

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,

Winter 1998

About Spiritual Direction

At almost every convocation or fellowship meeting I've attended, there always seems to be an aside or a discussion about how to find good spiritual directors. Intrigued by this question I introduced the problem on the online AngFran-L discussion circuit, and the following are some of the responses that appeared last November, as well as a short book review that Hugh Strickland sent me. Overall, the discussion broke into three parts: ways of finding spiritual directors; considerations about the denomination of a director (a most controversial area), and methods one can use to find out more about spiritual direction. Also sprinkled throughout the discussion are excellent observations on how to work with spiritual directors. My thanks to all who contributed.

On Finding A Spiritual Director

Try Looking in the Phone Book

I prayed long and hard and with great fervor. Then one day I suddenly thought, look in the phone book under "Franciscan." I found one listing for "Franciscan."

My heart beat rapidly as I called, my fear was that it was going to be a dry cleaner or flower shop or something. I thought what am I going to say.

When the voice said, "Hello," I just said, "aahhh, yes, I'm looking for a spiritual director." It turned out that I had just reached the church, and I was given the phone number of the Friary. I spoke with a brother who gave me to a father, and he said "I'd be happy to be your director."

We met, and it's been going well. It was amazing how easily it flowed and so suddenly.

Willie Elsass

Having to Find A New Director

I've had the good fortune to have the same spiritual director for 15 years. Now, with his retirement, I'm in the process of finding someone with whom I'm compatible. My search began more than a year ago when I realized that when my current SD (Spiritual Director not South Dakota) retired as our rector, he'd probably not want to continue working with someone who was part of the congregation—at least not during the search process.

First, I'd like to say that there aren't many who will be SD's in this area of the state—nor do we have the luxury of any "institutes" any closer than Seattle on the other side of the state. Because of the "affirming" Anglican side of my spirituality/theology, I "feel" (note the stress on feel, it may not be actual) even more limited but could also comfortably explore working with a Roman Catholic if that person were comfortable with less doctrine, the "three-legged stool," and ordained women.

I started by keeping my ears open and talking with others I knew who were under spiritual direction in our Diocese. Some of their directors I knew to be too conservative for me, others had a theology so different from mine, I was certain (not always a good stance) that we wouldn't be compatible. I also had a list of people who had agreed to be spiritual directors which came from the Diocesan office—a very short list. I hoped that I could find someone within less than four hours drive and on the eastern side of the mountains (The Cascade range divides Washington state and winter driving in the mountains isn't my "thing.")

(continued on page 8)

NEWS FROM FAR AND WIDE

Newly Professed Ralph Shower Honored by Diocese for His Ministries

Lay leaders from around the Riverside Diocese were honored for their ministries by Bishop Frederick Borsch on December 6th at the Diocesan Convention, and among them was our own Ralph Shower. His Diocesan citation read as follows:

A ministry of "accompaniment," "a ministry of presence" is how Ralph Shower categorizes his five plus years of HIV/AIDS prevention work with homeless persons in their isolated communities under downtown freeway overpasses and along the Los Angeles River. In weekly outreaches, Shower offers condoms, brochures, and counsel...along with food, clothing, and blankets to persons who are at great risk of exposure to HIV. Many use heroin, crack, alcohol, and other substances. Some subsist as panhandlers; pimps; or as male, female, transgender, or transsexual sex workers. As a brother of Jesus and as a member of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis, Shower extends God's embrace to those who are perhaps the most marginal in our society.

New Web Address for the TSSF Web

Our Web Master and Bursar, Ken Norian, has registered our TSSF Web Page with the InterNIC with our own World Wide Web designator:

www.tssf.org.

Typing in <http://www.li.net/~kenorian/tssf.htm> seemed pretty cumbersome, and, moreover, Ken felt there was no need to have his name appended to everything.

What does this mean for you or me? Simply that if you have a link in your Web page or your literature or your Web bookmarks to the TSSF page, you need to update it with the new URL.

Newest Fellowship: El Camino Real (South Bay, California)

A new South Bay Area fellowship was formed, and will be called El Camino Real—Spanish for "The King's Highway" which is a hymn, the name of the diocese in the area, a spiritual concept, and a real road, roughly US Highway 101 that connects the original California missions founded by the Franciscans from Sonoma in the north to San Diego in the south. The Convenor is The Rev. Linda Wood who resides in Santa Cruz along with The Rev. Stu Schlegel and Audrey Schlegel. On the other side of the great redwood forested coastal hills, in Palo Alto and San Jose, are other fellowship members, The Rev. Jan Meikle, Demian and Lorraine Harvill, and Betty Swinehart. They plan to meet the fourth Thursday of each month, to welcome Associates to their meetings, and they have already received Stu Schlegel's novice vows.

Program Manager Needed for the House of Our Lady of Wisdom in Papua New Guinea
from SSF, House of Our Lady of Wisdom, Brother Alfred Training Program

The Society wishes to appoint a person to supervise the Brother Alfred Training Program centered at the House of Our Lady of Wisdom in Goroka in Papua New Guinea Region of the Society.

The person appointed will

- be a member of the First or Third Orders (single) of the Society who has some experience of teaching practical subjects in a developing country or to those who teach English as a foreign language.
- have adequate physical, mental and spiritual health to function with limited support in a situation where delays and frustrations are common and where recreation and most activities can be undertaken only when potential hazards have been assessed.
- spend one year in a number of orientation and familiarization activities including a four-week course in Melanesian culture run by the Melanesian Institute.
- have the opportunity to work with the current holder of the position for an initial period of about a year.

The program is directed by a Committee of SSF, but the appointee will be welcome to contribute suggestions for modifications or extensions based on previous and on-going experience and will be responsible for implementation of most of the program. The facilities provide only limited accommodation for course participants onsite.

While the program is focused mainly on the junior professed members of SSF, it is hoped that members of the other two religious orders of the Anglican Church in PNG (Visitation Sisters and Melanesian Brotherhood) will apply and also members of the RC religious orders sometimes working in coordinated courses.

Courses are mainly on basic and middle management, and are offered within the context of the needs and aims of religious and spiritual dimensions as well as within cultural acceptability. Basic management may include cash, stock and building management, purchasing, telephone facsimile and radio use, letter writing and record keeping and the administrative aspects of evangelistic and conference/retreat work. While much of the teaching will be done by the Project Manager (which will to some extent determine what can be included) resource persons and facilities are available from both within and outside the Society.

Goroka has a pleasant elevated climate and is free of

toxic pollutants, and organically grown fruit and vegetables are freely available.

A Friar with demonstrated stability in the religious life who welcomes the challenge of a new ministry in an innovative situation or a Tertiary with appropriate qualifications in early retirement are urged to consider this opportunity. While engaging a First Order or Tertiary sister would entail some organizational modifications, we believe this can rightly be offered an Equal Opportunity position. Support would be subject to negotiation.

For further inquiry, contact Br. Daniel, SSF, 115 Cornwall Street, Annerley, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 4103. Phone (61) 7-3391-3915. Fax (61) 7-3391-3916. Email brdaniel@ozemail.com.au.

Br. Robert Hugh, SSF in *The Way* from AngFran-L

I was pleased and surprised to read about our own dear Br. Robert Hugh, SSF in my most recent copy of *THE WAY*, written by Dr. Dan Lackie, OFM. It is one of the best and most objective descriptions of our Order I have read or heard discussed in quite some time. If you are interested in obtaining a current copy of *THE WAY OF ST. FRANCIS*, published by the Franciscan Friars of California, please write to: 1500 34th Avenue, Oakland, CA 94601-3092, or e-mail to ofmcaway@worldnet.att.net.

Pax et Bonum,
James Phillips, TSSF

More News of Br. Hugh

Brother Robert Hugh SSF took a spill Sunday (February 1) as he fell off a step while distributing communion at the Church of All Souls in Miami Beach, Florida. He broke a bone in his wrist and is wearing a heavy cast. He needs to return to the doctor on Monday for further x-rays. He has had to cancel his participation in the meeting this week at Del Rey Beach of the Board of Episcopal Ecumenical Officers (at which he represents religious orders). He is staying with Dee Dobson this week. He is scheduled to present a program at the Cathedral in Miami next weekend. He requests your prayers. Br. Justus

1998 Convocation Information Thus Far Given to the *Times* (and corrections!)

- **Southeast:** 9/18-20, Ignatius House (Atlanta, Ga). Contact Land of the Sky and the Servants of San Damiano
- **Southwest:** 4/24-26, Picture Rocks Retreat Center, Tucson, Az). Contact Pat Shelton.
- **Western:** 8/7-9, The Angela Center (Santa Rosa, CA). Contact Joan Kidd.
- **South Central:** 5/15-17, St. Crispins (Wewoka, OK). Contact Caroline Benjamin or Dixie Mosier-Greene.
- **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 April, Tobago. Contact Gloria Waldron.
- **Guyana:** Contact Gloria Waldron.
- **Order of Ecumenical Franciscans:** 5/21-24, Sacred Heart Monastery (Richardton, ND). Contact The Rev. Fred Ball.

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:

<p>The Rule of the Third Order for Daily Reading (\$2.50)</p> <p>Order of Admission (\$1)</p> <p>Spiritual Director Guide (\$2.50)</p> <p>Statutes (\$1)</p>	<p>Devotional Companion (\$4.50)</p> <p>Way of St. Francis (\$2.50)</p> <p>Source Book (\$2.50)</p> <p>Directory (\$3)</p>
--	--

The TSSF Library

Rosie McFerran, Librarian for the Order

The TSSF Library is a sadly under-used resource for members of the Third Order. At present there are roughly 950 books, audio tapes and video tapes covering a great range of subjects of interest to Tertiaries, housed in metal cabinets in my garage (in order to keep them separate from my own books). The audio and video tapes, which require better climate control, are kept in the house. Books are accessible to any TSSF members in the American Province: all you have to do is contact me and ask for what you want. My address, phone number and e-mail address are in the Directory. A slightly outdated list of what is available is posted on the TSSF Web page (www.tssf.org). All materials are charged out for two months at a time, which should cover the time required for mailing out and back, plus enough time to read/use the material. If that is not enough time, notify me and material can be renewed unless someone else is waiting for it. When you have finished with the material, just mail it back. That's all there is to it!

When I retired from cataloging serials at the University of California, Davis, Library, in 1991, and took over the care of the TSSF Library, I immediately began to bring the library up-to-date, adding everything I could lay my hands on about Francis, and as much balanced material as I could find on problems confronting the Episcopal Church today. In addition, there is a wealth of material on prayer, spiritual direction, healing,

marriage, church history, Christian living, "and more!" as they say in all the ads. All of this material is listed on my computer, and I can locate material by author, title, or subject. In April of 1997, things came to a screeching, though temporary, halt when my computer crashed. We downloaded the list from the Web site, but things that had been added after it was put on the Web were lost. I am in the process, with the help of my Fellowship, of updating what is on my computer, and hope to put a new, up-to-date list on the Web site in the next few months.

I keep statistics on how many times books are used and when. (After a book has been returned, I do not keep a record of who borrowed it.) These statistics provide the basis for my statement that the Library is an under-used resource. In the Franciscan year 1991/2 (i.e., from October through September) we circulated 42 books;

- in 1992/3, 71 books;
- in 1993/4, 63;
- in 1994/5, 62;
- in 1995/6, 47; and
- in 1996/7, 85—our best year yet! Approximately one-third of the material circulated is non-book material.

Many of the same materials are used over and over. The all-time favorites are the video tape *Brother Sun and Sister Moon*, and Felix Timmerman's book, *The Perfect Joy of St. Francis*, both of which have been charged out seven times. To give you an idea of what your brothers

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 or more 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

and sisters are reading, the following list represents the runners-up, all of which have been charged out four times each:

- Bender, Sue, *Plan and Simple*
- Bodo, Murray, Francis, *The Journey and the Dream*
- Brown, Raphael, *True Joy from Assisi*
- Clare of Assisi (a videotape)
- Corstanje, Auspicious van, *The Third Order for Our Time*
- Crosby, Michael, Francis, *Model of Discipleship* (audiotape)
- Edwards, Tilden, *Living Simply Through the Day*
- Ramon, Br., *Franciscan Spirituality*
- St. Francis, *Troubadour of God's Peace* (videotape)

As you can see, materials about Francis are the most heavily used; Postulants and Novices are the ones who borrow the most material. The posting on our Web site, and the new formation classes by e-mail, and notes on the AngFran-L online discussion group have all increased use of the Library. But I wish it were used more! There is so much good stuff here folks!

P. S. You might also want to consider the following books in our library as suggestions for Lenten reading:

- Andrew, Father, *Christ the Companion*. (1996)
- Baggott, L. J., *Seven Penitential Psalms: A Book of Lenten Studies*. (1963)
- Hays, Edward, *Lenten Labyrinth: Daily Reflections for the Journey of Lent*. (1994)
- Neill, Stephen, *One Increasing Purpose: Lenten Meditations*. (1971)
- Ramon, Brother, *The Way to Love: Following Christ through Lent to Easter*. (1994)
- *These Forty Days: Lenten Counsels by 21 Anglicans*. (1962)

Congratulations To Our New Resident Author, Stephen Smith

Our own Stephen Smith was featured with a triple-column spread in the national newspaper, *Episcopal Life*, in the February issue. His article, "One Sunday in January on the Reservation", gives readers the sense both of life lived on the reservation, and the presence of God in the midst of pain and poverty. *Hau mitakuye oyasin—we are all one*. (Stephen's article didn't make the deadline for this issue, but we plan to reprint it in the Spring issue of the *Times*.)

From Lenten Love Letters—published January 1997

by Lucy Blount, TSSF

A Foreword to the book by The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley, Jr., Bishop Coadjutor of Alabama

Lent is sometimes called the ver sacrum, the sacred spring of the church. These letters have a spring-like quality which can help renew our sense of God's grace in all of life and find the inner rebirth to which this holy season invites us. May they cheer you and kindle your faith as they have kindled mine.

(\$13.95) Lightbearers Publishers, Inc., PO Box 5895, Maryville, TN 37802-5895, Phone (423) 379-9006.

Precious Sisters,
Good Friday

My name is Mary, the Handmaiden. I am Jesus's mother. He is the Messiah, the Lord and Savior of the world. He is the Messiah, the Lord and Savior of the world! I know. At the Annunciation I was told by our Father God Almighty's messenger. At His birth, shepherds and wise men recognized and worshipped

(continued, p. 6)

The Franciscan Times
is a publication of The Third Order
Society of St. Francis, American Province.
MINISTER PROVINCIAL
Anita Catron

EDITOR

R. John Brockmann
EDITORIAL STAFF
Ann LeCroy, Ann McCoy, Barb Chandler
Editorial contributions and all
correspondence should be sent to:
R. John Brockmann
P.O. Box 277, Warwick, Md 21912
jbrockma@udel.edu

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

Lentan Love Letters (cont.)

Him. At His nine day old presentation to the temple, holy Simeon and Anna proclaimed Him. John the Baptist knew. His disciples knew, first the twelve and then hundreds, even thousands who followed Him knew. The miracles. The fulfilled prophecies. My Son Jesus is the Messiah, the Lord and Savior of the world! But where is everybody now? I don't understand. I kneel on the ground looking up. My eyes are fixed on His. I'm trying to give Him strength with my gaze. There is an excruciating pain in my heart. My head is throbbing. My breath has become labored like His. Am I also dying? Once again I don't understand. I don't understand what's going on. But, that's all right. I've learned that I don't have to understand, but rather I have to trust and in trusting comes acceptance and I can, I must, I will proclaim my eternal continual response to our Lord God. "Yes."

My precious, precious sisters. I am in agony. If I could, I would climb up on that cross and die in my Son's place. You know I would, all mothers would. Right now I have to stay here as if glued to this spot.

"God is Love. My Son is the Messiah. God is Love. My Son is the Messiah." This thin line of words has become my Hymn, my chant, my lifeline.

"God, give me the strength to see this moment through and once more say 'yes'."

Sisters, do you still want to be a handmaiden, a servant too? Today I am clothed not only in humility, but the garment of love has also been added. God's ways are not our ways. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that our Father God's love is about to crash through this darkness and that my Son's Messiahship is about to be eternally proclaimed.

My arms are outstretched. I seem to be dying too, dying to self as I look upon Him. At the same time, this exquisite sense of love seems to be blossoming.

Look. Look! Do you see? Do you feel? Do you sense the same? Stretch your arms out. Look up into His eyes. All else seems to be dropping, drifting, departing away.

This Light—This Love

—In this darkness. Ah! "Yes, Lord, Yes."

My sisters—Humbly, Lovingly,

Serve the Lord with gladness" Mary

More News of Br. Hugh

Br. Robert Hugh is recovering from surgery on his fractured wrist and spent last night in the hospital. Br. Robert broke his wrist in a fall on Sunday. I'll keep you posted as we receive further information. Br. Guire Cleary, S.S.F. St. Elizabeth's Friary Brooklyn, New York

The AngFran-L Beat

by Barb Chandler, *Franciscan Times's* Online Reporter

"Zealous preaching, and dissemination of the Gospel, as through missionary work." This definition of evangelism in the American Heritage Dictionary should be altered to include "computer mailinglists." Anglican Franciscan, or AngFran, is a model of evangelism in action. Barry Paterson TSSF of Tropical North Queensland, Australia speculates that; "our Father Francis would probably approve because of the worldwide network of prayer and interaction that is being added to and reinforced everyday with new people encouraged to come on-line and share."

AngFran represents a microcosm of the Franciscan community by embellishing the Franciscan spirit of evangelism. Paterson reflected this community spirit when he explained; "for Franciscans like Dot Daniels and myself who live a long way from other sisters and brothers it is a lifeline of Franciscan goodwill and support."

Because of the spirit of Franciscan goodwill and support, people seem more comfortable in sharing meaningful details of their lives and how they live out their vocations with those they have never met. "I love to read about how Franciscans in other parts of the world live, work, and express their spirituality," said Rosie McFerran, TSSF, as she recalled a brief discussion on apartheid, and a description of an African Christmas Eve service.

Besides people talking about their personal lives or their thoughts about different issues, people talk about the different aspects of their spiritual life. There have been discussions on the Daily Office, simplicity, loneliness, and what it means to live a Rule of Life. Reading how other Franciscans think about issues particular to the Franciscan lifestyle is very meaningful. "I am reminded and get in touch at a deeper level with why I went through formation and continue as a Franciscan because of the closeness and community on this mailing list," Paddy Kennington, TSSF, explained. AngFran celebrated its 1st birthday this past year. Beginning on December 16, 1996 with a small group of 45 subscribers, AngFran has now grown to 150. The people on the list represent 7 countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the USA.

"Over the past year, we have made new friends, reconnected with old friends, and prayed for one another. Anglican Franciscans in the jungles of Guyana have prayed for Anglican Franciscans taking Third Order life vows in England. Members in Canada have prayed for sick friends of members in Africa," is the

way that John Snyder, the originator and list owner of the Anglican Franciscan list, typified the AngFran message in his birthday message to the list.

Although the majority of subscribers represent the Third Order, there are others who represent several other Franciscan orders, a Benedictine, and many "friends of Francis," who are not officially part of any order. There are Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican Franciscans in this diverse community.

Reaching out to others in a spirit of support and goodwill summarizes the mission of the Anglican Franciscan Cyber-community. The mailing list represents a spiritual oasis to those who have little to no contact with other Franciscans.

Cover Story: What About Spiritual Direction ? (cont.)

Having to Find a New Director (cont.)

unless it's absolutely necessary). I also considered where I am in my spiritual live and what particular gifts in a spiritual director might be of especial benefit to me.

By the time all my consideration were looked at, I came up with one person whom I respect, and whom I believe had the skills to walk with me and at the same time be objective, hold me responsible for my own spiritual life, would challenge me to grow, and be patient with me if and when I didn't. I then checked with my then present SD who knows this person well to see if he thought it might work.

With his affirmation, I made an appointment with her to explore the possibility of spiritual direction. We

shared a bit of our present spirituality and a little of how we got to our present point in our spiritual life and agreed to give it a try. I was to call and make an appointment when I had something specific I wanted to talk over with her.

We're both very active and busy people in our separate ministries. She lives three and a half hours from Yakima (in Spokane) on good roads (If there's not fog, ice, snow, construction, or traffic accidents). She considers her spirituality to be Benedictine (At this point in her life) and has worked a great deal with different forms of prayer. She has a marvelous respect for all of creation and understands my need for silent retreats and more current struggle with contemplative prayer. I understand and relate to her need for action. We both love "good" liturgy. Above all, she's an excellent listener and will respect my need to own where I'm going but won't be reluctant to offer advice if I ask for it. She asks good questions that make me think and thus stretch.

Although my "former" SD and I have had a good relationship and wonderful ease in communicating—and we've worked closely together, especially since I began to explore ordination and then entered the ordination process and we've worked closely together as our congregation began our Spanish language services, he stopped being my SD last Spring, and we began the separation process. It's not always been easy for me as we work together so much, and it'd be so easy to discuss my spiritual life as part of my ordained ministry. I grieve the loss of someone who knew "where I was coming from"—who doesn't need a lot of background to know why I've responded to something as I have; who knows my personality traits and how they affect my spirituality; who understands how I cannot separate my spiritual life from any other part of my life; who knows my theology and show it's evolving.

(continued, p. 8)

**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.

Deadline for the Spring issue is May 1, 1998.

Peta' Dunstan, *This Poor Sort: A History of the European Province of the Society of St. Francis*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd. 1997. \$45.00 (US) available from England via Heffers book store (<http://www.heffers.co.uk/>) ISBN 0-232-52214-6.

This Poor Sort is a big book that at times, early on in the text, seemed to me to be telling about what happened to every "Franciscan-ish" personality in England, every day of his or her life. Although I wondered at first whether I really wanted to know this much about the SSF, I was soon captured and indeed entranced! The story, set against the backdrop of contemporary events in society and the Church, moves along and is compelling. Dunstan is a fine storyteller and holds our interest—indeed our sense of adventure—through dense thickets of detail.

We get a very real sense of Brothers Giles, Douglas and Algy and all the other early pioneers and founders, as well as an understanding of how many different groups ultimately coalesced into SSF. As the story unfolded, I was taken by the breadth and variety of personal style (opinion, churchmanship, sense of vocation, ministry skills and the like) represented within the strands that came together to be the Society, all of which clearly contributed to the inclusive ethos that has typified the Society ever since (and that many of us experienced so powerfully at the recent Provincial Convocation in New Orleans).

In bringing the story right up to the mid-1990s, Dunstan delineates the personalities and policies involved in beginning and carrying out the many varied works, in many different places in England and abroad, that the Society of St. Francis has

undertaken: farms and hostels for homeless men, schools for maladjusted boys, university and parish work, presence in industry, evangelical preaching, ecumenical outreach, and the cultivation of Franciscan vocations and community life for both men and women. Numerous of these succeeded and are still SSF friaries, some could not get fully started; many had remarkably powerful ministries which in the end were closed because they had done their work, because they had become economically untenable, or, in several instances, because they represented overcommitment on the part of the Society. Dunstan evaluates all the pioneering SSF efforts to live and work amidst the poor and powerless judiciously, pointing out their lasting impact on the secular welfare establishment—even those which did not endure.

Dunstan sets out the foundation of SSF work in New Guinea and the Pacific and sketches the story of the foundation of Franciscan community life in America, Africa, and other parts of the United Kingdom. Throughout, she makes clear the issues raised by cultural difference and the wisdom of dividing the SSF into provinces.

One of Dunstan's early themes is the strong role of the Third Order in the formation of the SSF itself. Third Order tertiaries were actually in place before the First Order, and we played an important part in bringing the friars together into a recognizable and single religious community. This book, however, is about the First Order friars and, to a lesser degree, sisters. Given its subtitle, I wish the author had presented the foundation and development of the Third Order in equal detail. On the other hand, the book is already long and to have included a similar treatment of the tertiary movement would have required multiple volumes. Perhaps we can hope that telling our Third Order story will be Peta' Dunstan's next task.

Stuart A. Schlegel, N/TSSF, Santa Cruz stuas@cruzio.com

Spiritual Direction (cont.)

Tomorrow, weather permitting, I travel to Spokane for our first time together with my new SD. We'll both see how it goes. We both have a challenge ahead of us as we find our way together. I'm sure she'll understand and respect my grief. We'll explore each other's styles of communication—and our personalities. We'll both be patient with each other and respect what's shared and what's chosen not to be shared. I'm confident that God will be present in our meeting and that we'll be listening to where the Holy Spirit is leading us. If it doesn't work out, it won't be because of lack of concern for one another, but because of that loving concern

that's present when God is invited into a relationship—and I'll continue looking.

Katherine Prehm

Being Involved in the Diocese Helps

I've always been active in all areas of our church. While serving as a delegate to convention once, I met what turned out to be one of my better SD's. I pulled him aside and asked if we could set up a meeting to discuss the possibility and that led to a meeting, and then our decision to try it.

That's always been my approach. I mean asking if we could meet to talk about our understanding of what spiritual "direction" or friendship would be. At the meeting, we

decide to go off and pray further about it and then talk via telephone to decide to give it a try.

I found my present SD the same way. The first SD I had was recommended to me by our parish priest. I am sure that the Bishop's assistant in most dioceses would be happy to make recommendations too, although I haven't tried that as yet. People just keep moving away, and it is difficult at times to find someone who understands what living the religious life and a Rule of Life are. Cheryl Holmes

Spiritual Directors International and the Jesuits

I am a member of Spiritual Directors International and at the Convocation in New Orleans I met several people looking for directors. I sent each of them a name of one person in their area who they could contact. We do not use the membership listing as a mailing tool but can recommend a person in a particular area. I have two persons that I direct. (I really do not like that word.) We are spiritual friends. There are many SDs in the country. I found mine by calling the Jesuit parish in Charlotte and asking if they could recommend someone. I wanted a trained director. Many clergy think they are spiritual directors when what they really offer is pastoral counseling.

Calvin Heffner

Nuns as Directors

Over the last 20 years I have had—I think my count is correct—six different spiritual directors, all of which have been Roman Catholic sisters with the exception of a period of about a year when my rector was my director. Three of these were Cenacle sisters which are lovely sisters I heartily recommend. They are specifically trained to do spiritual direction, retreats, quiet days, etc., and the ones I have known have all been very open to Episcopalians! One was a Roman Catholic Franciscan sister, and I was disappointed that she was not more helpful to me. One was a Sister of Mercy, and she was very helpful, but could not discern that I was a guinea pig as she tried out all kinds of different techniques! I have never been able to find an Episcopalian spiritual director, other than my rector. He is very good, but I found that more and more we were discussing church matters, which is precisely what TSSF warns one about [see Third Order, Society of St. Francis, *A Guide for Spiritual Directors* (June 1991)] I don't know them to be so few and far between.

Rosie McFerran

What about the Denomination of a Director?

Some Bad Experiences

I discourage TSSF people from choosing Roman

directors for several reasons. First, one person from a fellowship in NY had to leave his director who was someone in the Fellowship. He found a Roman OFM priest who was glad to direct him. The friar lured him in with dreams of becoming a Roman priest (in spite of that not being realistic for various reasons). Two weeks ago this young man was anointed in the Roman Church and entered in the rolls for reconfirmation in the Spring. No one could hold the director accountable for proselyting with unrealistic goals.

Second, another person in the Order arranged direction with a Roman nun of the Cenacle in Chicago. She met her once, then passed her off to someone else. Such things happen all the time, but it felt like rejection for the tertiary who was early in her formation. The next Cenacle sister missed her first appointment. For her second, she called after 15 minutes and showed up a half hour late.

I think the Third Order needs to change their system. It is ludicrous we cannot have people in our fellowship be our directors. This rule means in practical terms we cannot have Franciscan directors unless we are near the 1st order brothers or sisters, or near the border of another fellowship, or we can go to the Romans. How many Romans come to Anglicans for direction? Not many. And there is a reason for that. We see God speaking and guiding in different ways. Hence our church structure is different. Anglicans are far more incarnational and grassroots oriented. There may be a select few Roman exceptions, but until we see them looking to us as a resource (other than as a body to proselytize from) then I would stay clear of their spiritual directors. I may be a lone voice crying in the wilderness on this one. That's life.

Mind you, I think for those who are deeply formed in their Anglican and Franciscan traditions, the cross fertilization provided by directors from other traditions can enrich the Order. But in general, I'd encourage Anglican and Franciscan directors for members of the Third Order, if only we were free to do so.

Rick Bellows, TSSF

Why the Order Doesn't Allow Fellowship Members to be Each Other's Spiritual Directors

Rick, believe me, we had very good reasons for putting that policy into effect. For one thing, having a director in your own fellowship is incestuous at best. We want people to have a wider experience than that, especially during formation. For another, it can lead to a kind of "particular friendship" that isn't conducive to either good spiritual direction or good community. Often, the

(continued, p. 10)

Spiritual Direction *(cont.)*

Fellowship Members As Spiritual Directors?

people in the fellowship aren't trained or able to do the job well. It was having to clean up the ensuing messes in the past that led to our decision to make this our standard policy. We've had to deal with some real doozies of problems from not enforcing this one. There are, of course, notable exceptions to all of this.

There's nothing wrong with having a non-Franciscan director. Most of us do. Even when I was living in San Francisco where there is a Friary, I normally did not have a Franciscan SD, with the exception of Br. Paul SSF who was my director (my third, actually) for several years until he died. Since then I've had 3 Episcopal priests and a Methodist pastor as directors.

I really have to disagree with your evaluation of RC directors. From my experience as an Area Chaplain, formation counselor, AFD & as Formation Director, I have had the opportunity to hear from and observe lots of folks who were delighted with their RC spiritual directors. Not one of them went over to Rome as a result, that I know of, nor did any proselytizing go on. On the other hand, we recently lost one of the people in our online formation group to the Cowleys probably through a spiritual director's proselytizing. I suspect that in our case, and probably with your fellowship's, the real cause didn't lie with the director, but rather with the true calling of the person being directed.
MaryAnn Jackman

Consult the Shalem Directory and Good

Experiences with Roman Catholic Directors

My experience with Roman spiritual directors has been good, fortunately; some better than others, of course. I will check my SHALEM directory and Spiritual Directors International and let you know if I find people in or near your zip code area and send you their names and telephone numbers. There may be some that I know personally and could recommend, but the only way to know is to contract with an SD for a period of 3 to 6 months (if you're going once a month) and agree to reassess the relationship at the end of that period. I do spiritual direction here in Blairsville, Georgia, and I have a Roman Catholic directee (a man), and so far, there have been no difficulties. He has been a blessing to me, and I hope I have to him.

Giving the relationship a trial time (for both director and directee) seems to be helpful. You will both know in three months whether you can relate to each other in the intimacy and trust necessary for mutual growth. Then, if it is not working, you can look further, or even request a referral from the "trial" director to another (or to several others)—it's perfectly "kosher" and there are no hard feelings if we are dealing with people of emotional maturity.

Dorothy Adams, TSSF Chaplain for Georgia

Rick, You're Not Alone

I really don't know much about "professional" spiritual direction. I've been very lucky myself. I have to admit however, that while the conversation was going on I was wondering why all of these Anglicans don't seem to be able to find directors in their own denomination? (Or don't want to?) I have many spiritual directors/confidants. One is a friend who is a counselor who happens to be an RC lay person. My director in the Episcopal church is Holly Antolini, a very gifted, open, spiritual priest here in Maine. I have a feeling too many of us have unrealistic expectations of our spiritual directors. I tend to put 1st & 2nd order people on a pedestal whether they're in the RC or Anglican communion. That of course isn't fair to them or me. I think the important thing is to find someone who is a good listener, who is nurturing, who strives to live the gospel, who has a good sense of boundaries, and is someone you generally get a good feeling from on a gut level. Someone who would tell you the truth, and not necessarily what you want to hear, someone who knows the meaning of confidentiality. I've certainly been blessed with my spiritual director from TSSF, Anne LeCroy! And lastly, I was really led to the Episcopal church by God. It hasn't been the easy choice by any means. Most people think I'm crazy for "jumping ship" in many ways. So personally, I need an Episcopal spiritual director to affirm my membership, as well as my love for and in this communion.

As I said, I'm no expert, but Rick, no, you're not alone!!

Eunice

Good Experiences with the Sisters of the Cenacle

I can only speak for the RC Sisters of the Cenacle, but I had had three of them as spiritual directors, and not one has ever tried to proselytize me, not one has passed me on to someone else, not one has undervalued me as a directee, as a person, or as a Christian. At one time when I was ill and couldn't drive to see her, Sr. Mari came to my house to see me. The RC Franciscan sister that I had as a director tried to counsel me in the technicalities of the Episcopal Church, of which she really knew nothing, but other than that, did none of the horrendous things Rick Bellows mentioned. The sister from the Sisters of Mercy was not as good at her job as the Cenacle sisters, but she didn't do any of those things Rick mentioned either. Of course, you have to use discretion and common sense in choosing your spiritual director, as you would with an Episcopalian, or any other denomination! And the Third Order does not require you to have a Franciscan spiritual director! That would be totally unrealistic! At the same time, we have had so much trouble in the past with problems

arising in Fellowships with members directing one another that that is also unrealistic. I see nothing intrinsically wrong with an RC spiritual director—just choose your individual carefully, and give it a trial period which you both agree on, after which you can assess the situation and reconsider.

Rosie McFerran

Grateful for the Way so Many of my RC Brothers and Sisters Have Enriched My Life.

Some years ago as a beleaguered fundamentalist, I was struggling with spiritual questions and pain (in what I later discovered was a “dark night of the soul”). Because my theological setting was providing only guilt and depression in response to my spiritual thirst, I sought spiritual direction from a friend, a retired Lutheran missionary. She directed me to begin my doing the daily office with the help of a wonderful resource called *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants* published by Upper Room Books. This guide used the Revised Common Lectionary and follows the liturgical calendar. For each week there are selected readings on a specific theme, and an extended quotation from writings on spirituality. It was there that I met writers from many different denominational traditions—frequently Roman Catholic.

Often I chose to read the entire book from which a quotation was used—and, over time, I came to realize I was not a fundamentalist, and that the theology that resonated with me approached issue of faith from a very different perspective. Eventually our family found our way (led, undoubtedly by the Holy Spirit) to an Episcopal church, and I knew I was “home”.

About that time my spiritual director became seriously ill, and I began looking for another. I went to a local spirituality center run by some wonderful nuns, and I attended a workshop that explained spiritual direction and how it differs from catechesis, from psychotherapy, and from spiritual friendship. We were taught that no spiritual director is for everyone, and that we needed to be selective, to interview several directors, and that we should “try on” a director to see if the “fit” is mutually satisfying. Through them, I discovered the woman who has been my director now for about ten years. A Roman Catholic, she was trained at the Shalem Institute and has trained spiritual directors herself. Not once has she made any attempt—overt or otherwise—to proselytize me. She has introduced me to Buddhists like Tich Nhat Hanh, to mystics like Julian of Norwich, and to the Ignatian Exercises. Mostly she has helped me to pray, and to look at suffering in a new light.

Sister Clare (an interesting choice for her name, don't you think?) has been very encouraging to me in my

spiritual journey, and has rejoiced with me as I discovered my vocation to the priesthood. It hurts me to think that her ministry should be dismissed out of hand simply because she is not an Anglican. She herself talks about how enriching it is for her to be meeting with people of other traditions, and I wouldn't trade her for anything.

Let's be careful about making blanket statements about people from other traditions. It may be that the Roman Catholic directors Rick refers to in his message are among a “select few” who are less than ideal—not the majority at all. And, if we concede that the Holy Spirit plays any role at all in guiding our lives, it may be a very real possibility that the young man in the first example was simply following his own spiritual path and no one else's agenda. And, it may be that the woman in the second example was thwarted in her efforts to meet with an RC director not because of any disingenuous motives on the part of the directors, but simply because of their human failure to manage their time.

Sorry to be so lengthy. There are many reasons why I am not a Roman Catholic and why RC theology is inadequate for me, but I am utterly grateful for the way so many of my RC brothers and sisters have enriched my life.

Karen Wojahn

Journey in the Company of Another Pilgrim

Some of us are Anglican, others Roman Catholic, and still others, which I do not remember having been mentioned, are Ecumenical. And there are probably still others who feel the fit of none of these “classifications.” However, we all embrace one thing, a call to follow the ideals and teachings of St. Francis of Assisi. Hence, we all share a Franciscan spirituality in some variation. As such, I see no reason to divide that spirituality along some kind of denominational lines. Our individual faiths are expressed by our choices of denomination, but our spirituality is rooted deeper than mere choice of what branch of Christ's Holy Church we elect to follow.

Spiritual direction is someone helping someone else deepen their spiritual being. A spiritual director, regardless of denomination, is one to help us identify the qualities of our spirituality and to deepen and strengthen them. To me, there is no application of denominational doctrines. There is only the desire to draw closer to God and our understanding of Him. I see no reason to muddle this with denominational interests.

(continued on page 12)

As a Franciscan, I am a child of God first. Then I am a Franciscan. Last, I choose to express my Faith as an Anglican. I do not expect the bottom line of spiritual direction I receive to make me a better Anglican. I expect it to help me have a deeper understanding of my spirituality as defined as a Franciscan and to help me learn to serve God as a servant to His creation. Consequently, it doesn't matter if my spiritual director is an Anglican, Roman Catholic, or whatever. It does matter that my spiritual director help guide me in my own journey.

I have had a Roman Catholic (Dominican priest) as a spiritual director, as well as an Anglican. And, I have been very happy with both since they only did what was asked—give me Spiritual Direction. They helped me with my prayer life, my view of servitude, my opening of heart and mind, and my ever deepening understanding of God. None of this was done with any mention of or consideration of denomination. But it did have a lot to do with my calling to be Franciscan.

I think one of the most important aspects of choosing a spiritual director is to choose one who is also under spiritual direction. In that way, you make your journey in the company of another pilgrim who is also deepening their spirituality. You are then not two Anglicans, or two Roman Catholics, or two of something else or one and one, but you are two children of God seeking to learn more about your Father.

With that goal defined, I think you will find that matters of denomination are irrelevant. What you will find is a deeper spirituality. And that will happen whether you are Franciscan, Dominican, Benedictine, and whether you are an Anglican or a Roman Catholic, or something else. You will also probably find that you will be a better member of your chosen branch of the Church.

John Tolbert

Being Part of the Solution

In reading this on-going conversation, I was struck by four points:

- Whether someone is Anglican or not is for the most part irrelevant. The point is that a SD must have the deepening of the directees relationship with God as the primary goal. Secondly, as one who without knowing it was doing SD for years, the deepening of the SD's relationship with God is an outcome of the relationship with the directee. So what or which denomination does not seem to me to be as important as frank discussion of the relationship at the beginning. Perhaps the first four meetings should be about defining the relationship.
- I know many religious people who were under SD for years and did it by correspondence; one woman

now uses e-mail and finds it satisfying after forty years of written letters.

- AngFran-L has some of the attributes of Group SD without having one person as the SD: groups of people corresponding with each other to deepen their relationship with God.
- SD is a much needed ministry, and one in increasing demand. If you can't find an SD, you might want to become one yourself. Hugh Strickland

Some Ways to Find Out More About Spiritual Direction?

Books by Alan Jones

Forward Movement Publications has a little 11 page pamphlet called "What Happens in Spiritual Direction?" by The Very Rev. Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. It's probably the best brief introduction to SD I've seen, and I'd not hesitate to give it to any TSSF inquirer.

John Snyder

More on Alan Jones

I heartily agree—this pamphlet has been around for quite a while. Jones is an able spiritual director & has written on the subject (*Soul Making and Exploring Spiritual Direction*). I used to send the Forward Movement pamphlet to inquirers & postulants who had no notion of what having a SD was about. Thanks, John. I'd forgotten about that one. It's a gem.

MaryAnn Jackman

The Reluctant Spiritual Director by Fleetwood Range (1996)

Catacombs Press, 370 Forest Lane, Huntsville, TX 77340
Watch out when people see a book and think of you. Last spring I was in Austin, Texas to attend the Province VII meeting of College and University Chaplains. In the bookstore of the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest one of my friends handed me this book and said "This one's for you".

I opened the book to one of the first pages, in bold type that jumped out at me it read "WARNING! HAZARDOUS MATERIALS!" A single paragraph on the page drew me to read it. I read it. Putting the book down and I left the book store. I returned to the conference. I avoided the bookstore every time others invited me to accompany them to browse, I did something else. I finally bought the book and put it in my suitcase, when I got ready to leave the conference I took this book as my airport and plane reading. The warning on that early page is absolutely true, "WARNING! HAZARDOUS MATERIALS!"

Now that you are warned, let me share a little about the author. Fleetwood Range has for some years trained spiritual directors. She is a graduate of the School for Spiritual Directors at the Benedictine Abbey in Pecos, New Mexico, and a graduate of the Episcopal Church Education for Ministry program. She is a member of the Bishop's Committee for Diocesan Spiritual Development in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. She is an experienced teacher, having lead training for laity and clergy in Kansas and Texas. In the fall of 1997, she began a new approach to training for spiritual directors in the Diocese of Texas.

This is a fine little book. It is not long and it is written with a great sense of humor and human understanding. It is a book that carefully lays out the ministry of spiritual direction from a practical and direct set of views. I found that it moved me toward recognizing one of my spiritual gifts. Maybe one of the things about reluctance and spiritual gifts is that if you are like me the spiritual gifts I have are the ones I am most reluctant to use. This book is filled with great questions. "Am I called to this ministry?", "What is a spiritual direction session like?", "How do I begin?" are just three central ones. The answers are better than the questions.

This little book has great resources compacted into its 133 pages. Looking at what are the basic tools of spiritual direction, options in training, and practical considerations for being a spiritual director in working with someone of the other sex and with women especially are valuable insights into this ministry. The annotated bibliography and resource list is very helpful. The lists of sources and resources are a reading list of excellence for anyone interested in or involved in this ministry. The resources are divided into areas. These areas are dreams, healing—mind and body, deal/ethical issues, C. S. Lewis, living the christian faith, personality types, prayer and psychology and Christianity. All worthwhile areas of study and well organized for the development and giving of the ministry of spiritual direction. It is not instant spiritual director, it is a great place to start.

The chapter titled "A spiritual director's soul" really caught hold of me. In this chapter, as well as other places in the book, I found the call of God to use my own spiritual gifts confronted by a need in the lives of others. This is, it seems to me, the way we find our ministries and the way the Gospel shows up in the world.

This little book is well worth the read. I do however endorse the author's early, bold, attention grabbing note. "WARNING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS!!"

Hugh Strickland

Training Programs

For anyone who is interested in training programs for spiritual direction, by playing around on the internet and talking to one of my spiritual directors, I heard of a couple of good programs. One program (2 yr.) is from the Thomas Aquinas Institute (call it up on the internet). The Pecos Benedictine Monastery also has a wonderful program in New Mexico (1 month long-1st yr., 2 wks-2nd year). And lastly, (of course there is more than just call up spiritual direction on the internet) Rich in Mercy Institute, Mercy Center, Inc. in Colorado Springs, CO. These all are RC programs, just in case you're wondering.

God is so amazing. I jumped in for an appointment with one of my spiritual directors and talked to her about spiritual direction and the lack of programs someone like me (in the boonies in Maine) can participate in, when she pulls out a folder of information about how the Rich in Mercy Institute is doing their program right in our town over the next 2 years beginning in March of '98! Although the local RC church is hosting this program, it's open to all churches. Talk about amazing grace!

Eunice

Faithful Friendship, by Dorothy C. Devers,

For those who do not have access to Spiritual Direction programs because of location or funds (many of these programs, though worth it, are quite expensive... and, for those who even have difficulty because of location finding a spiritual director, I would like to recommend a little book that used to be published by Forward Day by Day. The last time I tried to get copies I had to order them direct from the Potter's House in Washington, DC (part of the ministries of Church of the Savior). The book is entitled *Faithful Friendship* by Dorothy C. Devers, subtitled "Christian Growth and Spiritual Direction through Faithful Friendship" and is designed to be used by two individuals, or larger groups. It is not expensive and is an excellent resource.

Although I did not do this program myself, I am thoroughly familiar with the program sponsored by the Diocese of South Carolina. I know the folks who oversee this program. One of my Spiritual Directees has completed it and I have participated in their Autumn Refresher Retreats for Spiritual Directors for three years. It is a very good program.

The Rev. Elizabeth W. Libbey

(continued on page 14)

An Internet Online Spiritual Direction Training Course

A growing number of schools, denominations and their seminaries are beginning to use this technology to make available courses of study that apply to degree and non-degree objectives. The factors that encourage this are the possibility of having a collection of fine minds discuss and learn about one topic without the constraints of time, travel cost, limited leadership and with the possibility that the historic training in the written word, clarity of thought and reflection of our hearts all be retained. In some ways it provides the opening of a merger of valued traditions, emerging technology, and the life style of a large number of people. People in need of education about spiritual life are frequently the most active and less available to classes with fixed times and locations.

This is a class in support of the ministry of Spiritual Director. This vital ministry needs new ministers and on-going training and support for those engaged in the ministry of fostering deeper relationships with God. The availability of training limits participants to financially well-off people who can afford to commit their financial resources and time to travel and participation in training programs outside of their communities. To increase the support of and to make available more spiritual directors for ministry the use of new technology will be applied.

The Course

We want your participation in this. The initial offering is for a period of two and one half months. January 5 to March 15, 1998 and a period of two weeks of continuing discussion and evaluation until March 31. The next offering of Exploring will be determined as we proceed in this course.

During the initial period we will use as the text *Listening Hearts Discerning Call in Community* by Franham, Gill, McLean, and Ward. Each participant will need a copy of the book. This can be ordered by calling Morehouse Publishing at 1-800-877-0012. There will be three basic questions forming the path of discussion each week.

- How can I apply the ideas presented in this material to open up my understanding of what a deeper relationship with God is?
- What applications of this material seem possible to my interest in becoming a Spiritual Director or in my current ministry as a Spiritual Director?
- What principles of Spiritual Directions come to mind when I reflect on this material?

After registering with Christ Church Center you will be sent directions for joining the list. Once you have subscribed to the list, you will be asked to write a

personal introduction and to post it between December 26 and January 4th. This is a closed list and every subscription will be approved by the moderator after completing registration. The moderator will post reading assignments in the text and prompt the discussion by posting the three questions at intervals during each week on the list. Once a question is posted it is open for discussion for the balance of the week.

Course Fee

Participants will register with the Christ Church Center by sending in a fee of \$25 and their email address to the CCC mail address at the top of this announcement. It will be the responsibility of each participant to obtain a copy of the text. Registration is open until December 31. For registration after this date contact the moderator for availability and procedure.

James H Strickland <hughstrickland@juno.com>

An Original Play—A Meeting of Franciscans

(Part 1 of 3)

Moderator: Fr. Bill Graham, TSSF

Guests: St. Francis of Assisi; St. Clare of Assisi; Br.

Elias; St. Elizabeth of Hungary; St. Louis the Ninth of France; Dee Dobson, TSSF; Fr. John Scott, TSSF; Bp. Desmond Tutu, TSSF

Fr. Bill: I'd like to welcome some special people who have come together today to share something of the ways that they have tried to serve God in their lives. Would you please stand as I introduce you to our audience.

First we have several guests from Europe of the 13th century. From the Italian city of Assisi comes Francis Bernardone. Also from Assisi is Clare Scifi and from Cortona, Elias Bombarone. Next, we have from Hungary, the Princess Elizabeth. Along with her is Louis the Ninth, King of France. From our own time, I am delighted to introduce Bishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu of Cape Town, South Africa, Mrs. Dee Dobson from Miami, and Fr. John M. Scott of Philadelphia. These last three and I, are all members of the Third Order, first begun by St. Francis in the 13th century.

Francis, since all the rest of us have been very much influenced by you in our spiritual lives, I think we'd be best to begin our dialogue by having you share with the audience some of your personal history.

Francis: Fr. Bill, I'm honored that you pay me so much

respect, but I'm just a poor soul who has tried to live my life by the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Still, since you ask, I'll try to satisfy your curiosity. I was born in the year of our Lord 1182. My father was Pietro Bernardone, a cloth merchant. He was mainly interested in his business and making lots of money. My mother's name was Pica; she was a wonderful, caring person.

I went to school until I was 13. I spent the next five or so years - I think your young people today would phrase it - "hanging out with my friends". I was quite popular and they used to call me the "King of Feasts."

As you might imagine, this got to be a bit boring after a while and I knew I had to do something more valuable with my life. When I was 19, my town of Assisi was at war with a neighboring city of Perugia. I went off to fight, but I was captured at the battle of Ponte San Giovanni and ended up spending a year in prison. After I was freed, I was sick for almost all of 1204. I still desired military glory and the next year I decided to join the Papal army.

Elias: If I remember right, you never made it as far as the army which was gathering south of Rome.

Francis: True! I had a mystical experience just after starting and I returned to Assisi. Everything began to change in my life. Elias, I recall that you and I spent a lot of time praying and talking those next few months.

Elias: I especially remember the change that happened when you met the leper.

Francis: Without going into the details of the experience, let me share with you what I wrote a few days before my death. "This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me."

Clare: Wasn't it during the Fall after you embraced the leper, that God spoke to you in San Damiano?

Francis: Yes! As Elias mentioned, I had begun spending a lot of time in prayer and that little field chapel was one of my favorite places. The building was

not much, but it had this large, Byzantine crucifix hanging over the altar. I felt especially close to God when there.

Well, one day, after I had visited the lepers, I knelt down and gazed on that image of the crucified One. I prayed, "Great and glorious God, my Lord Jesus Christ! I implore thee to enlighten me and to disperse the darkness of my soul! Give me true faith and firm hope and a perfect charity! Grant me, O Lord, to know thee so well that in all things I may act by thy light, and in accordance with thy holy will!"

It was then that I heard a voice coming from the crucifix, a voice that said, "Now go hence, Francis, and build up my house, for it is nearly falling down."

Trembling, I answered, "Lord, with joy will I do what thou wishest."

Elias: You'd better share with our friends here how you went about building up God's house.

Francis: Why don't you tell them, Elias.

Elias: Brother Francis has always had this tendency to understand things rather literally. The first thing he did was to actually gather stones and repair a dilapidated wall at the San Damiano church. Then, he took some of the cloth from his father's store and sold it so the money could be used to help with the work. Fortunately, the priest had already heard what Francis had done and had enough sense not to accept the money.

Fr. Bill: He probably didn't want to deal with an angry Pietro Bernardone. *(to audience* How would your parents feel if you pulled a stunt like that?) Francis, would you tell us how this affected the relationship between you and your father.

Francis: Which father do you mean? I was just doing what my Father in heaven wanted. As for my biological father, we were in constant conflict from that time on. A few months later, he actually took me to court to try to get back the money that I had used to help the poor. My father was never happy. I kept trying to show him that was because he put his wealth in the place of God. He never did understand what striving for material possessions did to him.

Clare: Brother Francis has indirectly pointed out what was the heart of his spirituality. Even before hearing the voice from the crucifix, he had found the love of his life, "Lady Poverty."

(continued, p. 16)

Elias: Francis, we need to share some of the details of the court session with you and your father. You claimed that you were no longer subject to the civil authorities because you were consecrated to God. The judge didn't know what to do, so your father next took you before Bishop Guido. It was then that you renounced the patrimony of Pietro Bernardone.

Francis: That's right. I was still wearing the rich clothes that had been purchased by my father, so I simply took them off and laid them at his feet. I cried, "Listen to me, everybody. Up to now, I have called Pietro Bernardone my father! But now that I propose to serve God I give him back not only this money that he wants so much, but all the clothes I have from him! From now on, I can advance naked before the Lord, saying in truth no longer; my father, Pietro Bernardone, but our Father who art in heaven.

You should have seen the surprise on Bishop Guido's face. He quickly grabbed his cloak and covered me up. From that time on, all I ever wore was the simplest of clothing.

Fr. Bill: What did you do next?

Francis: I became a hermit and spent the next year and a half repairing churches. Another significant event for me happened at the church at Portiuncula, on February 24th, 1208. I was truly moved by the gospel at the Feast of St. Matthias. I changed the leather belt that I wore for a rope cincture and began to preach about poverty in public.

Fr. Bill: Excuse me for interrupting, but I think our audience ought to hear that gospel passage which so moved you. It was Matthew 10:7-10 and it says, "As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food."

Please continue.

Francis: When I began to preach, several other young men decided to follow our Lord along with me. In April, I was joined first by Bernard of Quintavelle and Peter Catanii and a week later by Giles of Assisi. During the summer we grew to eight by adding Rufino, Maseo, Juniper, and Leo. We preached throughout the Rieti valley. Late in the year we returned to Portiuncula and were joined

by four more brothers. I forget, were you one of them, Elias?

Elias: I can't remember exactly either. I don't think I joined until after you had made your famous visit to Pope Innocent III.

Fr. Bill: Ah, that story is told in just about every biography I've ever read of you. That is the visit shown at the end of Franco Zeffirelli's movie "Brother Sun, Sister Moon" which came out in the early 1970's. I wonder if any of our audience has viewed that film. Clare, this happened close to the time when you were learning about Francis and his brothers. Could you fill us in?

Clare: Oh, certainly! This was an event that simply had to be the work of the Holy Spirit. Francis had been pushed by Bishop Guido and others to get formal recognition from the church for what they were doing. He wrote a Rule which was not complicated like the one the Benedictines followed. It was really little more than the passages from the Gospel which he and the brothers were following in their lives. They traveled to Rome in the Spring of 1210 to seek an audience with the Pope.

There are lots of variations and details that I don't have time to describe, but let me just say that Francis actually visited with Pope Innocent three times. Between his second and third visits, Christ sent a dream to his earthly vicar. Because of that dream, Pope Innocent gave his verbal approval to Brother Francis. The brothers became known as the Friars Minor, which emphasized the need for humility in serving God.

Francis: Thank you for pointing out that important and critical need. You heard that, didn't you, Br. Elias?

Fr. Bill: I know you're anxious to respond to that, Elias, but just hold off a little longer.

We've just heard about the beginnings of what we now call the First Order. Let's hear more from you, Clare, about how you and Francis began the Second Order, the one we now call the Poor Clares after you. When did you first meet Francis?

Clare: Assisi's not that big a town, so I had seen Francis a few times as I was growing up. My family was nobility, while his father was a merchant, so we didn't attend the same social functions. I did view the famous split with his father when Bishop Guido had to cover him up. I was fourteen at the time. From then on, everyone began talking about Francis. I heard him preach several times between 1210 and 1212, the year I left my home. That last

year, I received much education from Francis and the brothers minor. One of them, Rufino, was my first cousin.

Fr. Bill: Was it just Francis who influenced you to dedicate your whole life to God?

Clare: Oh no! Much of the credit goes to my mother. It was she who first taught my sisters and me about God. She had even made three religious pilgrimages. One was to the Holy Land. Now, that's a place that I always wanted to visit, especially after Francis told me so many wonderful things about the area. Father Francis, you need to tell us about how you got to go there.

Francis: That happened in 1219. I had come to the realization that the military crusades to capture the Holy Land were really not what God wanted. I felt that God's will was for all Muslims to accept Jesus Christ. I figured that if the head of Islam were converted, then all the others would follow, so I traveled to Egypt. I had a marvelous meeting with the sultan and I told him all about how much Jesus loves us and all that He had done. I really liked the sultan. He was a person of deep religious convictions, but alas, he would not turn his life over to our Lord. Jesus must have wanted me to walk in some of his footsteps, because He did cause the sultan to give me safe conduct to Jerusalem so I could do that.

Oh, dear! I'm afraid that we've gotten off the topic. Clare was telling us about how she came to serve our Lord Jesus.

Clare: Well, as I implied earlier, my faith had become very strong before I ever heard Francis preach. I spent a lot of time in prayer. God had made me very attractive physically and some had been trying to marry me off ever since I turned twelve. At fifteen came my first serious offer. I kept putting that off because I was in love with God, not with any man. This did not endear me to many of my relatives. Even then, most people only wanted religion up to a point. Members of nobility weren't supposed to get overly involved.

Louis: That's for sure. Wait until you hear about some of Elizabeth's experiences.

Clare: By the time I was seventeen, I knew what I had to do. Francis and I planned what you might almost call an elopement, for the night of Palm Sunday, March 18, 1212. At midnight I slipped out through the "coffin door" of my house and made my way through the woods to the place where Francis received my vows. He cut my hair and took

me to a Benedictine convent. A week later, I was joined by my sister, Agnes.

In May, with the help of Bishop Guido, we moved to San Damiano, where Francis heard the voice from the crucifix. That was to be my home for the next forty years. By 1216 we were a small contemplative group and I reluctantly accepted the title "Abbess".

I guess that would be the official beginning of the Second Order. I wrote the following as part of our Rule. "On her part, the Abbess is to be so familiar with the sisters that they can speak and act toward her as ladies do with their servant. For that is the way it should be, that the Abbess be the servant of all the sisters.

"Indeed, I admonish and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ that the sisters be on their guard against all pride, vainglory, envy, greed, worldly care and anxiety, detraction and murmuring, dissension and division. Let them be ever zealous to preserve among themselves the unity of mutual love, which is the bond of perfection." (Clare's Rule, Chap. X)

We, too, devoted ourselves to Lady Poverty. Unlike other orders such as the Benedictines, we refused to accept endowments that would have given us guaranteed support. In this way we were able to put our full reliance upon God, much like the Friars Minor who continued to beg food daily as payment for the work they did.

Francis: Clare was a wonderful example for all of us. She never forgot the importance of humility and shared in all the daily labors of the community. She also served as a counselor both to me and to many priests and bishops. Her order provided needed prayer support when we began serious missionary work in 1217 and sent brothers across the Alps and the Mediterranean.

Fr. Bill: Thank you for sharing that. Perhaps now is the time for us to deal with some other issues that arose following Francis' return from the Holy Land.

Before asking for comments from St. Francis and Br. Elias, let me explain to our audience that as the Order expanded, two differing sets of opinions developed about the future. St. Francis and his early followers became known as the "Zelanti", the zealous ones or the spiritual friars. The other group, represented by Br. Elias, were the "Mitigati" or the conventual friars. By the way, conventual means having convents or buildings. Elias, would you tell us about the structure of the Order?

To Be Continued...

The Third Order, Society of St. Francis
American Province
4001 S.W. 5 Terrace
Miami, FL 33134-2040

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2007
Miami, FL
33134

Inside this Issue

ABOUT SPIRITUAL DIRECTION, 1, 7-14
RALPH SHOWER HONORED BY HIS DIOCESE, 2
NEWEST WEB ADDRESS FOR TSSF, 2
EL CAMINO REAL FELLOWSHIP—A NEW
FELLOWSHIP, 2
MANAGER NEEDED IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, 2
BR. HUGH IN THE WAY, 3
REGIONAL CONVOCATION INFORMATION, 3
TSSF LIBRARY NEWS, 4
CONVOCATION 2002, 4
STEPHEN SMITH'S ESSAY IN EPISCOPAL LIFE, 5
LUCY BLOUNT'S LENTEN LOVE LETTERS, 5
THE ANGFRAN-L BEAT, 7
REVIEW OF DUNSTAN'S *THIS POOR SORT*, 8
"A MEETING OF FRANCISCANS"—A PLAY BY
FR. BILL GRAHAM (PART 1 OF 3), 14

Coming Next Issue

- CURRICULUMS FOR SMALL GROUP STUDY:
VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY, RENOVARE, AND
CELEBRATING DISCIPLINE
- "A MEETING OF FRANCISCANS"—A PLAY BY
FR. BILL GRAHAM (PART 2 OF 3)
- MORE FROM OUR ANGFRAN-L ON-LINE
REPORTER
- A SPECIAL ANGFRAN-L DISCUSSION
OF TRUE JOY
- STEPHEN SMITH'S "ONE DAY IN JANUARY ON
THE RESERVATION"