



# The Franciscan Times

Easter 2008

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

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## Letter from Masud Ibn Syedullah, Minister Provincial

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Easter greetings to you all! This past Holy Week and Easter Day celebrations were, by far, at once the most buoyant, yet the strangest that I think I have ever experienced. Who can explain all the reasons why worship experiences may affect us in one way or other at a particular time? Yet, for me in my parish here in The Bronx, there was a profound sense of drama throughout the week – from the exuberant cheers and gripping foreshadowing of the passion on Palm Sunday, through the intimacy of footwashing and eucharist on Maundy Thursday, the meditations of sacrificial love on Good Friday, and culminating with the joyous shouts of, “Alleluia. Christ is risen!” at The Great Vigil of Easter on Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday morning. What drama! Such a progression: from joyful expectation, to brutal execution, to the new life of resurrection. Such is the central week of the Christian year and such is the story of our lives. Such is the on-going story of our journey of faith in Christ.

That week was strange in that it was also a time in the history of our world when the war in Iraq was still being waged with indications that it would soon come to an end. What a turbulent time in the life of the world! What a strange moment as the Church was living out, through its liturgy, the drama of the cosmic conflict of good and evil. What an “out of joint” kind of time. What a time for Christians to be proclaiming the victory of God over death, sin, evil, and corruption. What a challenging juxtaposition of events. It was really too much to take in. It will surely take time to digest, if we will.

As the season has progressed and we have been given the word that the combat portion of the war is over, we are left with an awareness that some significant changes have happened, yet the contrasts persist. An old regime is gone, a country lies in disarray; people are free from a tyrannical government, people are left without homes, family members, body parts. People have new freedom. People have new hope. People are unsure about the future. It is somewhat reminiscent of the opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities*, “It was the best of times. It was the worst of times...” It is in such times that we need to know the reality of the resurrection. It is in such times that every fiber of our being yearns for the reality of new birth, the restoration of true goodness.

As we of Christian faith continue through this season to proclaim the reality of the Risen Lord, may we also continue our prayers and actions for peace and reconciliation in the world that it may be restored. As our shouts of, “Alleluia” ring, may also our shouts for justice persist. May the joy and experience of Easter life not be only for some, but for all. May we be vigilant in our efforts to make it known that the Lord is risen indeed over all corruption, sin, death, and destruction.

Pax et Bonum,

Masud

**Building Peace In Central Africa**

*Mark Barwick (Mark coordinates programs in Africa for Pax Christi International in Brussels)*

Some people will sleep in the forest tonight. It is safer there. Villages and towns are often terrorized by soldiers and militia forces during the night. They come suddenly, pillaging, raping and killing as they pass through the area. Sometimes the soldiers are no more than children, recruited by one of the rebel groups active in the region. Streams of weapons cross borders to fuel the war and the rebellion. And poverty deepens as economies collapse, and the region continues its downward spiral.

These are the fearful realities that shape the everyday lives of people in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). While the war in Iraq and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence continue to grab headlines around the world, other regions of conflict receive scant attention. Central Africa is one such region. Six African nations and five rebel factions have been fighting in the Congo's protracted civil war since 1998.

Eastern Congo is a place of extraordinary beauty. It is also rich in mineral wealth and other natural resources. There is little wonder why so many scramble for its control. The sale of diamonds, now often referred to as "blood diamonds," funds the military operations of rebel groups here, as the government of Joseph Kabila struggles to restore control of the eastern provinces. A cease-fire agreement signed last year, brought renewed hope for an end to the conflict. Foreign troops began to withdraw, and some rebel groups have disbanded. However, many tensions remain.

I write these words in the eastern city of Bukavu, looking out across Lake Kivu toward the misty shore of neighboring Rwanda. Years of war have marred the serene beauty of this once popular resort center. Bukavu is still quite lovely. I have been traveling in the region as part of my work. I present seminars on democracy, human rights, advocacy, and conflict resolution. I am also fortunate to meet and collaborate with an incredible array of people and organizations that are working to shape a more peaceful and just future for Africa.

One hundred years ago, the vast region we now call the Congo, a land surface about a quarter that of the United States was being rapidly colonized by King Leopold II of Belgium. The exploitation of rubber, in particular, became associated with terrible atrocities and virtual slavery. Rubber workers who did not return with their daily assigned quota had their right hand severed – or worse. It has been estimated that Congo's population was cut in half as a result of this tragic period.

The Belgian Congo became independent in 1960, later changing its name to Zaire. The subsequent years saw the rise of Mobutu Sese Seko, whose long and dictatorial presidency was buttressed by US Cold War policy. Mobutu remained in power until 1997, when he was forced into exile. During this same tumultuous period, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda occurred, claiming over a million lives and creating a refugee crisis of catastrophic dimensions. Nearly one million Hutu flooded into eastern Zaire in July of that year to escape the violence.

It is difficult to imagine the terror and the hardship that people in the eastern DRC have experienced, in their past and right up to the present moment. I have found the Congolese to be for the most part a gracious, light-hearted, and gentle people. The traces of such immense suffering are barely visible at first. For those who linger long enough to hear their story, other impressions emerge.

I have been asked here whether people in America and Britain believe in God. Many Africans wonder about nations that profess a Christian heritage and yet wage war against weaker nations like Iraq. I have also been asked why the international community remains silent in the face of such ongoing violent conflict in Africa. If fighting between white "tribes" in the Balkans requires intervention, a massive response from Europe and America is forthcoming. However, when it is a matter of interethnic violence in faraway Africa, they point out, no one seems to care. Why don't people in Europe and America pressure their governments to take a more decisive role in protecting the vulnerable civilian population along Congo's eastern border? Why did the United Nations step back and permit the horrible 1994 genocide in Rwanda?

I do not have answers to these questions. I can only witness their exasperation and hang my head.

This morning I hear the song of fishermen on the lake. They cast their nets over and over again into quiet waters in hopes of a return for their labors. They are patient and expectant. I am sure they are often frustrated with the results. I have imagined how the fishermen on Lake Kivu must feel. I work patiently to organize, train and encourage those who are working to rebuild a new and more peaceable Congo. And like the fishermen, I am sometimes discouraged by my efforts.

But in this season I am reminded of another truth. I believe in Resurrection. I believe in the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. In fact, I have already seen it with my own eyes. I have seen it splashed across the hopeful faces of people in eastern Congo.

marktssf@hotmail.com

**Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation***Carol Tookey*

At its 2002 annual meeting, the Third Order Chapter brought into being a Commission on Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC). This came out of an *ad hoc* Peace and Justice Committee that had been appointed on an annual basis by the Minister Provincial.

But because the issues of justice, peace and the environment are concerns that go on year round, it was decided that an ongoing commission would be formed to bring these issues to the Third Order community in various ways.

The charge to the JPIC Commission is as follows:

- To identify for the Third Order social and environmental concerns that need to be brought to our attention.
- To educate/inform the Third Order of resources of information about various social and environmental concern, e.g. websites, articles, books, conferences, rallies, and the like.
- To suggest projects and actions to Chapter, Fellowships, and to the general membership that address particular social and environmental concerns.

The Minister Provincial has appointed the following persons to make up the Commission: Emmett Jarrett, Carol Tookey, Terry Rogers, David Nard, Ken Norian, Caroline Benjamin, Brenda Stewart, Mark Barwick, Francesca Wigle, and Jeffrey Gollither. In addition, Br. John George and Sr. Pamela Clare have agreed to serve from the First Order.

During the year we will try to keep issues and concerns before the membership through the Franciscan Times. All tertiaries are welcome to bring things to our atten-

tion that meet any of the charges above.

In this time of fear and conflict in our world, we hope that all tertiaries are taking to heart Chapter's appeal to make extra efforts of prayer, fasting and giving for the work of peace in our world. Einstein said that a problem cannot be solved by the same consciousness that created it. So we pray for a transformation of consciousness in our world, in our leaders, beginning with ourselves.

**Peace and Justice listserv***Francesca Wigle*

The American Province is working to make peace and justice a priority within our Order.

The Peace and Justice listserv was developed as a place to share opportunities for action, articles, ideas and experiences about peace and justice. Sr. Shell Balek of Franciscans International forwards news to us several times a week.

Terry Rogers was recently part of a delegation to Israel, Lebanon, and Palestine sponsored by Interfaith Peace Builders of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In late January and early February, the delegates had an opportunity to share their lives and learn from citizens in those countries. The sixteen participants formed a Muslim, Christian, Jewish

group of individuals from all over the U.S. They sent back six fascinating, informative and very heartfelt trip reports. These were posted at [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org) and were also printed on the Peace and Justice list. Thanks to Terry for helping us join in her experience through the reports.

If you are interested in joining the Peace and Justice list, please email me at: [francescaw@prodigy.net](mailto:francescaw@prodigy.net)

**Franciscan Cross-Hairs***Piper Selden*

4pm, March 19, 2003: Target War.

We bomb—again.

Mothers, children, fathers, brothers, sisters: family and friends all.

**God help us.**Air raid screams, dawn breaks Baghdad:  
live-action confusion, destruction, death.Heaven's tiny tears, an ocean away Portland:  
tape-delay confusion, destruction, death.*Brother fire* illumined the night,  
battle's false dawn—our harnessed hatred.*Our sister, mother earth*, mourns the dead—her men  
and mountains.*Sister moon and the stars* greet new souls—their celestial  
kiss.**God help us.**Missiles strike intended military targets,  
legitimate targets—strikes of opportunity.Efforts to avoid harm to innocent civilians,  
legitimate targets—strikes of collateral damage.*Our sister, death of the body*—her arms open wide.“Our purpose sure. Decisive force. No outcome but  
victory.”

“Draw your sword, I am not afraid.”

“Love the Lord your God. Love your neighbor.”

“Where there is hatred, let us sow love.”

*Brother sun*, I pray, lighten the darkness of my heart.

Thousands of soldiers...

Tens of thousands of refugees...

Mothers, children, fathers, brothers, sisters: family and  
friends all.They are us and we are them—our humanity in the  
cross-hairs.**God help us.****God help us all.**

## Crystal Bradford's Novicing

by Marilyn Brandenburg

Crystal Bradford is a "long termer" at the Washington Correction Center for Women (though budget cuts in the state may contribute to her being a "short termer" in the near future). We met during a Kairos weekend and have developed a friendship through my work as a pastoral care volunteer associated with the chaplain in the institution.

About three years ago she began asking about becoming a Third Order Franciscan and, toward that end, became a member of St. Barnabas's Episcopal Church on Bainbridge Island, Washington, where she has found many friends willing to write to her and visit her. Our Assisting Bishop, Sandy Hampton, made a special trip to the prison to confirm her in 2001.

She was received into postulancy last year and has become an example to other inmates in this maximum-security institution of 900+ women. She currently mentors 34 women in the horticulture program and takes every opportunity to talk about her Franciscan calling. Her

recent novicing ceremony was attended by people from her church, the St. Clare Fellowship, and - significantly - a number of members of the prison staff, to whom she also ministers.

Those of us who work in prison ministry know full well that our credibility and influence is limited to the time we are on site and that the real ministry takes place in our absence through people like Crystal. I rejoice that she is a sister in the Third Order. One condition of Crystal Bradford being accepted into Postulancy was that she not be permitted to have people's addresses and phone numbers. (Apparently an incarcerated person in the past took advantage of his or her position and created some problems.) Therefore Crystal receives only censored Franciscan literature and she is listed in the Directory c/o The Rev. Marilyn Brandenburg. If you would care to write to her, e-mail Marilyn and she will send you Crystal's mailing address.



*St. Clare Fellowship: The Rev. Jeff Hall, Crystal Bradford, The Rev. Beverly Hosea, Tony Boxwell, Susan Pitchford, Bill Berge, Dianne Aid (front)*

## Thoughts on Crystal Bradford's Novicing

by Beverly Hosea

In our Eucharist of Saints Francis and Clare we have the choice of the familiar "The Lord be with you," or an alternate wording, and in this prison setting these alternate words communicated important and significant truth:

"The Lord is here!"

"God's Spirit is with us!"

"Let us pray."

The sweet Spirit of Jesus filled the prison chapel and our worship with joy radiating from faces of inmates, prison staff, the St. Clare fellowship, and friends outside. In fact it seemed to me that it is in such

locations as prisons that the Light of Christ seems brighter than usual, perhaps in contrast to the setting, and perhaps because there the liberating grace of God is more clearly recognized.

That evening I and most of the other members of the St. Clare

Fellowship had the opportunity to finally meet Crystal Bradford, who has been a member of our fellowship without attending. We've sent her letters, cards, and greetings through Deacon Marilyn Brandenburg and other members of the fellowship involved in the Kairos prison ministry. She has sent us handcrafted gifts of her own creation, a way for her to participate in the fellowship. But now meeting her face to face the recognition of a kindred spirit and fellow Franciscan was very present.

Crystal spoke to us all about the spiritual process leading her to this moment of novicing. What came through quite clearly was her deep understanding of grace at work in her life. She knew and could articulate plainly how Jesus was forming her in discipleship, and calling her into a baptismal ministry right where she was. Her words were congruent with what was obvious in her face and whole being. There was a comfortable ease and peacefulness in her that accompanied the joy of the occasion, a peace that could only come as a

gift of God in the cultural climate of a prison. This was a powerful witness to the truth of the Gospel, unobscured by the easy life most of the rest of us live in comparison.

It is so fitting for Franciscans to gather in a prison. Francis knew the inside of prison, and his own prison experience contributed to his conversion process. I had looked forward to this evening with considerations about what to expect from the prison staff. They sure had some intrusive rules for our having a Eucharist there, rules that for me as a priest rubbed the wrong way. They dictated the kind of chalice and paten that could be used, mandated wafers and no bread, limited the amount of wine to 3 ounces no matter what size the congregation, forbade inmates to drink from the cup and dictated that they could not even dip their own wafer into the cup. The Eucharist is at the heart of our Rule, and those who were not taking part in the liturgy were telling us how we could and could not worship. After I got over my initial reactivity around this, we decided that all of us would receive communion the same way, by intinction with none of us dipping our own wafers. There in the prison chapel the only way you could tell the inmates from everyone else would be to check the badges we all wore. In this prison was a test for discovering perfect joy. And perfect joy was to be found in abundance.

Our province of the Third Order has been blessed by this occasion. We have been privileged to give support and community to a person in transformation, and she has felt and expressed profound appreciation for this support. Crystal is also blessing us with her participation and sharing in the formation process as the light of Christ shines through her. In the words of the collect chosen for the Eucharist, "as Francis found joy, not only in creation, beauty, and simplicity, but also in sharing the sufferings of the world, so may we, abiding in your love, receive your gift of perfect joy, and by the power of your Spirit radiate your peace, and find, even in the suffering, the glory of God."

*Beverly Hosea Area Chaplain and member of St. Clare Fellowship*

### More Thoughts on Crystal Bradford's Novicing

*by Betty Wood*

Ordinarily, a Formation Counselor does not fly halfway across the country for a novicing.

Ordinarily, the site of the novicing does not require a tougher security screening than a major airport.

Ordinarily, the persons attending will not be led by guards through tall fences topped with accordion wire.

Ordinarily, the novicing is not held inside a maximum security prison.

But this was no ordinary novicing. Crystal Bradford was no ordinary postulant. She is an inmate at the Washington Correction Center for Women.

She has turned her life around quite dramatically and has become a model and an inspiration to others at the prison, both inmates and staff, as well as to many on the outside.

Her love of God and her devotion to the Third Order are glowingly evident. I read her reports with awe. I learn more from her than she does from me. She is a powerful Franciscan witness to all she meets.

I flew out from Cheyenne the previous day. She did not know I was planning to be there and her stunned reaction was all we had hoped for.

The service was most moving. It was obvious that all those present held Crystal in great love and respect. She was a most gracious hostess to everyone: members of her parish on Bainbridge Island, of the Fellowship of St. Clare, various friends, as well as other inmates and prison staff. Three other novices also renewed their vows.

Three cheers and a heartfelt Hallelujah for people like Crystal!

### Dear Dada

*Janice-Marie McDonald*

Dear Dada up above,  
Why do bad things happen  
To the ones I love?  
Why am I  
always tired and ill?  
I'm told, dear Father,  
it's not your will.  
Wars and pain,  
sickness and strife,  
That can't be what you  
want for our life.  
Father, dear Father  
I don't understand.  
Now, come on  
please, tell me,  
Is this part of your plan?

I'm asking, and seeking,  
I'm down on my knees  
Answer me, answer me,  
answer me, please!  
Dada, I want you to  
make it all better.  
That is why  
I wrote you this letter.  
Your daughter is hoping  
and trusting in you.  
I know that you love me,  
And I love you too.  
—Love, Janny Poo

P.S.

So I'll praise you  
and bless you  
until my life's done.  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Thank you Holy One.

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**Fuller Partnership for Latin America in the  
American Province**

*David Catron*

Few people think about Anglicans, and even less about Anglican Franciscans, when they think of Brazil. Yet a thriving community of Anglican Franciscans is precisely what two members of the American Province found when they traveled there in December 2002. Brother Derek, SSF, Minister Provincial of the First Order, and I, David Catron, a Portuguese-speaking member of the Third Order, spent a week, December 3-10, visiting Franciscans in Recife and São Paulo.

Anglicanism came to Brazil in two stages during the nineteenth century: by way of English immigrants who established themselves in 1810, and through the work of American missionaries who arrived in 1889. At present, the Anglican Church in Brazil (officially called *Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil*, or IEAB), the Nineteenth Province of the Anglican Communion, has seven dioceses, two missionary districts, and 150,000 members. Their web site is available in both Portuguese and English at [www.ieab.org.br](http://www.ieab.org.br).

Roman Catholic Franciscans have been in Brazil since the early colonial period, as in much of Latin America. The origin of Anglican Franciscans is uncertain but appears to have strong links to the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscan Order, inasmuch as many Brazilian Anglicans are converts from the Roman Church.

At the 1998 Lambeth Conference two Brazilian bishops came into contact with First Order brothers of the European Province and expressed interest in Franciscan religious life. As a result two Brazilian Franciscans, both priests, visited Hilfield Friary in 1998 and 1999. In the American Province there were several communications from Franciscans in Recife, a major city in northeastern Brazil, asking for closer relations. Eventually Brother Derek was invited to visit at the time of the Diocese of Recife's annual convention, December 5-8, 2002.

Part of the convention's opening Eucharist was devoted to a ceremony in which eight to ten people were admitted as postulants and novices, and others to profession. The Brazilian Franciscans regard themselves as a single order, the Order of Saint Francis (OSF), embracing both seculars and those who are seeking a community life. They stated a dislike of the ordinal numbers "first" and "third" as suggesting somehow an inferiority of the latter to the former. All members wear brown habits with a white cincture for ceremonial purposes.

Some of the best interchanges and learnings occurred at lunch and dinner, which was served in the church's

*Anglican Parish of Agua Viva (Br. Derek in doorway).*



ample dining area (part of it out of doors). Br. Derek and I were able to visit with fifteen to twenty men and women, all thirsty for information, as we were about them. Occupations were as diverse as veterinarian, web page designer, teacher, student, retired, and clergy. A number of spouses were present also. Most had come to the Anglican Church from other faith traditions, notably Roman Catholic and Baptist.

On a Saturday, one of the lay brothers took Derek and me to visit the parish church of Água Viva in the nearby town of Olinda. It was an extremely modest facility, not much more than a large metal and concrete storage shed with a sanctuary for worship, a kitchen, and, yes, a dental office. It serves the entire community of Olinda's *lixão*, or landfill, except the land has not been "filled," rather it is just a huge trash and garbage heap. The church ministers to the people who make their living on top of, and whose homes are alongside, the mountain of trash. They scavenge for reusable materials, first with which to make their own homes, and second, to sell to middlemen who come in large trucks to pick up metal, glass, and other recyclables which are then taken to manufacturers.

After visiting the church, Derek and I were taken to the cardboard and metal village where they visited church members and residents. This is a story of dignity in the midst of incredible poverty, people who live on less than \$1 per day.

Later in the day their hosts took Derek and David to visit the parish church and residence where Dom Helder Câmara, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Recife, served and lived until his death two years ago at the age of 90. Dom Helder, together with the Brazilian (also Roman Catholic) Franciscan Leonardo Boff, was one of the principal architects of Latin American liberation theology in the 60s and 70s.

On our way home, Derek and I were able to stop for two days in São Paulo, where we met with another ten Franciscans who were as eager for information and closer ties as those in Recife. And as in Recife, several in this group were interested in community life. The bishop of São Paulo, who was at the gathering, has said he will shortly donate land at about an hour's distance from the city for what can become a friary.

It was in São Paulo where we got our first serious look at, and discussion of, the founding documents of the Brazilian Franciscans. While their *Principles* are the same as those of the American Province, their *Rule of Life* does not match any of our source documents. It should be noted that, like the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscan Order, on which many of their forms are based, the Brazilians accept a single *Rule* as applying to all.

Out of nowhere, it seems, has come a highly organized, nationwide group of Anglican Franciscans in Brazil, numbering 30-50 people, who are keenly interested in establishing a relationship with the American Province. Geographically, of course, they are already in it, but they know little of our processes, our constitution, our statutes, our way of life. This is a stunning opportunity and the American Province is already taking advantage of it. On April 27, Barbara Baumgarten and I will travel again to Recife and São Paulo for a week of discussions on formation and the rule of life. In late May the General Secretary of the Brazilian OSF will travel to New York to take part in the First Order Brothers' Chapter.

Latin America, so long a neglected part of the American Province, may be on its way to a fuller partnership.



Interior of Aqua Viva Church, David Catron & Br. Derek

## Guyana 2003

by Barbara Baumgarten

On February 2, 2003, Julia Bergstrom and I (Barbara Baumgarten) flew into Georgetown, Guyana along with tertiary Eunice Edwards who had attended the Trinidad and Tobago Convocation with us. The trip began with a visit to Bishop Randall George who offered a warm welcome along with a word of warning about the instability and violence in Guyana. We were not to leave Eunice's side at any time, for any reason, while in the Georgetown area.

The afternoon was spent obtaining permission to travel to the interior of Guyana to visit tertiaries Charles and Celian Roland. Normally, such permission must be obtained weeks in advance, but by God's grace, the Minister of Amerindian Affairs agreed to grant our travel into Imbaimadai on Thursday, February 6. No small miracle was this!

In the meantime, Bishop George arranged an appointment for us to meet with the Chief Medical Officer of Guyana the following morning. Dr. Rudolph Cummings gave us complete instructions on how to arrange a medical mission into the interior if a team of Third Order members desired to undertake such a ministry. The Amerindians are rarely privileged with medical care by trained physicians and nurses. Many suffer from malaria, TB, gastro-intestinal disorders and malnutrition. A proposal will be written up for Chapter to consider.

After leaving Dr. Cummings, we traveled up the west coast of Berbice to spend time in Eunice's home. Eunice took us to the end of the road where a ferry

must be caught if one wishes to continue on to New Amsterdam. Along the way, Eunice showed us the seven churches served by her local priest. Eunice's home is next door to one of the churches where she serves as a lay minister. The priest depends upon the lay ministers to do everything except weddings. The cemetery is situated between Eunice's home and the church, where a number of her ancestors lie and keep watch over her. The day ended with the singing of hymns and saying Evening Prayer with Eunice's extended family of 9.

Lauren Gordon and Marjorie White, both postulants since 1997, appeared at Eunice's home midday Wednesday. Their dedication to TSSF was apparent and then was celebrated with their novicing at Evening Prayer and with feasting. En route back to Georgetown, we stopped off at the President's College, the only residential college in Georgetown. Eunice's granddaughter was delighted to see her grandmother and to be treated with some spending cash.

At 6:45 a.m. Thursday morning, the Bishop's driver, Patrick, came to drive us (Julia and Barbara) out to Ogle Airport to catch our flight to Imbaimadai. After going through customs and waiting for the weather to settle, we climbed aboard a small bush plane to make a one-hour flight into the jungle of Guyana. One other passenger and cargo accompanied us on the bumpy and loud flight (ear plugs were a must). Upon arrival at the Imbaimadai airstrip, we were relieved to see Fr. Charles Roland waiting for us; and we were surprised and delighted to see that Fr. Winston Williams was there as well. Fr. Williams explained that we were going to get into a boat and go up the Mazaruni River to Jawalla—a four-hour ride in a motorized open canoe.



First, we were taken to Fr. Roland's church and were serenaded by the local children. After a lunch of rice and tea, Fr. Charles and Celian Roland, Julia,

Barbara Baumgarten and Fr. Charles Roland en route from Jawalla to Imbaimadai on the Mazaruni River of Guyana. Hidden is Fr. Winston Williams who is steering.

Fr. Winston Williams, and I boarded the boat and headed up the river. The brown river was low and much care was given that rocks and other objects were avoided. Along the way, the green jungle was thick and quiet. Occasionally, we saw miners or Amerindians going about their daily tasks. Due to the mining, most of the wildlife has moved deeper into the jungle, but we spotted a red snake and a baboon.

Jawalla sits high on a rise above the river. The settlement is spread over a great area and is connected by the river and trails. The Rolands, Julia and I stayed at a comfortable diocesan guest house as did another couple who were in residence to help with the Bible translation program. The diocesan house had chairs with backs, a "kitchen," a common area (where we spent many hours "gaffing" or talking), and three bedrooms. Absent were running water, electricity, bathroom, window screens and other amenities taken for granted in the States. An outhouse was situated nearby and the river was used for bathing. Celian, a trained cook, and Dorina Williams were happy to have a "kitchen" area and cooked many wonderful meals for us. The staples included rice, cassava bread and some type of stew or fish—all cooked over a small kerosene stove.

Each day began with the beckoning of the conch shell to Morning Prayer and Eucharist at the Anglican church. On Friday, we were invited to eat lunch with Dee and Ray, the American couple in residence at Jawalla to translate the Bible into Akawaio (ek-a-why-oh), the local language. Ray and Dee have been in residence for five years. They spent their first four years learning the language and giving it written form—Akawaio is an oral dialect. Now they are translating the Bible with a team of Amerindians brought in from throughout the region. At lunch, the whole team joins

under the thatched roofed, open eating area (like a covered picnic area) for a common meal. We were warmly welcomed by all and enjoyed the stories of many while eating "one pot," a hearty fried rice. The days ended with the loud "whistle" of a beetle that announces the setting of the sun—and sometimes the call of the baboons could be heard which resembled the sound of wind blowing through trees.

On Saturday, we joined the only other Christian church in the area for their weekly service. The Amokokopai Alleluia Church meets in a large, open thatched-roof building with backless benches circling the perimeter of the space. A simple table sat in the middle of the room with a basket on it for donations. We were invited to speak, and Winston translated what Julia said. The three hour service, held in Akawaio (Fr. Williams translated periodically), consisted of preaching and witnessing until the final hour when we joined arms for a meditative chant-dance. The words and steps were repetitive, making it easy for us to fully participate, even if we did not understand what we were singing. The dance concluded by moving everyone outside to another communal eating area where cassava bread, dried fish and cassak (a popular wine made from cassava) were served. While this was the "social hour after church" it felt more like Eucharist, or even the feeding of the 5,000. We were richly blessed indeed to be welcomed into the community.

Across the river and down the trail a bit, sits Jawalla's one store which sells a limited variety of packaged foods and supplies. Outside the store is a benched area

*Celian Roland,  
Barbara Baumgarten  
Fr. Charles Roland and  
Julia Bergstrom during  
sermon at church in  
Jawalla. Seated figure  
on right is lay reader  
and local midwife,  
Rita.*



with a television and VCR. A generator is used to power the unit. Arrangements were made for us to show our videos from the Santa Barbara convocation and to share about the Third Order with the local community. Many Amerindians came to hear and see the white visitors. Again, we experienced a warm welcome and strong interest in who we were and what we were about.

The Anglican church sits in the middle of the area where we stayed. It was surrounded by the Williams's rectory, the diocesan guest house, the local school and the Bible translation center. Services out of the *West Indies Book of Common Prayer* are held on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday with Morning Prayer preceding the Eucharist. On Sunday, Julia and I preached about TSSF. Fr. Roland recorded the sermon and Celian translated from English into Akawaio even though most of the congregation understands English. After Sunday services, we lunched then headed to the boat for our journey back to Imbaimadai.

Imbaimadai is a mining settlement which lacks the tranquility and cleanliness of Jawalla. The miners have a huge generator that runs loudly during the night in order for them to have light; when they have a successful day finding gold or diamonds, celebrations run at full volume through the night; their disregard for the environment is evident by the trash strewn about and the damage done to the river. An insult added to this injury is that a rancher died and his cows now roam freely through the settlement leaving their presence in evidence everywhere. However, Imbaimadai is a savannah that allows for incredible views of Guyana's countryside. Fr. Charles and Celian welcomed us into their home with grace. Celian spent the evening spinning cotton on a rudimentary spinner that used her thigh and nimble fingers. Once spun, the cotton will be used to make a hammock.

Due to unfavorable weather, the plane failed to pick us up on Monday morning. By the time the weather cleared, the pilot decided it was not worth making the trip. Fr. Charles and Fr. Winston radioed the pilot and

convinced him to find enough cargo to warrant the trip so that we could return to Georgetown. By 1:30 the plane arrived, and off we went bidding farewell to our wonderful hosts. What an incredible gift our days with the Rolands and Williams were! The flight out offered beautiful views of the jungle and Guyana's many waterfalls.

Our final day was spent at the annual Mother's Union meeting in Georgetown. The Mother's Union is a vital organization of Anglican church women throughout the Third World countries. At the meeting we were welcomed by Sheila George (the bishop's wife), reunited with Eunice, Laureen and Marjorie, and were invited to speak about TSSF. By the end of the day, 30 women expressed serious interest in the Third Order and are looking to make application. The day ended with Laureen Gordon leading the Mother's Union in a local folk song that had us all rocking with joy—a joy that expressed candidly our experience of visiting our brothers and sisters in Guyana.

### **Caribbean Regional Convocation**

The Caribbean Regional Convocation was held Jan. 31 to Feb. 2, 2003 at Vicki's Guest House on Tobago. It was well attended by Tertiaries from Trinidad, Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana. Julia Bergstrom, Provincial Chaplain, Barbara Baumgarten, Formation Director and Joan Verret, Fellowship Coordinator were Chapter representatives. Brother Dunstan was the First Order Visitor. The location was lovely with a view of the Atlantic Ocean. The food was wonderful.

Seven tertiaries made their Professions, The Rev. Claude Berkeley, the Rev. Hilton Bonas, The Rev Philip Isaac, Emeris Mckenzie, Francilla Rodreguez, Josephine Crooks and Stephanie Harrison.

Fr. Edwin Primus and Fr. Philip Issac led a very effective program on Team Building. Fr. Primus also served as the enthusiastic leader of group exercise and singing. During the Convocation a new Fellowship was formed for Tobago. Franciscan hospitality flowed through out the weekend and the rhythm of worship with the Daily Offices and Eucharist provided a setting for spiritual growth.



*Left to Right  
Brenda Cummings, Area Chaplain;  
Stephannie Harrison, Fr. Claude  
Berkeley; Josephine Crooks; Fr. Hilton  
Bonas; Julia Bergstrom, Provincial  
Chaplain (hidden Francilla Rodriguez);  
Fr. Philia Isaac; Emeris McKenzie.*

### Four Corners Fellowship

by Carol Tookey

In an area that encompasses four states and three dioceses, the Four Corners Fellowship represents a unique area of the U.S. – the great southwest. The Fellowship has been in existence for 20 years. We meet monthly for food and fellowship, worship, and a variety of programs that has included Franciscan study, Bible study, and contemplative prayer.

The Rev. Jack Fowler is a semi-retired priest and calls himself an “ecumaniac.” He has ministered on the Navajo reservation since the 1950’s, coming originally as a minister from the Church of the Nazarene. He has been a Mormon Bishop, and now assists in ministering to St. John’s Episcopal Church, Farmington as well as in the Arizona region of the Navajoland Church. He is also a regular preacher at the Fellowship of Spirit, a “new thought” congregation. He is married to Anna Fowler and has a large family of children and grandchildren.

Gary Hachadourian is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Farmington. He is a transplant to the 4 Corners from California. He is married to Joyce and has 2 adult children. He is a runner, bicyclist and hiker. In addition to doing *pro bonum* professional work as ministry, he serves on the Navajoland Diocesan Council.

Les Lundquist is a former painter, nursing assistant and farmer who is now attending college to study botany and environmental science. He is passionate about plants and how they fit into the environment. The concept of “permaculture” has made a deep and lasting impression and forms part of his spirituality. He ministers in the Navajoland Diocese in many ways, primarily in the area of building and grounds. He is married to Carol Tookey, another member of the fellowship.

The Rev. Hunt Peacock is Priest Associate at St. John’s Church, Farmington, and is a practicing physician in the area of addictions. He is a Farmington native, following in the footsteps of his physician father. In addition to parish ministry, Hunt is also an iconographer, using his spiritual and artistic gifts to help others to experience the Holy. He is married to Charlotte.

Ashley Shultz is one of our newer additions to the fellowship and has made a recent return to relationship with Christ. She worships at St. Mark’s Church, Durango, Colorado. She is a physicist who is a professor in physics and astronomy at Ft. Lewis College. Ashley is also a musician, playing the violin and, more recently, the viola. She is an organic gardener and knows intimately the struggles of keeping things alive in our dry climate. She is engaged to be married to

another member of our fellowship, Jonathan Steinhart. Ron Smith is a “gentleman farmer” who lives in Cortez, CO and worships at St. Barnabas’ Parish there. He is a retired doctor who spent his last few years of practice on the Navajo Reservation, nearby. He is active in the free lunch program at St. Barnabas’ Church, Cortez. He is married to Judy.

Jonathan Steinhart, Ashley’s fiancé, lives in Shiprock, NM and alternates between worshipping at St. Mark’s, Durango, and being the music minister at St. Augustine’s, Shiprock. He has been employed for Indian Health Services for over 20 years and currently works as an obstetrician/gynecologist. He is an outdoor enthusiast and is very involved in music. He has sung in choirs all over the world and currently sings with the Durango Choral Society. In addition to his vocal talent, he also plays guitar, piano, recorder and Indian flute.

Judi Thomas has recently returned to the 4 Corners and to Franciscan formation. She currently lives with her 2 dogs at “Dzilh na o dilth le” – a clinic/ school compound on the Navajo reservation where she works as a Registered Nurse. Judi is a social activist whose ministry goes back to working for peace with Daniel Berrigan and working at Catholic Worker houses. She is a mother and grandmother. She is an inspiration to creativity and trying out new ideas.

Carol Tookey is married to Les Lundquist. She serves as priest in the Navajoland diocese. She and Les recently returned to the southwest from a six-year venture in the heartland. She has served in the TSSF formation program for many years and is currently on Chapter. She is also a nurse and does volunteer ministry for public health nursing on the Navajo reservation. Jack Yerby is a long-time member of St. John’s, Episcopal Church. He is currently employed there in the church office. He has been an organist for St. John’s for many years. He is also a professional personal trainer. He is a former French teacher and has made trips to France. He is a gifted preacher and teacher.

### Franciscans and Hunting?

Dear John,

Please help me with this question.

I was talking to a parishioner last Sunday at coffee hour about hunting. We have been “hunting partners” for years, and he was telling me about a new bow that he just purchased. Another parishioner jumped in and asked how I could hunt and still be a “Franciscan,” given the Blessing of the Animals, the Sermon to the Birds, etc.

(continued on page 12)

**Franciscans and Hunting (cont.)**

I talked about the food chain as the natural order of things and the Native American idea of the animal giving up its life; sacrificing, if you will so that the hunter and family could survive. My wife is Chipewewa-Cree, and I learned this from hunting with her brothers. I explained my hunting "code" (based on Native traditions) to the skeptical inquirer.

1. We only shoot what I and my family are prepared to eat, and eat what we shoot. Nothing is wasted. We hunt deer, elk, moose and an occasional bear. Any extra meat is donated to the God's Love Shelter, which they welcome.
2. After a kill, the hunter always thanks the spirit of the dead animal for giving its life for his/her family. Actually there is a short formal ceremony that occurs. A liturgy, if you will, common to many Plains tribes. It is a purification rite that is done before praying that involves burning sweetgrass or rolled wild sage. In our parish, we also use it as part of our House Blessings. Some tribes use cedar flakes or chips. A small, flat stone is carried in the hunter's pack or one is found on site. The braided sweetgrass or rolled sage is lit with a wooden match. Only natural things, things of the earth can be used...no lighters, propane torches or anything like that. Then the hunter "washes" in the smoke of the smoldering sweetgrass or sage to purify body and spirit and the rising smoke helps the prayer lift to God. As the hunter prays the sage is laid on the flat stone, and the rising smoke kind of "helps the prayer along." It also smells beautiful. Any prayer of thanksgiving can be used. The animal is also "blessed" with the smoke, thanked, and a prayer for a good journey for the animal's spirit is usually offered. The symbols are similar to many in our Christian tradition. The sage smoke...incense. The flat stone could be seen as a "mini-altar"...creating "sacred space" if you will.
3. The carcass is always treated with reverence for it is a gift from the Great Spirit. This is another Native concept that I have learned. It is always covered when transporting; never thrown over the hood of a vehicle or thrown up on the roof rack.

He was still not convinced that any "true" Franciscan could kill an animal, even for food. Can you offer some guidance here?

Best regards,  
Joe Scheeler

**Book Review: Salvation: Scenes from the Life of St. Francis, by Valerie Martin.**

Vintage Books 2001.

by Carol Tooke

St. Francis may have the most biographies of anyone in history. So one wonders: what's the value of one more. However, this biography by Valerie Martin is a welcome addition. Based on Italian frescoes depicting the life of St. Francis, its word pictures are vibrant and colorful. The stories are fresh and make Francis and his companions come alive. The book begins at the end of Francis's life and goes back through his life, ending with his conversion. While the stories may be familiar, the telling might just make him that more much interesting and loveable.

For example:

*The novice has demonstrated, the custos admits, that he can read the Psalter, albeit haltingly, with curious lapses in pronunciation and the toneless accent of a schoolboy, but he thinks he reads excellently and has somehow extracted from his minister permission to have a psalter of his own. Then, of course, some of his fellow friars have told him that Father Francesco expressly forbids the friars to own books, so he has gotten it into his head that he will have no peace with his until Francesco gives him a special dispensation to have it...*

*"You know it is against our rule," Francesco says, "for any friar to possess more than one tunic, quilted if he likes, a cord, and breeches?"*

*The eager eyes dart upward, engaging momentarily a directness of inquiry that makes it impossible for him to say more than "Yes, Father."*

*Francesco leans away from the youth and holds his hands out to the fire as if he might solicit a decision from it. He turns his hands palm-down, warming them, and speaks in a voice heavy with fatigue. "If you have a Psalter," he says, "then you will want a breviary. And when you have a breviary, you will sit in your stall like a grand prelate and say to your brother, 'Hand me my breviary.'"*

*Francesco rises to his feet. The novice steps back and manages a feeble protest which dies in his throat.*

*Francesco kneels at the hearth, his back to the youth, takes up a handful of ashes and, raising his hand high, pours the ashes over his own head. Illuminato looks on curiously, and the custos, alerted by the sudden, ponderous silence behind him, turns on his stool to watch. Francesco rubs the ashes down over his forehead, then around his cheeks and over his chin as if washing himself. "I, a breviary," he says, closing his eyes, intoning, like a chant. "I, a breviary." And he repeats this action and this phrase until the novice, alarmed and thoroughly perplexed, slowly backs away and lets himself out of the door he came in."*

## People Who Work Growing Franciscans!

(from *Franciscans Canada* newsletter Easter 2002)

### Captain Patrick Lublink Corps Officer – The Salvation Army Bloor Central Corps

Captain Patrick Lublink immigrated to Canada from Belgium as a child. Prior to becoming a Salvation Army officer, he served in the Canadian military in a non-combat role for 22 years including two overseas assignments.

In addition to his undergraduate work at the Salvation Army Training College in Toronto, Patrick holds a Master of Divinity (Pastoral Focus) from Tyndale Seminary.

Patrick is the Corps Officer (senior pastor) of the Salvation Army Bloor Central Corps (church) in Toronto. In addition to his regular pastoral responsibilities, he is responsible for an extensive social outreach program.

Patrick was drawn to a Franciscan spirituality because of St. Francis of Assisi's passion for God and for all creation. He has traveled twice to Assisi. In 1996 he became aware of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans and was the first to be professed in Canada in July 2001. He presently serves as a formation counsellor and co-convenor of the Toronto OEF fellowship. Patrick is presently supervising three people in the formation process to become professed members of the OEF.

Patrick is married to Valerie and together they have five children – Sarah, Rachel, Peter, David and Myriam.

### The Rev. Richard Roberts—Canada's Only TSSF Deacon

I frequently am asked, "Where are you from?" To such a question my normal answer is "I am not sure." I was born in Liverpool, England, brought up in Holyhead, North Wales until I was 10. In 1959 we moved to Nigeria, West Africa and stayed there until 1967 when the Biafran War started. I left there returning to the UK for a brief period and came to the Vancouver area where I have been since my arrival.

I got married to Jenny in 1972, and we have three daughters, Christine (22) Patricia (19) and Mary (17). I have two male dogs but they don't help very much.

I am a vocational/permanent deacon, ordained in 1997. I attend St. Mark's Anglican Church in Ocean Park in South Surrey with my family; however I am not licensed to the parish as a deacon. I am the Mission Administrator, managing the two facilities for the Mission to Seafarers in Vancouver, a service club that

ministers to the needs of Seafarers from all around the world. I also visit berthed ships, bringing magazines to the Seafarers and inviting them to visit the Mission. We hold a Eucharist service in our chapel weekly for the seafarers. Although the Mission is an Anglican mission it operates ecumenically with chaplains coming from Anglican, Christian Reformed and Roman Catholic churches. (Visit our website at <http://www.flyingangel.ca>)

Every day has its new challenge; it is through the dedicated help of staff and volunteers from the three denominations that we are able to carry out our ministry. In 2001 the Mission to Seafarers visited 2880 ships and we had over 18,800 seafarers visit our two facilities in our port.

Other areas of my ministry include being the director of an ecumenical refugee sponsorship organization called the Inter-Church Refugee Project (ICRP). Started in 1995, ICRP is made up of a co-op of 11 churches from the Anglican, United, Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran and Presbyterian churches. So far we have sponsored 11 families (44 people). It is great to see our congregations working together to help people start a new life in Canada.

In mid September, I started my new appointment as chaplain to our Bishop accompanying him as he visits various parishes around the diocese to model diaconal ministry in the diocese.

I am currently a novice, and I believe I am the only TSSF deacon in Canada.

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

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

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

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

**Statutes** (\$1)

*Devotional Companion* (\$4.50)

### **Please Note:**

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

### Retreat in Preparation for Profession To the Third Order, Society of St. Francis

by Julia Bergstrom, Provincial Chaplain, and Barbara Baumgarten, Formation Director

Making one's Profession is a lifelong commitment and should not be entered into lightly. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you make a retreat of at least 24 hours of silence in preparation. The retreat may be self-directed or you may opt to schedule a director and/or a spiritual direction session during your retreat.

In addition to a retreat, it is suggested that all candidates study the Provincial Statutes before Profession. Full preparation for the responsibility of profession requires that we understand the "basics" of how the Order works, and that we know and understand the Principles and Rule.

Below is a suggested format for your retreat. The activities might include journaling, centering prayer, manual labor, resting and/or walking. Reading is not recommended. The format is based upon a retreat that begins after dinner on an evening and concludes with Evening Prayer said just before dinner the following day. Please adjust to fit the actual time frame that you choose to observe.

#### Opening Meditation

Then St. Francis...arose with fervor, saying, "Let us go in the name of God;" and taking with him Br. Masseo and Br. Agnolo, both holy men, he let himself be guided by the Spirit of God, without considering the road he took. They soon arrived at a town called Savurniano, where St. Francis began to preach, first to the swallows, who were calling, to keep silence until he had finished; and the swallows obeyed his voice. He preached with such fervor, that the inhabitants of the town wished to follow him out of devotion; but St. Francis would not allow them, saying: "Be not in such haste, and leave not your homes. I will tell you what you must do to save your souls." Thereupon he founded the Third Order for the salvation of all; and leaving them much consoled and well disposed to do penance, he departed.

from *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*

Read and meditate on: John 17: 13-23

#### Concluding Collect:

O God, your love led Francis and Clare to establish our three orders: draw us into your love, that, in its perfection we may grow in love towards all with whom we have to do; for the sake of Jesus our Savior, who gave himself in love to all. Amen.

Collect for the Three Orders

Activity  
Compline  
Sleep  
Morning Prayer  
Breakfast

#### Meditation

O God, who opened the eyes of blessed Francis to the vocation of those whom you have called to serve you in the world, grant such grace to the members of the Third Order that, being crucified with Christ, we may show forth the

radiance of his risen life, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

from *The Devotional Companion*

Read and meditate on: Matthew 25: 31-46

#### Concluding Collect:

Lord God, you came among us as a servant: fill us with your humility that we may, like Francis, forget ourselves for love of you and in compassion for others; and in the lonely, the rejected, the deprived and the imprisoned find Christ our Lord.

Collect for St. Francis

Activity  
Noonday Prayer  
Lunch  
Rest/Walk

#### Meditation

God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through it the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. It means nothing whether one is circumcised or not. All that matters is that one is created anew. Peace and mercy on all who follow this rule of life, and on the Israel of God. Henceforth, let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus.

from Galatians 6: 14-17

Read and meditate on: I Peter 2:1-5

#### Concluding Collect:

O Great God of glory, bring light to the darkness of my mind; give me right faith, certain hope and perfect charity, insight and wisdom so that always I may do everything in true keeping with your holy will. Amen.

Prayer of Conversion, St. Francis of Assisi

Activity

#### Closing Meditation

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that I receive, it is in pardoning that I am pardoned, and it is in dying that I am born to eternal life. Amen.

attributed to St. Francis

Read and meditate on: Matthew 5: 1-12

#### Concluding Collect:

May the power of your love, O God, fiery and sweet as honey, so absorb my heart as to withdraw it from all that is under heaven. Grant that I may be ready to die for love of your love as you died for love of mine. Amen.

The Absorbeat, St. Francis

#### Evening Prayer

**Terry Rogers Returns to the Middle East**

Since I returned from my recent trip to the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine), when people have asked me, "How was your trip?" the first words out of my mouth are, "the almond trees are blooming." These lovely trees look like apple or cherry trees - they are bare with delicate pale pink flowers. A member of our delegation told me that, just before we left, the Jewish festival Tu B'Shvat was celebrated, a feast of trees, with special attention to the almond tree.

I looked up almonds in my Bible concordance, because I remembered something about Aaron's rod blossoming. In Numbers 17:8 his rod sprouted, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds, as a sign of God's trust in him and as a warning for his people to "cease their grumbling."

Other images from the journey - our group standing in the mild winter sunshine on top of Mt. Nebo in Jordan, gazing across the Jordan River into the West Bank. Here Moses is said to have stood and seen the promised land, knowing he would never cross that river.

We meet a very old man in a refugee camp in south Lebanon, born in Palestine under the British Mandate. Eight of us Americans crowded into his tiny room on a cold rainy afternoon as a young man translated the old man's memories of a land and culture impossibly loving and beautiful, fervently and tenderly remembered. He, like Moses, was close to the border, but he would never again set foot in his longed-for homeland.

The people in Numbers 16 were suffering from a plague as a consequence of their grumbling. At Moses' command, Aaron lighted incense in a censor and ran among the people, "standing between the dead and the living," and the plague stopped. And it was after this that his rod burst into flower.

There are many in this part of the world still standing between the dead and the living, seeking to stop the plague of human misery and death. I could give examples, carefully balanced between peace groups and activists in both the Palestinian and Israeli communities. But as I prepare to do this my eyes fill with tears and I realize I CANNOT BEAR to talk about Palestinians and Israelis, about "this side" and "that side."

Don't we know, do we have to be told, that courage and love are found in all human communities? What difference does it make who has put down the gun, who is doing non-violence training, who is organizing peaceful resistance, who is teaching their children to walk in justice and peace? These are our brothers and sisters, period. And so are the soldiers and the bombers, the angry and the hopeless. Just now I can't bear to separate and distinguish them, even in words.

These almond trees have seen a lot of people come and go: Canaanites, Israelites, Babylonians, Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, Persians, Turks, British, Israelis, Jordanians, Palestinians....Many national identities are now in the dust, and the human creatures are now living together in the heavenly kingdom.

The almond tree is one of the first plants to flower in the Holy Land. Thus it stands, in a way, between the living and the dead, between winter and spring. Are these flowers warning me to cease my grumbling? There's a spiritually dangerous place of self-righteousness and despair that can look much like compassion and a longing for justice. Trying to struggle for the oppressed can lead me to despise political leaders, feel superior to those who seem indifferent or uncaring, to resent the powerful who bulldoze the weak and innocent. It is really no better to grumble on someone else's behalf than on my own. Both are actions (at least for me) that put God and me on different "sides." On this journey, there were times when I was aware of the spiritual winter and the spiritual springtime, and of needing to choose, moment by moment, where I wanted to be.

And the almond blossoms beckoned me forward into the light. Sharing food around family tables was a blessing. Synagogues, churches and mosques bathed us in prayer. Seeing a father scoop a small child into his arms and nestle it against his chest, I imagine God is saying: "This is how I love my children."

Sisters and brothers, God wants me to pray and work for peace and justice with the greatest possible joy and serenity, keeping my gaze on that blossoming garden where creation began, and where we will meet each other and the Lord at the end.

Note: You can read reports of each day's journey, written by various delegates on this trip, at [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org). (Trip from January 25-February 8).

**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  
[jbrockma@udel.edu](mailto:jbrockma@udel.edu)

### ***Economy of Neighbors***

*By Carol Tookey*

Walter Bruegemann, in his essay "placed" between promise and command, writes about an 'economy of neighbors.' He contrasts the conventional economy of the Canaanites – a society of 'haves' and 'have-nots,' with the Mount Sinai Covenant. He states Moses' vision of the transformation of the land is based on a covenantal social relationship between the weak and the strong, the haves and the have-nots. He further states that the command of God (that all members of society be cared for, the orphans and widows, even those who have sold themselves into slavery because of debt) "anticipates not simply modest acts of charity and compassion but a major transformation of economics whereby poverty is eradicated in a community that handles its wealth in genuinely neighborly ways. The radicality of this core provision can hardly be overstated. Indeed, the healthy transformation of Israel's place requires a break with both a conventional market economy and a state economy. Moses anticipates an economy of neighbors, a practice that holds for Israel not only in a simple face-to-face economy, but in every attempt to establish visible community."

Perhaps this 'economy of neighbors' was part of Francis' vision when he embraced Lady Poverty. He had obviously spent his upbringing in a conventional economy – an economy which, while developing a middle class, still consisted of the haves and the have-nots. Having been convicted about giving alms to the poor 'for the love of God,' he promised never to deny anyone who begged of him in the Lord's name. But he rightly saw that a hand out was not the vision of Jesus and the gospel. So he took the more radical step of becoming one with the poor – with being a neighbor to the poor.



We live in a world that is as far away from an economy of neighbors as can be imagined, where billions of dollars are exchanged daily that have nothing to do with the transfer of goods and services, where wealth is routinely transferred from the have-nots to the haves. It is an economy which encourages the breakdown of families and communities by its very instability – transferring jobs around the globe to minimize labor costs thereby maximizing profits for the worlds' elites.

How can we, as a community of Christians who desires to follow Francis's little way reclaim that vision of an economy of neighbors? In a church that has, for the most part, capitulated to the capitalist world view, how can we be a seed of change? Can we catch a glimpse of that vision that Moses saw – a community based on justice and compassion? Can we see beyond our own broken reality to catch sight of the Reign of God where it is the poor who are blessed and the meek who inherit the earth? Can we be bold enough to find ways in our own lives and circumstances to join Francis in envisioning an economy of neighbors?

### **Obituaries**

#### **Mary Lillian Wilkes**

Mary Lillian Wilkes, died on Friday January 24th after a massive stroke and coma. Born Jan 10, 1925, in Waco Texas, she was a former church secretary at St. Paul's Church in Fayetteville Arkansas and at St. Martin's University Center. At St. Paul's Church, she was also on its Healing Ministry Team. Professed in 1987, she was a member of the Third Order, and was preceded in death by her husband, Joseph Wray Wilkes, who was also a Third Order member. Mary Lil was one of the last three surviving members of the Arkansas Fellowship.

#### **The Right Reverend Paul Moore**

The Right Reverend Paul Moore, retired bishop of New York, died at home peacefully today. Bishop Moore, one of the great urban bishops of the Episcopal Church and champion of justice in and outside of the Church, served as Bishop Protector of the Third Order for many years.

A requiem mass will be celebrated in honor of his life at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, New York City. Give thanks for this giant of faith and witness. Peace be with you, Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF Minister Provincial

### ***Mustard Seed Fellowship Retreat and Celebration of Profession, April 26, 2003***

By Janet Wakefield

On Friday and Saturday of Easter Week, our fellowship had double joy! First, Fr. Masud Syedullah joined us at our Easter retreat at St. Margaret's House. Masud talked about some of the themes and biblical passages of the Great Vigil of Easter, invited us to reflect in silence on how they may have resonated in our lives.

On Saturday morning, we celebrated a Franciscan Eucharist, and I was professed. Masud celebrated the Eucharist with Fr. Bob Graham, my spiritual director of eight years, and Linda King Watkins, our fellowship convenor, con-celebrating. Marcia played the organ, Linda received my vows, and Masud sang the Litany. After lunch, some of us danced an Alleluia/Easter dance of rejoicing.

It feels different being professed! A week before profession, on Holy Saturday, I did a 24-hour plus silent retreat which the formation team recommends and for which it provides guidelines (see page 14). During that time in silence the realization that I would be taking life vows really hit me. This is for keeps! I feel a great sense of peace about giving myself to our Lord Jesus Christ and a sense of trust that he will take me where I need to be. During the retreat it came to me that instead of me "trying", it is really me "letting" God live in me and through me. I will be in good company with all of my brothers and sisters!

I've loved being formed and I am grateful for the love and caring, time and attention of my formation counselors and directors, my spiritual director, and my fellowship. God is so good!

### ***Expressions of Francis***

Are you a teacher? A programming analyst? A gardener? Do you live amid buildings and streets? Are you prairie-bound? Is your address in Silicon Valley? East Coast Megalopolis? As many as there are TSSF-ers, that's how many ways we express Francis in our lives. We're beginning a new series in the *Times*, devoted to sharing the myriad ways we all live out our Franciscan connection.

Each of us faces unique challenges to our faith, as well as unique opportunities to live it. Our series will present as many different faces of Francis/Clare as we can. Janet Woodward is collecting four-paragraph (okay—three!) modules. Sharpen your pencils and let her hear from you! (She'll even write it for you, if you give her the details, and she may be calling you to participate!) Our first *Expressions* will appear in the next issue of *Franciscan Times*. You can reach Janet on e-mail at [woodwrdtssf@yahoo.com](mailto:woodwrdtssf@yahoo.com).

*Left to right: Sonya Boyce, Linda King Watkins, Fellowship Convenor, Masud Syedullah, Peggylee Stephens, Janet Wakefield, Bob Wakefield, Marcia Shaw, Lynne Herne, Fr. Bob Graham, spiritual director, and Al Layo, aspirant.*



Send in your contributions to the Summer issue! The deadline is July 1.

## Inside this Issue

- Letter From Our Minister Provincial On War and Easter, 1
- Building Peace in Central Africa, 2
- Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creating, 3
- Franciscan Cross-hairs (a poem), 3
- Peace and Justice listserv, 3
- Crystal Bradford's Postulancy, 4
- Dear Dada (a poem), 5
- Fuller Partnership for Latin America in the American Province, 6
- Guyana 2003, 8
- Caribbean Regional Convocation, 10
- Four Corners Fellowship, 11
- Franciscans and Hunting?, 11
- *Salvation: Scenes from the Life of St. Francis* (a book review), 12
- People Who Work! Captain Patrick Lublink Corps Officer, 13
- People Who Work! The Rev. Robert Richards, 13
- Retreat in Preparation for Profession to the Third Order, 14
- Terry Rogers Returns to Middle East, 15
- *Economy of Neighbors* (a book review), 16
- Obituaries: Mary Lillian Wilkes, The Right Reverend Paul Moore, 16
- Mustard Seed Fellowship Retreat and Celebration of Profession, April 26, 2003, 17
- Expressions of Francis, 17
- Hot News, 18