and multiethnic groups. Loved having Romans, Ecumenical Franciscans, and a variety of other related brothers and sisters.
- To learn how others integrate their vocations as Franciscans with secular interests—I found most had positive attitudes.
- [I feel challenged] to further simplify my life—to take serious the commitment to community obedience—to take more personal responsibility for staying connected in years ahead.

### Editor’s Notes From The Plane Ride Home

What hit me was:

- the many, many colors of our Order as demonstrated in accents and stories, liturgies of varied hue and sound,
- the wide and wonderful use of talents from those who were musicians, puppeteers, dancers, writers, and mimes,
- the range of ages from dancing children to a beautiful 70-year-old priest off the New Mexican mesa,
- the constant scanning to see how each could be of aid to others in creating sacred spaces for our liturgies, to wheelchair pushers, to those who were leaders through the deepest dark of the French Quarter at night,
- a wonderful embrace of serendipity: “Let’s go to the zoo,” “Let’s get fresh-baked bread each day for the Eucharist from the bakery down the street called *The Staff of Life*,” “Let’s feed the birds with the leftover chunks of the communion bread;” “Let’s add in each days Prayers of the People the names of those with 40-, 30-, 20-, and 10-year anniversaries in the Order;” “Let’s invent some space each day for Centering Prayer;”
- Francis was honored with a liturgy but so was Clare and the Blessed Virgin and St. Elizabeth.

In the end, it could all be summed up for me in Anita Catron’s question, and our unanimous response: “Shall we do it again in five years?” All that was heard was a resounding “YES!” (See page 17 for the announcement of plans for Convocation 2002!)

## Jacqui Belcher's Convocation

### First Impressions

After eight hours of driving through the coastal back roads of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, I arrived hot, sticky and frustrated in New Orleans. My patience was further tested when, seeing off in the distance the tall dorm building which was to be my home for the next five days, I could only circle the area getting no closer to my destination. I felt trapped in an Escher painting. No matter which way I turned, I ended up back at the front of Loyola! Then I remembered...I am woman, I can ask directions...and all was well.

It took me as long to register as it did to find Buddig Hall. This, however, was due to my renewing acquaintances or putting faces to names I'd only seen on paper or voices I'd only heard over the phone. "I imagined you taller...shorter...younger..." It was a delay of pure delight!

Finally, I was through the melee of hugging and welcoming Tertiaries and on the way to my room. The room, itself, reminded me of being ship-board. Very clean and utilitarian: two narrow, metal-shuttered windows; everything anchored down; platform beds protruding from the walls. The long, narrow bathroom, shared with the adjoining room, had no window or exhaust fan, and, with my macabre sense of humor, I imagined mold creeping along the dank shower walls (it never actually happened—at least not while I was there!). After a long, cool shower—my Lord be praised for Sister Water—the bare linoleum floor and shuttered windows became a blessing in the sticky, atmosphere of the Deep South in June.

Once the road grit and grim were washed away, I actually found the weather to be quite pleasant (perhaps living in coastal Georgia prepared me, for I did notice a "glistening" on the upper lips and foreheads of some of our northern and European sisters and brothers!). The daily afternoon thunder shower kept the temperature in the 80s, and the atmosphere a little damp.

So, first impressions firmly in place, I headed off to the first event...supper!

### We are family

I've been looking over the photos from New Orleans. Mostly they are of people—quite a deviation from my usual would-you-please-move-out-of-the-

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## CSF Office Book: A Review

by Alden Whitney, TSSF Minister General

Several years ago, when the Sisters of the Community of St. Francis in San Francisco announced that they were working on a CSF Office Book with the goal of its publication for their Community and others in the greater SSF family who might want copies, I looked forward to the event with a lot of anticipation, and ordered four copies. The CSF Office Book was printed, and distribution was begun this summer. My anticipation has been rewarded greatly.

It's a big book; even so, I often carry it to work with me. For one thing the book is very useable, and replete with so much variety, that I find myself not wanting to "settle" for the vanilla BCP Office. The Offices of MP, Noonday and EP are presented for each day of the week, with tables for psalms, and canticles, as well as collects chosen for each office. Compline has its own section, and also offers day-by-day diversity.

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#### Who to Send Changes To

Name and address changes  
Convocation Dates  
Profession Mandates & Record of Novicing  
Notification of Deaths  
should be sent to the secretary:  
Robert Kramish  
P.O. Box 460550, San Francisco, CA 94146-0550  
BOB190059@aol.com

Requests for Release from Vows  
and other pastoral matters  
should be sent to the Chaplain of the Province:  
The Rev. David Burgdorf, 40-300 Washington St,  
Apt. M204, Bermuda Dunes, CA 92201  
74554,643@compuserve.com

## First A Word From Brother Hereticus

by his brother John Tolbert

[Ed. A mysterious mute presence could almost be found nearly everywhere during the Convocation. His white face and brown habit; his hand holding out old-fashioned, wedged, iron nails; never a word spoken—it was Brother Hereticus. He turned up in hallways and on city trolleys. This is his story.]

Last October a member of my local parish, St. Timothy's, Kingsport, TN, asked me to speak to the congregation on All Saints's Sunday about St. Francis of Assisi. The primary purpose was to relate, especially to the children, that a saint's life was not one of glamour nor filled with the sentimentality that is so often associated with saints.

That Sunday I was serving as a Chalice Bearer, so I was already robed in my alb. Just before I was to speak, I removed my shoes and socks. At the appointed time, I was introduced simply as a "special guest." I walked to the steps at the foot of the altar and sat down. I invited the children to come sit around me and then I told them about the life of St. Francis. I told them about his dream of becoming a knight. I told them about his relationship with his father, and how they parted company. I told of the begging and living in caves and in cells. I told them of his preaching to the birds. I told them about his receiving the stigmata, and I told them of his illness, and how he died.

All this sparked an idea. This could be something I could be share with other churches. That idea was still on my back-burner when, around the first of the year, I came across the words of St. Francis, "Preach the Gospel to Every Living Creature. *If necessary, use words.*" Immediately my original idea began to evolve into something quite unusual for me. Most who know me also know that I am a VERY verbal person. More than once in my life I have been dubbed the "Mouth of the South." However, I have also had a great admiration for mimes. But for me to be a mime seemed totally *absurd*, and yet that was exactly the topic of the small group I had been invited to co-facilitate at the Convocation, "Humor and the *Absurd*."

The idea came to me that I should dress in something similar to Francis's brown robe. I would perform in silence as a mime. A Franciscan mime? Why not? Then it came to me that I could give out little wedged-shaped nails as reminders of Christ's crucifixion. My wife made the habit.

The first day I ever put on grease paint in my life was the morning of my first appearance as Brother Hereticus at the Convocation. My co-facilitator in the small group, Lynn Herne, is a clown, and she was prepared to dress as a clown for our presentation. Lynn helped me put on the white grease paint. It was exciting and yet awesome to step out of my room and into the world transformed into a mute monk.

Convocation plans called for all of us that morning to go to the Cathedral for the opening service. So while folks were boarding the buses, I gave out the first nails, "directed" traffic, waved at children coming to day camp, and never said a word. That may have been my most mystifying act to many who had never seen me silent.

That afternoon, returning to myself, I got a good bit of feedback from several folks. All of it was positive, but some of it was very surprising to me. Most shocking was hearing that in my face some saw happiness and sadness at the same time. Basically, I

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Brother Hereticus, a.k.a. John Tolbert

## A Newly Professed Sister, Lucy Blount, & Her Lightbearers

Lucy introduced herself and her profession earlier in her letter about Br. Hereticus. Wonder why she addressed the letter, "Precious Sisters and Brothers?" The answer lies in the fact that Lucy has been writing to her Montgomery, Alabama Bible-study group, and she has been addressing them as "Precious Sisters and Brothers," encouraging them, and they her for some years now. Moreover, Lucy has collected these letters in a series of books published by her own Lightbearers Publishing Company, and all were on sale at the Franciscan Convocation Store. Her books include:

- A lovely children's book that has pictures and blank pages on which juvenile readers are encouraged to draw and write their own pictures. It's called *The Story of Lucy What's-Her-Name (and your name, too!)* (1992). The illustrations by Woodie Long are intentionally unpolished so as not to intimidate the young Rembrandts.
- A collection of letters between Lucy, her Precious Group, and a pince-nez-ed Aunt Fannée about the experiences she had as the wife of a candidate for governor of the state of Alabama, Winton Blount. This 1994 book is entitled *Letters from a Candidate's Wife: It Looks Like a Rough Ride, But There's a Rainbow in Sight*. Armed with her rare gift of seeing the Lord at work in all situations (even a political campaign), this book focuses on her daily experiences on the campaign trail.

- And, the whole publishing project began with *Letters to the Precious Group* that was in its third printing in 1994.

She and her husband have four adult children and two grandchildren, and a new book on the way in late October entitled *Lenten Love Letters*. This new book is also joined by the adult fable about Lamkins J. Flock reprinted below. Lucy's photo, if you look carefully, shows Lamkins J. Flock, atop her hat!

When I interviewed Lucy at the New Orleans Convocation, she noted how she always felt that she's been a Franciscan, but it took an interim priest who had been a member of the TSSF to explain how such a "feeling" could be lived out. She had hemmed and hawed about pursuing this TSSF lead until one day, the Church's red name and address book fell open with the number clearly visible to her. It also helped that she and her husband were long time friends of the Willie's in Birmingham, and had been compatriots in Louis Willie's integration efforts at the Shoel Creek Golf Course.

Lucy mentioned that there are twelve members of the Alabama fellowship but only three, now four, professed. She observed that there was a need to educate the Deep South's "Low" Church about Orders in the Church. Something must be working for Lucy and her Alabama TSSF friends because she noted how their Bishop and his wife have now become inquirers.

Lucy's decided to take it a little bit easier and concentrate on the writing rather than on the publishing. She has sold her publishing company (their address is Lightbearers Publishers, Inc., PO Box 5895, Maryville, TN 37802-5895, Phone (423) 379-9006).

Congratulations, Lucy, on your profession, and, as you yourself write in *Lucy What's Her Name*, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven."

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*Lucy Blount at the Convocation  
Talent Show with Lambkins J.  
Flock atop Her Hat*

**Brother Hereticus (cont.)**

perceived that in being Brother Hereticus, people could see inside me—my life, my heart, my joys, and my sorrows. I felt so vulnerable. I had not anticipated anything like that. My first reaction was to ask myself if I was willing to risk opening my soul to others. And I saw into the faces of some folks (none of my Franciscan brothers and sisters) and saw that they did not know what to make of this performance. It reminded me of those who could not face either themselves or God. I saw their sorrows and fears. I pondered for some time before deciding that it was worth while to continue “performing” for the good feelings it gave me in witnessing to others about Jesus. After all, while in the guise of Brother Hereticus, I was having a wonderful time.

Brother Hereticus seemed to make profound impressions on some, including me. He was such an expression of both Franciscan joy and being a Fool for Christ. I found out that I could indeed preach the Gospel without uttering a single word. Brother Hereticus will not be a “one-time” event. He will be around for a long time and will share the Gospel as one of God’s fools joyfully and as often as possible.

**And Now Some Reactions to Brother Hereticus Precious Sisters and Brothers,**

My mind drifts back to the first whole day of our New Orleans Convocation. We all were gathering to board the buses to go to our beginning Holy Communion service at the Cathedral. As I walked to the bus, there he stood, the man robed in brown. His back was turned. I just thought to myself, that’s a little odd. I don’t recognize that shade of brown belonging to any of our brothers and sisters. Then he turned and I saw for the first time his grease-painted face. It was startlingly white. There seemed to be a gladness, a sadness about this clown who called

himself Brother Hereticus. As I came closer, I recognized our own John Tolbert from the Southeastern Convocation. I felt a little awkward and a little “distancing” cropping up in me. Was he being serious or sacrilegious? I thought of the centuries of brothers and sisters in brown marching by. What would they think? I didn’t mind making a fool of myself, why in just a few days I’d be doing so at the talent show [Ed. See related article and photo about Lucy Blount and Lambkins J. Flock], but was this an “approved” activity? I wasn’t quite sure. All I knew is that it made me a little uneasy. Chicken that I am, I just stood and watched and didn’t get too close, except when one of John’s big hugs would catch me off guard.

I remember him silently sitting near the front of the Cathedral on the right-hand side. I remember him silently standing in line at lunch and then sitting silently at one of the dining tables. I remember him sitting silently at one of our later services. I remember him silently standing in the downstairs hallway giving out a gift. I couldn’t avoid him. He’s my brother and friend. His hand grasped mine and left the present. I looked down. It was a large, primitive iron nail. I looked up and met John’s happy/sad eyes and said “Thank You!”

John—alias Brother Hereticus—our Franciscan clown, was willing to be a “Fool for Christ” tangibly, literally. His presence was a profound blessing. He cut very close to the edge. It made my heart cry out “Hey Lucy, how far are you willing to go out on a limb for your Lord, for Francis, for your brothers and sisters in Christ?”

I remember one day gazing into the mirror in our dorm room after brushing my teeth and noticing a big white streak through the side of my hair.

**CONVOCAATION 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.

Deadline for the Winter issue is January 1, 1997.

My first reaction was "Oh, dear! I'm aging right before my very eyes." Then I smiled and then I burst out laughing. Hereticus had left his mark on me! Some of his grease paint had rubbed off at the passing of the peace. I carefully wiped it off and went on to the rest of the day's activities.

Later I laughingly mentioned it to John. I once again thanked him for the nail. It was a weighty present, and I asked if he might give me twelve to take home to our Fellowship. It seemed the perfect gift to take back to Alabama's "God's Joyful Fools." He did, and it was. They received them two days ago when we met at the Advent Cathedral in Birmingham for a meeting, lunch, and Holy Communion where I was professed and then there was a reception. Family, friends, Franciscans were gathered. It was a day I'll never forget, never forget.

Funny, as I sit writing to you here on the floor in a hotel bathroom so as not to awaken my sister or mother (we're on a mother-daughters trip to Canada), my mind drifts back and seems to skip from the image of John the Clown to being Professed and then back to John the Clown and then to being Professed. The two scenarios seem to be weaving themselves together and becoming one. Maybe it's because it's pre-dawn, and I just need some coffee. All I know is that I can't wait to see the photographs taken while I was making my vows. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if there was an invisible clown present carrying some nails in his hand, ready to distribute them to each person.

Thank you, John. Your happy/sad eyes reminded me of another "Clown of Christ." It is my prayer that I may become as you have become—willing to come close to the edge, to go out on a limb, to do a little hilarious humility dance as our Brother Francis did and all for the love of Jesus.

And now it's time to rise off this cold tile floor and tiptoe back to bed. But first I'm going to take a glance into the mirror, for there might be a little white grease paint still stuck to my hair. If not, I do know it has surely stuck to my soul. It was stuck on by a bear hug and a nail gently placed in my hands.

And now for the first time in my life, I get to sign off with love in Christ and Francis,

Lucy Blount, TSSF

P.S. During the Convocation, John quietly reported to a few that while in costume he had silently handed a nail to a seemingly unknowing Loyola student who just happened to be walking by with a

friend. The friend on viewing the nail asked what that was all about, and his companion proceeded to witness to him about our crucified Christ. My sisters and brothers in Christ and Francis, it is my prayer that our life's actions may also act as conduits for Christ's kingdom to spread and to come forth.

#### A Reaction to Brother Hereticus from the ANG-FRAN Internet News Group

Dear Br. Hereticus

It may be none of your business, but I think getting to know you is one of the really big blessings in my life.

Love & Big Hugs Mary Ann Jackman

Dear Mary Ann,

I agree with you. John and Br. Hereticus are both a blessing to our Order. I have been thinking back on Convocation quite a bit. After the opening Eucharist, some of us (about 10-12) decided to ride the streetcar back to Loyola. Br. Hereticus joined us. When we boarded the streetcar, most everyone was reading, listening to taped music, staring out the window, or quietly talking with seatmates. We boarded, along with Br. H., and before we knew it, everyone was laughing and talking and asking questions and getting out of themselves and into the world. Why? I think it was because we were open and loving. We weren't afraid to speak to a stranger. A man sitting in a seat next to me, got up and let Sue (Heinsohn) sit with me! We thought he was getting off the streetcar, but he said: "No, I want to give you my place." A very few people were to afraid to join in, afraid to look at Br. H., afraid of what might be called out of them. I pray that God will bless them and open them up to the world around them.

Love, Peace and Joy!  
Cheryl Holmes, TSSF  
Woodward, OK

\* St. Hereticus was "discovered" back in the 60's by the Rev. Robert McAfee Brown. Hereticus's biography is a "hoot" to read.

### How Many Are We?

At the January IPTOC meeting of Provincial Ministers in New Zealand, Alden Whitney, the Minister General of the Third Order, reckoned that there are:

- 2, 929 tertiaries world wide;
- 16 sisters in the Second Order, and
- 240 brothers and sisters in the First Order.

**Jacqui Belcher's Convocation (cont.)**

frame attitude towards photography. They reflect the wonderful diversity, love and humor that are the ingredients of a healthy community. As I sifted through the pictures, I found myself quietly singing, "We are family, do do do do do do, da da da da sisters and me!" Okay, so I couldn't remember the words, but you know what I mean....We truly are a family and this was our reunion. We each had our foibles, we each had our moods—at any given time joyful, frustrated, mellow, gregarious, quiet, happy—but mostly we just delighted in one another. Even the squabbling was light-hearted—"But I wanted to write about the liturgies!" (Well, I really did, and I don't see why, just because he's the editor, John should have dibs on....oh, sorry, I'm digressing.)

**The liturgies**

(sorry, John, a Tertiary's gotta do what a Tertiary's gotta do)

From the first opening chord on Wednesday morning in Christ Cathedral to the last saxophone note at our closing liturgy in Loyola's St. Charles Room, it was glorious, outrageously glorious. Who among us wasn't riveted by Br. Brian's opening sermon on the continual rebuilding process of formation, conversion and transformation, or deeply moved by the powerful healing service gently swathed in Taizé music and dedicated to St. Clare. Who could keep their body still when egged on by the Caribbean rhythms, or not feel warmed by the nurturing language of the New Zealand and Community of St. Francis prayer books. Reflective words and soul-stirring music. The preparation that went into the liturgies was, I know, given to the glory of God, but they were a beautiful gift to us. Thank you.

**Way down yonder in....**

Gosh, and I haven't even *begunto* tell you about New Orleans, itself! (What's that, John, leave space for other people?) Oh, all right...but just let me mention that the area surrounding the university exhibited a gentle, southern charm with its blossoming, vividly purple crepe myrtle lining the narrow streets, and houses with second story verandahs and intricate wrought iron fences—nearly as elegant as Savannah.

Dorothy Adams and I enjoyed the Andrew Wyeth "Helga" exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art, a relatively small museum built in the middle of a refreshing park, complete with lake and appropriate water fowl.

The French Quarter was a mite touristy for my taste. Nonetheless, the food at the "Old Dog, New Trick" hole-in-the-wall restaurant was scrumptious and the jazz at the Preservation Hall was outa sight and hot! But what seemed glitzy and risqué by night turned shabby and crude by day. The hoard of fellow tourists on Bourbon Street made it difficult at night to see what was evident during the day—the homeless, the addict, the apparently lonely and empty teenager. The quietest spot in the Quarter was Café Joël, a Christian coffee house. It made me ponder our role as Franciscans. It made me give thanks for everyone who ministers to the downtrodden and disheartened, and particularly for our little Father Francis, who, even with his poor eyesight, would have recognized and embraced these New Orleans lepers.

**CSF Book Review (cont.)**

The "Proper of the Christian Year and Lectionary" is located toward the back of the book, and the lection lists for Years One and Two are presented with the appropriate Propers of the Seasons, week-by-week or day-by-day in a simple plan which helps getting around. It's an ideal arrangement, and one I've never seen before. In the same fashion the Propers for the Holy Days with suggested canticles are easily found. The CSF Office Book, unlike some office books, is a pleasure to navigate.

The "soul" of the CSF Office Book is uncovered decisively in the Psalter and the Canticles. The cadence and content of the Psalter of the BCP is mostly the same as that of the 1979 book, but there are immensely welcome developments in naming and phrasing which get away from strictly patristic views of God, without eliminating the essentials of Trinitarian theology. Similarly, the Canticles—all 60 of them (count 'em!). Many are new (to me), and vitally enrich prayer time (for me). There is, at last, balance in the presentation of the male and female aspects of God and Christ—while preserving the otherness and magnificence of God.

This is a book characterized by a Franciscan ambience and the zest of the American Province of the CSF as well. The flavoring of Francis is found scattered about in antiphons, benedictions and extra canonical readings; and there is a section devoted to Franciscan collects. All of the CSF Sisters are responsible (and laudable) for the genesis and nurture of the CSF Office Book. Yet when I browse through it, I often hear the voice of Sister Cecilia singing and speaking the words of the Psalter as envisioned by her. Also I imagine Sister Pamela Clare and the sound of computer keys and that of mousing: typ-

ing, cutting, pasting and laying out the text page after page—version after version—month after month. What a labor of love! Thank you, Sisters all, for your gift to the SSF.

#### A Few More Words About the CSF Book...

A Review by Anita Catron, TSSF Provincial Minister

I love mine—a gift from the New Orleans Convocation Steering Committee. Sister Jean has been visiting me all week, and we used it, which helped guide me in its usage. It weighs about three pounds, but it's worth its weight. Some of the advantages I found were that the type font is big, there's lots of white space, and great graphics by Sister Pamela Clare.

### Lucy Blount (cont.)

**"Lamkins J. Flock, Get Off That Heap!"** (an adult fable) (a book in progress)  
by Lucy Blount

On a walk in the Cotswolds, I came across this sight!

"Lamkins, Lamkins J. Flock, if I've told you once, I have told you a million times, get off that heap! What's gotten into you?"

"Here you are surrounded by some of the most gorgeous grazing land in all the world and what do you do? You go and find yourself the only manure mound in the whole field and go plop yourself right down in the middle of it."

"Open you eyes, precious lamb. Don't you see all the beautiful grass surrounding you? Look at your fellow flock. Do you see them climbing around on a dung heap? Gross. I mean gross!"

"I didn't raise you to sit in such stuff. You've forgotten who you are and from what fine stock you've come. I know the view might seem grander from that seemingly higher vantage point, but Lamkins, really, it's not higher for long. Why it's disintegrating as you sit there. You're not on solid ground, and I know it might feel warm and soft and comfy on such a bone-chilling day as today, but these creature comforts won't last for long."

"You're going to get yourself good and sick. That's what's going to happen. I just know it. Those fumes couldn't be good for you and look at yourself. You've gone and gotten your beautiful fleece all dirty. There's nothing healthy to eat up there, and you're not getting your daily exercise—plus how can you socialize? You know we're a very social group with a herd mentality. No one that's anyone is going to join you up there. Believe you me, I know what I'm

talking about. I've been around a lot longer than you and have stood on a few piles myself and nothing good comes from such living."

"Now you come on down like a good lamb. I'll help you get clean and see that you find a nice little grazing spot among friends."

"The sun's rising, and the chill's leaving. Let's get ready precious Lamkins of mine. You just forgot for a little while who you are and to whom you belong."

"Hurry, the Shepherd's coming."

"Now that's the way."

"You're almost back on solid ground—just a few more steps."

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#### Letters to the Precious Group

\$19.95 (hardback) \$13.95 (paperback)

#### Lucy What's-Her-Name

\$12.00 (spiral bound)

#### Letters from a Candidate's Wife

\$24.95 (hardback) \$18.95 (softback)

#### Lamkins J. Flock, Get Off That Heap!

\$7.95 (softback)

#### Shipping and Handling

Up to \$20-\$2.50; \$20-75-\$5.00; Over \$75-5% of subtotal

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### "Anyway"

by Mother Teresa

People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people may accuse you of selfish motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you may win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable.

Be honest and transparent anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People who really want help may attack you if you help them.

Help them anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you may get hurt.

Give the world your best anyway.

(from Mother Teresa's *Meditations from A Simple Path*)

## Franciscan Aid

At the Convocation in New Orleans, people asked what Franciscan Aid was to which we as a province have been contributing to for many years. The following article of explanation is reprinted from *The Chronicle: The Journal of the European Province, Summer 1997*, and was written by Clive Cresswell, Assistant Minister Provincial, formerly Treasurer, and a Trustee of Franciscan Aid for many years. His name and address for contributions is at the end of this article.

*I am working as a general hand and finding it difficult to raise the family and send the children to school.*

So runs a letter received recently from one of the women we support in Zimbabwe. Surely if someone is working it should be possible to afford basic education? To reinforce the claim, her latest payslip was enclosed which made interesting reading. After swingeing [sic] reductions at source, the princely sum left for survival for one month was \$700 [about \$60.00 US].... One might perhaps despair, thinking of the millions in the same condition; even though money may go further in Africa, there is no way that we can help them all. There are so many excuses that we can dredge up to think negatively in such a situation, and put off doing anything about it for another day. Our consciences are troubled briefly, and then we may get a windfall which prompts us to send a percentage in a flush of goodwill. But we are Franciscans, surely we should do better than this?

Perhaps I can highlight the positive features of Franciscan Aid and dispel any misgivings you may have about the way that the money raised is distributed (Avoiding avaricious intermediaries en route!). We are a Franciscan charity. This means that the people we support have been recommended by Franciscans, usually First Order brothers but sometimes members of the Third Order. The amount spent in administration is less than 2%, and a large chunk of that is bank charges for the transfer of money overseas. We only help people in Third World countries and do not pay air fares. Our main area of help is education, and we have many students at all ages from nursery through to University. The Trustees will sometimes support children right through their schooling, but they have to be reassured by relevant academic reports that progress justifies further expenditure.

Here are two specific examples of recent help:

- **Bulawayo**, where Stephen Spencer has a parish and Sally, his wife, is starting up a nursery school in a very poor area. In a letter to us Sally mentioned the

urgent need for vital equipment to start this project, and her plea was endorsed by Ann Kotzé, current Minister Provincial of the African Province. We sent them £1000 which should get them off to a very good start.

- **Nairobi**, where we are supporting Jared Ogutu, originally at the suggestion of Felicity Hadley. He is studying a University course to enable him to teach in the poorest areas. His Diocese had encouraged him to take the course, but could not afford the fees. We send money direct to the University to pay for this tuition, but it is dependent upon receiving satisfactory reports from the University on his progress.

On a general note; the Trustees try to split the giving 50/50 between individuals and institutions. In the latter area we have supported a psychiatric hospital in Ghana, an orphanage in Zimbabwe, and an AIDS clinic in South Africa (through Andrew Dotson, a tertiary priest there).

So how about these little drops in an ocean of hunger and need? We have faith that we are doing God's will, and we hope that the mustard seeds planted now will flourish—but we shall never really know. However, I am convinced that we are guided in our tiny task, and only this morning we received a cheque for £500 that will educate three children for one year in Zimbabwe. I know that many of you are reading this are contributing in all sorts of ways for the good of Franciscan Aid, and thank you for that. There may, however, be someone not so involved who might wish to consider helping appropriately, and I would be delighted to hear from you. We want to make Franciscan Aid work through all Franciscans so that we can support people who are often unable to get help from anywhere else, however just their cause. [Regular or one-off contributions (covenants are preferred!) will be gratefully received by Clive Cresswell, Assistant Minister Provincial, 27 Priory Close, Royston, Herts, UK SG8 7DU.]

The American Province has contributed \$700 a year to Franciscan Aid for the past half dozen years, and Clive Cresswell e-mailed me to say that they had collected nearly \$5,000 in the last month, and that they had sent \$1,500 to an orphanage in Zimbabwe that is grossly underfunded by their government.

## ANGFRAN-L

### First An Overview

By Barb Chandler, *Franciscan Times* Online Reporter

"As the only Franciscan in Zimbabwe with e-mail, I greatly appreciate the contact with TSSF throughout the world. The List gives me a vision of the meaning of Francis of Assisi for people of different countries," said David Bertram, TSSF Anglican priest. "I am grateful to be a member of the Community (the Third Order) which I find on the List."

Bertram is talking about the Anglican Franciscan Mailing List, ANGFRAN-L, which embodies the Franciscan tradition of forming "a community without walls." The electronic community which is made up of members some in the First Order, many in the Third Order, and many who have a "Franciscan heart" gather together to talk about many different things. One common thread that runs through the diversity of the forum is the Franciscan spirit. "I've learned a great deal about love, humility, and peacemaking from my brothers and sisters on ANGFRAN-L," said Karen Wojahn who describes herself as having a "Franciscan heart."

Personal reactions and opinions about current events in the church and in the world, jokes, prayers, and prayer requests are some of the topics that make up the list. "Particularly important to me are the prayer requests," said Wojahn. "I have been grateful for those who have prayed me through my health problems, and for those who have given me the privilege of praying for them. It has enriched my own prayer life and strengthened my faith."

There are similarities between the community that has developed on the ANGFRAN-L and the early community of Franciscans in Assisi. According to one biography of Francis:

*The brothers would go out on the road, returning to Assisi once or twice a year for the 'Chapter of Mats,' so-called because the brothers would gather on the hillside, and, seated on mats, would listen to Francis's words to them. They would tell their stories of what had transpired on the road, confess their sins to one another, and then kneel at Francis's feet as he sent them forth on the road to preach and witness to the Gospel by their poverty and love for one another.*

The "roads" traveled by those on the ANGFRAN-L list are scattered throughout the world, and their

ministries are very diverse. When they read/answer/post an e-mail in the electronic forum, it is similar in a very metaphorical way to being at the Chapter of Mats. The ANGFRAN-L list is a gathering place for Franciscans to be in community with others, to receive refreshment and renewal through dialogue with one another and prayer. All who come to the List, through the spirit of Francis as shown by our brothers and sisters, "kneel at Francis's feet" as he blesses them and send them forth on the road.

### The Nitty Gritty

The most involved on-line resource of the Order is the one created and maintained by John Snyder whose cyber-talents are only exceeded by his musical talents as displayed over and over at the Convocation. ANGFRAN-L is "linked to" by the Anglicans Online! Web page, and subscriptions from Sweden and Zambia have been received.

You could most easily find out how to subscribe to ANGFRAN-L by pointing your WWW browsers at the AngFran-L Web page

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/4995/>

On this Web page there are complete instructions on how to subscribe to AngFran-L, as well as other interesting options and information. (You could also write to John at [jsnyder@pobox.com](mailto:jsnyder@pobox.com) for more help or information.

### General Instructions for Using ANGFRAN-L

To subscribe to the free list and discussions, send an e-mail message to [LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU) with the subject line entitled SUBSCRIBE ASSISI-L

and in the message area just write

SUBSCRIBE ANGFRAN-L [first name] [last name]

You will then soon receive confirmation that you are on the list, and, at that point, to keep my computer from being inundated by messages, I immediately followed up by asking the Listserve to send me messages by "digest"—a single message each day which contains all the traffic sent that day rather than each message being sent individually. The way to do this is to send an e-mail message to [LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU) and in the message area just write

SET ANGFRAN-L DIGEST

To reset mail to the single mode, send an e-mail message to [LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU) and in the message area just write

SET ANGFRAN-L MAIL

(continued, p. 14)

To stop mail (such as when you go away on a holiday), send an e-mail message to [LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU) and in the message area just write  
SET ANGFRAN-L NOMAIL

To restart mail (upon return from holiday), send an e-mail message to [LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU) and in the message area just write  
SET ANGFRAN-L MAIL

To get off the list forever, send an e-mail message to [LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU) and in the message area just write  
SIGNOFF ANGFRAN-L.

#### Other Online TSSF Resources

##### Ken Norian's TSSF Home Page on the Web

Some online resources are somewhat "read-only" resources such as our Web Page created by Ken Norian that is best accessed by plugging in "TSSF" in your favorite Web browser (but if you want the actual address, it's [LI.Net/~kenorian/tssf.htm](http://LI.Net/~kenorian/tssf.htm)). From the Web Page, inquirers can find out information and send in a request for more. There's also recent photos from the Convocation, a listing of our library, and other links to resources.

##### Joan Kidd List

Then there's the "Joan Kidd List" which is simply a listing of all TSSFers who have e-mail addresses and who have alerted Joan to their addresses. This list is updated and sent out every month (it's also reproduced on Ken Norian's Web page). You'll also find some folks on the list who are SFO, OFM, or just "friends" who asked to be on the list. To get on the list and to receive an electronic copy of the list, e-mail Joan Kidd at [JOANKIDD@aol.com](mailto:JOANKIDD@aol.com).

In case you have lost your previous issues, here's some information previously appeared in these pages.

- **ASSISI-L** at American University seems to be a general, ongoing international discussion of Franciscan topics. These topics range from a debate surrounding the movie *Priest* to a discussion of the most recent encyclical from Rome on ecumenism, to messages from church leaders in Bosnia. This list is primarily filled with messages from Roman Catholic Secular Franciscans, but it is interesting to find messages from Cleveland interspersed with ones from Russia or Australia.

To subscribe you simply need to send an e-mail message to

[LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU)  
with the subject line entitled  
SUBSCRIBE ASSISI-L

and the message simply written as  
SUBSCRIBE ASSISI-L [first name]\_[last name]

In a short time, your subscription to the mailing list will be verified, a list of usage guidelines will be sent, and messages from Franciscans around the world will begin winding their way to your e-mail address.

- A General Franciscan Home Page is available on the World Wide Web, and it is pretty interesting. From this Home Page I was able to find our own Episcopal on-line files, as well as those of the Benedictines, Jesuits, and Dominicans. I found a tour of Assisi via very colorful photographs, and links from this page to various Bible commentaries and on-line versions of classic religious literature.

To access this Franciscan Home Page on the World Wide Web, you need to use Mosaic or Netscape, and set your URL to

<http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/franciscan>

## "Stations of My Home" Touch the Mystery of Life

by The Rev. Harold Macdonald TSSF, Saskatchewan, Canada—  
"retired" to the shore of Lake Winnipeg. Reprinted from the  
*Prairie Messenger* (3/26/97, page 15)

It has to start where there's the most pain. In front of the wide eastern windows, opening on the lake and the sunrise.

I limp there, wincing, sore-footed, back stiff and tendons in the back of my legs shortened, it would seem, two or three inches during the night. The extra strength Tylenol has long worn off.

I stand before my Maker as the sun rises in the southeast and raise my arms in praise. The bursitis in the left shoulder howls from a lifetime of hitting golf balls.

I say, or groan, "Glory be to you, O Father."

I raise the left arms, then the right. Again, a little further. Again, almost straight up. Now I raise them both together, like Abraham, or Moses, or Francis of Assisi.

The first is the station of glory, of the beginning. Of creation. Of my Maker. "Hail to you, Lord God." Now a mite more supple, I walk rapidly to Station 2, which is my computer adjacent to a step down into the guest bedroom. There I say, "Blessed be you,

**Stations of My Home (cont.)**

O Word of creation, intelligence of being, Word of forgiveness, the Yes-Word of my life."

I march up and down the single step leading first with the right foot, then the left, beside the computer.

"Blessed be truth," I say, beginning to puff. "Blessed be the courage of the Word."

The dogs, a German shepherd cum wolf, and a Llassa Apso cum cocker, watch. They're waiting for anything that looks like a walk. Nothing does.

"Blessed be the intelligence of animals," I say between ups and downs. The dogs are unimpressed. Then to the stereo I march across the room. I swing my arms. There's less pain—it's the music. Announcer is doing "Stereo Morning." The Spirit catches me up. I dance. Manage a hop to the right, a hop to the left, a twirl. Catch the rhythm if not too fast.

She is waiting for me to catch up; she is wisdom, joy, and laughter, tears, and celebration. She is Spirit. "Blessed are you, Spirit, flooding into my aching being like refreshing waters."

I urge the dogs. Now they're interested. I am Gene Kelly, swooping around the room. I am Baryshnikov. The wolf crouches, thinking ballet means ball. The Llassa barks at the movement—I would like to say the excitement—of the dance. I am puffing. It's been 22 years since I had a cigarette. Station 3.

Then quickly to the station of play. It's the back entrance to the same large living room which looks out on the lake. To the right is the den, where the TV is on, and the crosswords are being summarily dispatched.

One ball for the Llassa goes careening in there, the other goes back eastward, ricocheting off the legs of chairs and dining table.

The dogs scatter after their respective quarries; the rugs fly; I get in a little step marching, for there's a step there, too, leading back into the back hall.

They return, tails wagging, waiting for me to try, attempt, foolishly endeavor to wrestle the balls from the mouths. I chase them around. They run, not too far.

I recover the trophies and again they fly through the air. Step up. Step down. For joy you made the earth. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross."

What a bunch of sad-sacks we are! There's more in a wagging tail than this world dreamed of.

Then to the kitchen. Station 5. This is where many people are not fed. This little place, with microwave, stove, fridge and food is an island of luxury in a world of want. I have gone from bliss to sorrow.

Up a step, down a step. Right, left. Burundi, Nigeria, Rwanda; the nameless millions of the hungry haunt my doorway.

I offer a prayer. "Let us all be satisfied with just the daily bread, so there can be enough for all."

I see bread, eggs, butter, meat, coffee, orange juice, milk and fruit. I see shantytowns in Mexico City, San Paulo, Bangkok. How many have none of these? How many only one? I have them all.

I am stepping quite rapidly now. The pain has moved inward, is no longer physical.

Then we three move to the other window of the living room, looking north, having now made almost a circle inside the house. I look through the glass into the 80-mile length of the south basin; all ice, horizontals. This is Station 6.

Often the wind howls down from the lake, but we are protected by a pine tree. The north wind is my death. I want to face it with courage and joy. I will walk into it, indeed, right through it, to the paradise at the back of the north wind, as George Macdonald put it.

Again, I renounce fear. I think of you, Jesus, of course, and of resurrection. Militarily, I march on the spot.

I see that soldier, filmed during the D-Day attack on a Normandy beach, running and falling once again. Before our eyes he has died a thousand times. I grieve a thousand times; I am grateful a thousand times. I pray for the dead. I ask for certainty of faith. Now I am back, in a few painless steps, to the glass patio door flanked by large picture windows on each side, facing the east. The Creator. The creation.

On the sill rests a pair of binoculars which we used before dawn to see the spectacular view of Hale Bopp. The stuff of the comet, the sun, the molecules of my arthritic joints was forged in the same fire of creation.

Together, we are a huge mystery. At least it will do until we meet you, O Maker, face-to-face.

The circuit begins again. I will get around it five or six times. The Creator at my window, the Word at my computer, the Spirit in my music, the play in my animals, the nurture in my kitchen, the death in the bracing, cleansing north wind. These are the stations of my house.

**The Fioretti Fellowship (Tri-State, North Kentucky)**

On September 4th, Anita Catron, TSSF Provincial Minister, approved the formation of a new fellowship to include members from Kentucky, Southwestern Ohio and Southeastern Indiana. Sarah Stanton is the new convener and can be contacted by (606) 581-0695 for information about meetings.

## An Advent Quiet Day Meditation

By Rik Fitch TSSF, Edited by Robert Durand

At this time of year, we find ourselves being concerned with presents, the Presence, and being present. Now is the time to be present. Your whole life is waiting.

Your present is here for you right now. It is wrapped, and it is a beautiful gift. This gift has been waiting for you, and it has always been here for you. Open this gift, because it is your true nature.

That's right. The gift is you, and you are this gift. Such a gift it is...and such good news!

What's that? You say you never thought about this, and you think this gift is too hard to obtain?

Take a moment to consider just how easy and rewarding this gift can be. First of all, you should know that you need only do one thing to receive this gift. All you need to do is give up your fear that "I do not deserve this gift."

You have no doubt been told before that you must work hard to receive this gift. You have also been told, at this time of year, that you must be good and that you cannot open your gift until Christmas. But these instructions apply to the gifts of the world.

However, the gift of your true nature — your one true gift — has been waiting for you. This gift will not disappoint you, like all the other gifts you might find under the tree.

Do you remember those gifts for which you expectantly waited as a child as you counted the days until Christmas? Can you recall the excitement and wonder as you gazed over the brightly-wrapped packages on Christmas Day?

The joy of opening presents was (and is) very real. But who among you did not gleefully tear open one gift and immediately cast your eye to the next package before even knowing what you had received and from whom? And who did not experience a little disappointment on Christmas afternoon after all the gifts had been uncovered.

This present which you are asked to consider in this meditation is not one which will disappoint. It is the true Christ gift, one that will last forever. Your gift is you, was you, and will be you. It is your soul gift, and it can never be taken away.

So let's remove the wrapping and look at this present which is your true nature. Allow your mind to go into and be present with your true nature. It only needs to be a second or a micro-second—a moment of bliss and truth where you feel that God is present with you.

Go to that time and place right now. This is your home. You are in your true nature, and you are home. You are here and now. This is your true present, being present within God's presence.

This is who you really are. This is your true nature. Rest in this knowledge.

In this space, you are cared for and are caring. You are gift and giving. You are compassion and compassionate. You are full and alive and rich because you exist in the richness of God's presence. How fortunate we are to be present with this true present.

Why do we even need to open the wrapping of any other gift when we have been given this present?

The world has told us that this gift is not real. It seems we are trained each day from birth that this is not the true gift. The world has packaged other gifts in brightly-colored wrapping to fool the mind, and the mind is fooled.

But take a moment to open your true present. Gaze at your own face and look into your own bright, shining eyes, and be present. Within your true nature, gratefully accept God's presence.

This is your true gift. Welcome home!

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### Assisi, 4 October 1226

(Read at the Scottish 1997 Franciscan Celebrations  
by Michael Harg Duke)

At Francis's own command, the Brothers  
laid his naked body on the ground to die.  
A borrowed cloak hid the mystical nail prints,  
crested larks sang  
an impromptu requiem.

Then ecclesial pomp replaced  
the reality of the alfresco funeral;  
a cortege was formed, solemnized with hymns;  
a military guard deployed  
to protect the holy bones  
priceless future assets  
of Assisi Pilgrimages PLC.

Four years of building constructed  
a grandiloquent denial  
of the Proverello's message,  
in soaring columns  
two churches deep.

Three quarters of a millenium  
the Church has paid its homage  
and drawn its interest.  
Now an earthquake  
has shocked the neat exchange.  
From the tragic rubble  
does Francis's spirit fly  
with grateful liberation  
to the autumn gold of Umbria?

**1998 Regional****Convocation****Information So Far**

- **Southeast** 9/18-20, Ignatius House (Atlanta, Ga). Contact Land of the Sky and the Servants of San Damiano
- **Southwest** 4/24-6, (Tucson, Az). Contact Pat Shelton.
- **Western** 8/2-4, The Angel Center (Santa Rosa, CA). Contact the Oregon Fellowship.
- **South Central**, 5/15-17, St. Crispins (Wewoka, OK). Contact ?
- **Midwestern** 8/7-9, Divine Word International (Teckny, IL). Contact Mark Drish.
- **Northeastern** 8/28-30, Graymoor Friary (Garrison, NY). Contact Janet Moore.
- **Caribbean**: Early February, Tobago. Contact Gloria Waldron.
- **Guyana**: ? Contact Gloria Waldron.
- **Order of Ecumenical Franciscans** 5/21-24, Sacred Heart Monastery (Richardton, ND). Contact?

**2002 Convocation—Step 1. A Request for Proposals**

Fellowships and/or individuals are invited to offer locations for the next Convocation that could take place in your local area. You and your Fellowship will be integrally involved in the process. A decision on the location and time for the 2002 Convocation will be made at Chapter, October 1998. Please mail all your proposals to John Brockmann, Editor of the *Times*.

**We need:**

- a place for 200 attendees for five days in the summer
- accessibility both in terms of handicapped access and in terms of a nearby airport, preferably a hub
- space enough for a large liturgical space and a minimum of six small group spaces
- food services that offer a range of diets (low salt, diabetic, vegetarian)
- public transportation
- costs roughly equivalent to those in New Orleans: \$250 for double occupancy, \$300 for a single including all food, meeting rooms, and coffee breaks.

**Suggested sites include:**

- universities on vacation
- retreat and conference centers
- off-season hotels

**We strongly desire**

- a local Episcopal church
- recreational/tourist attractions nearby
- a copy shop nearby
- a recreation/exercise center

## Mark MacDonald, TSSF Ordained Seventh Bishop of

### Alaska

(Adopted from the *Episcopal News Service*)

In a sweeping liturgy that blended a wide variety of historic influences on the church's largest diocese over the last century, Alaska consecrated Mark MacDonald as its seventh bishop. At 43 he is the youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church. Mark, however, has been integrally involved in the Native American aspects of the Episcopal Church: Owanah Anderson's *400 Years: Anglican/Episcopal Mission Among American Indians* (Forward Movement Publications, 1997) chronicles Mark's adventures in Oregon, Navajoland, and Minnesota on at least a half dozen pages.

The September 13 consecration drew heavily on Native American elements—not all of them from Alaska. Bishop Steven Plummer of Navajoland and Bishop William Wantland, a Seminole from Eau Claire, participated with clergy from throughout the huge diocese and the nation. The Gospel

was read in English and then the two official native languages, Inupiaq and Gwich'in, and the preacher was Steve Darden, a Navajo from Flagstaff.

During interviews with the local press, MacDonald has been asked about his pony tail, even though they are fairly common in Alaska. Owanah Anderson, the Church's officer for Native American Ministry, said: "Mark is probably the first bishop since the 18th century with a pony tail." The Rev. Luis Uzueta noted: "Mark brings encouragement and hope to the staff—and to the diocese. He has a strong sense of direction and has special gifts of discernment, especially on multicultural issues. He is very spiritual but with a common touch and people open up to that."

In the Supplications of the Eucharistic Prayer used at Mark's ordination, along with remembering many spiritual figures from the Alaskan diocese and from Native American history, one could also find memorialized: Francis and Clare, Elizabeth and Louis.

### The Rev. Mark Sisk, TSSF Elected Bishop Coadjutor of New York

On the 18th of October, Mark Sisk, TSSFer and Dean of Seabury Western in Evanston, Illinois, was elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of New York. Mark was previously awarded the Society's Minister General's Medal for his longterm support of the life and work of the First Order Brothers in the American Province.

### 1997 Guyana Convocation

Pamela Redhead Mungroo, the Chaplain for the Caribbean and South America, and The Rev. Gloria Waldron, Formation Director for the Caribbean and South America visited the Franciscans in Guyana from the 8th to the 11th of May and held a Convocation. During the Convocation some of those who have been novices for upwards of fourteen years (!) were professed: The Rev. Charles Roland, The Rev. Winston Williams, and Mr. Alex Gibson, a Guyanese gentleman who transferred from the European Province. Mind you, it's not that the formation process took exactly that long, but that these brothers and sisters of ours work up the rivers in the rainforests with the native peoples, and only once a year come down the river to their diocesan synod. Moreover, even if the men come to synod, very few can afford to bring their wives with them. Thus, it was extremely lucky that five of our "up-river" members could make it to the Convocation.

The theme for their Convocation, held at the Clergy Hostel and Chapel in Georgetown and underwritten by funds from the Order, was "Following Francis in the Steps of Jesus." Professed tertiaries renewed their vows and novices were professed at a ceremony in which some of the prayers were sung in their own language.

Pamela and Gloria surprised those present with copies of the *Book of Common Prayer* sent from the fellowships over the last year—22 in all were received—Bibles donated from the Trinidad and Tobago fellowships, as well as sewing machines, tools, medicines, and extra money for the Bishop to disperse for anti-malaria prescriptions—all from our Province's outreach funds. Here's a sample of some of their thank-you notes.

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*Greetings to you through the blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*It was so wonderful and pleasing for us here 3rd Order members to have with us Sisters Gloria and Pamela. I am certain that I am encouraged and uplifted by them personally. At this time I wish to thank you ever so much for the prayer books, Bible, and other things which they were able to share with us. Special thanks to Ken and Janet Watts who made it a great joy for me to have an American Prayer Book. Please mention this to them. It was received with immeasurable love, thanks, and joy.*

*Your brother in Francis,  
Derrick Merriman*

---

*Greetings in the Name of Our Blessed Lord!  
Please express to the God's Joyful Fools Fellowship, Alabama, my sincere thanks for the gift of a copy of the Book of Common Prayer. Indeed, it came as a great surprise during the Guyana Convocation. My thanks also goes to Sisters Gloria and Pamela Mungroo.  
Alexander Gibson*

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*We are in town for our annual synod & retreat and have had the visit of Sisters Gloria and Pamela from Trinidad. We were grateful for their visit, but sadly our wives who are members were not able to meet them. Despite this we were able to carry on the meeting with them. I daresay this gathering has meant so much and especially with Sisters Gloria and Pamela who have expertly explained the reason for their coming, and also they have encouraged us to live in the Spirit of St. Francis. Along with their message, they have brought us gifts, such as the Books of Common Prayer, and other little items. I was told that you had compiled these books for us which make me say a hearty thank-you for the books. In a nut shell I would like to say, we are all brothers and sisters despite the distance, and as our Rule states, our continued prayers for the Society of St. Francis.*

*Every Blessing,  
Yours in Jesus' Name,  
Charles Roland*

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**1997 Chapter at Little Portion: October 7-10**  
*(from front to back, left to right)*

*Anita Catron, Provincial Minister*

*Ken Norian, Bursar/Jacqui Richards (Trinidad)*

*John Brockmann, Times Editor/Julia Bergstrom, Assistant Chaplain/Br. Robert Hugh, 1st Order Visitor/Joan Verret, Fellowship Coordinator/Bob Kramish, Secretary/Kathy Eickwort, Chapter member*

*Jane Ellen Traugott, Local Arrangements/Masud Syedullah, Chapter member/Alden Whitney, Minister General/Fred Ball, Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF) Visitor/David Burgdorf, Chaplain*

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- CURRICULUMS FOR SMALL GROUP STUDY: VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY, RENOVARE, AND CELEBRATING DISCIPLINE
- "A MEETING OF FRANCISCANS"—A PLAY BY FR. BILL GRAHAM
- MORE FROM OUR ANGFRAN-L ON-LINE REPORTER
- A SPECIAL REPORT ON FINDING AND/OR THE SUBSEQUENT CARE AND FEEDING OF A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR—ARTICLES ON THIS TOPIC WOULD BE WELCOME FROM ALL MEMBERS OF THE ORDER—DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES IS JANUARY 1, 1998.