



# The Franciscan Times

Pentecost 2004

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 ■

## TSSF and OSF (Brazil) sign Concordat!

*Barbara Baumgarten*

Last October at Little Portion, Chapter drafted a concordat inviting the Order of Saint Francis (OSF) of Brazil to join the Third Order, Province of the Americas (see *Franciscan Times* Advent 2003 issue). To follow-up on that decision, four delegates—Masud Ibn Syedullah, Minister Provincial; David Catron, translator; Anita Catron, Los Latinos Coordinator and myself, Barbara Baumgarten, Formation Director—went to Brazil from April 19 to May 3, to meet with the various OSF fraternities (a.k.a. fellowships) throughout Brazil.

We began with a visit in São Paulo to the Regional Guardian, the Rev. César Alves, Brazil's equivalent to a Minister Provincial. After a day in São Paulo, David and I traveled overnight by bus to Araçatuba in the state of São Paulo, to meet with the Rev. Sérgio Pacheco and their local fraternity. The Diocese of São Paulo has recently purchased a farm for the Franciscan community to operate as a drug rehab residential program for teens. This program trains them in farming, community living and academics. Currently, the farm includes a house for twelve, and another for two Franciscan brothers. However, in the near future, three more buildings will be constructed: one for housing forty teens, one for offices and community activities, and another for a retreat/conference center.

While David and I were in Araçatuba, Masud and Anita traveled to Rio de Janeiro where they met with

Rio Diocesan Bishop, Dom Celso de Oliviera and the Rev. Stephen Taylor (an English-Portuguese speaker) at the Cathedral. At a fraternity meeting of OSF members, Masud and Anita had a chance to talk about TSSF both in the Americas as well as its worldwide community. Later at the Eucharist, Masud received Bishop Celso as a postulant. It was a joyous occasion; a Roman Catholic friar friend of the Bishop delivered the sermon making it a truly ecumenical event.

After the service, 75 people gathered for a reception honoring both the Bishop and the TSSF visitors. The next day, Masud and Anita took a bus past the famous *Christ the Redeemer* figure on Corcovado Mountain, the well-known beaches, and finally to the "City of God" (Cidade de Deus) in the outskirts of Rio. (The "City of God" was featured in a recent motion picture of the same name.) A large population was moved by the government from the beaches to this new location. Nearby is the Episcopal Church, a center for Franciscan social ministries where some literacy is taught to both adults and children.



*Masud Ibn Syedullah, Minister Provincial, receiving Dom Celso Franco de Oliveira, Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, as a Postulant.*

*Masud Ibn Syedullah, Anita Catron, and César Alves, with Franciscan brothers at The City of God, Rio de Janeiro.*



*The Araçatuba fellowship: (left to right, front) First Order Br. Severino, Elisabet Pessoa, Rosanna Pacheco w/daughter Laura, Alvaro Antunes, (2<sup>nd</sup> row) Barbara Baumgarten, Rev. Sérgio Pacheco (guardian), David Catron, (in back) Br. Laurindo.*

Two issues of a community newspaper have been published, and the intention of the paper

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*Regional Chapter gathering at Caruaru.*

is to involve the whole "City of God" community. Everything is done on a shoestring but well and with heart. For Masud and Anita it was unforgettable; the level of commitment and courage of the Franciscans engaged in this ministry is reminiscent of the early days of Francis and the Franciscan movement. Next on their itinerary, Masud, David, Anita, and I traveled to Caruarú, in the state of Pernambuco in Brazil's North-west. There we met in a regional Chapter meeting with representatives from most of Brazil's fraternities (Recife, Caruarú, Natal, São Paulo, and Paraíba).

After a morning of prayer and Franciscan reflection and study, the concordat was read, discussed and unanimously ratified!

The Regional Chapter meeting closed with Eucharist

*A spontaneous dance in celebration at after the closing Eucharist of the Regional Chapter at Caruaru which voted unanimously, to enter TSSF.*



and sharing. The Franciscans were the first guests at a newly opened retreat center which was transformed from a couple's villa home.

From Caruarú, the TSSF delegation flew via the Recife airport to the southern city of Porto Alegre in the state of Rio Grande de Sul. We were met by Christina Winnischofer, the General Secretary of the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil (IEAB), the Anglican Province of Brazil. Christina did much for the delegation; she arranged all of our in-country travel, hosted us in Porto Alegre, and introduced us to the Primate of Brazil, Dom Orlando Santos de Oliveira who then explained that the initiation of a Franciscan order in Brazil was his long held dream. After hearing the details about TSSF he signed the concordat and offered ongoing support. Dom Orlando noted that the TSSF's presence was not an U.S. American idea, but a response to Brazil's invitation.

*Masud Ibn Syedullah and César Alves with Dom Orlando Santos de Oliveira, Primate of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil, as he signs the concordat, pledging his support.*



Masud, David Anita and I then boarded a bus and headed six hours west to Santa Maria where Bishop Jubal Neves had been trying for ten years to create a Franciscan presence in his diocese. We met with a dozen people who were anxious to explore TSSF, especially the *Principles* and the structure of the Order (the Community Rule and the personal rule). Bishop Jubal showed us the diocesan food project where bread is baked, and produce and medicinal herbs grown. This food project is a cooperative effort with the community of Santa Maria to help feed the poor and fund the diocese.

A visit to the 100-year-old cathedral concluded Masud's and Anita's visit to Brazil; Masud headed home to New York, and Anita set out to host a Franciscan encounter in San Juan, Puerto Rico (see page 23 of this issue).

David and I rode six hours by car to Concórdia, in the state of Santa Catarina, to stay in the home of Luiz and Lúcia Sirtoli. Luiz had been a Roman Catholic Franciscan friar for 16 years before marrying Lúcia. Thus Luiz has a profound understanding of the religious life, in general, and the Franciscan charism in particular. Luiz and Lúcia share in daily devotions that include song, scripture and meditation. (David and



*The profession of Rev. Luiz Sirtoli at the convention of the Diocese Sul-Occidental, Erechim.*

Barbara were deeply moved by one of their meditations, and include it here at the end of the article for your use.) David and I concluded our time in Brazil by attending the Diocese of Santa Maria's convention at the invitation of Bishop Jubal. There was repeated allusions to the Franciscan life throughout the convention, and a warm embrace for us. At the closing Eucharist, 12 new members were welcomed into the Franciscan Order. It was a moment of profound joy and humility; indeed it was a tangible moment of being "bound into a living whole through the love we share in Christ" (*Principles*, Day 27).

## **The Lord Gave Me Brothers (and Sisters)— Luiz and Lúcia Sirtoli**

**Self-examen:** I present myself before the Lord who gives me brothers (and sisters). I ask God for the grace to see myself as I am, and how I may grow in fraternal love. The questions that follow are mere suggestions:

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## **A Coincidence of Articles Entitled Perfect Joy?**

### ***An Interpretation of Francis' Perfect Joy***

*Andrew Wilkes*

First of all, the question about perfect joy needs to be translated into a modern idiom. In today's terms Br. Leo was asking Francis to explain the meaning of life.

The story about perfect joy is about one of Francis' own experiences. Francis and Brother Leo had been out on a preaching mission. As they were returning home, the weather turned nasty. Francis and Leo had traded their habits for the cloths of a beggar they had met on their journey. They didn't stop at an inn on the way home when the weather got bad. All the inns were full and they didn't have any money.

All the homeless people who lived within walking distance of the friary had come to the friary because they knew they would be allowed in. The weather had been bad for several days. The regular porter had been up through the night for several nights in a row and had yielded his post to a newly arrived, younger brother. The Order was in a period of explosive growth. The replacement porter had never met Francis.

*(continued on page 4)*

### ***Perfect Joy Being Franciscan—Kathleen Collado***

*Joachim Bakey*

*Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before Him, singing for joy. (Psalm 100, v.1)*

Perfect joy was being Franciscan for Kathleen Collado. Her hunger for God took her all over the world. God's name was Joy. She searched for this Joy as a spiritual leader in the New Age movement. Her God of Joy was a raging fire. She preached around the world as a Pentecostal minister for eight years. Her all-consuming desire for God brought her to a beautiful cathedral in Russia, where the God of Joy took possession of her. From there she was led to the Episcopal communion where every liturgy filled her with Joy. Her prayer became "increase my love for you, Jesus, to the maximum degree possible." This prayer was answered, and the Lord brought her and her husband, Angel, to the Franciscan Third Order. They lived this Franciscan prayer: " O Lord Jesus fill us with the radiance of your love and joy. Melt us down and fuse us with you so that nothing can get us out of you or you out of us, and

*(continued on page 5)*

## **St. Francis and Perfect Joy—The Traditional Version**

(Found on the web at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ugolino/flowers.iii.viii.html>)

Brother Leo wondered much within himself; and, questioning the saint, he said: "Father, I pray thee teach me wherein is perfect joy."

St Francis answered: "If, when we shall arrive at St Mary of the Angels, all drenched with rain and trembling with cold, all covered with mud and exhausted from hunger; if, when we knock at the convent-gate, the porter should come angrily and ask us who we are; if, after we have told him, 'We are two of the brethren', he should answer angrily, 'What ye say is not the truth; ye are but two impostors going about to deceive the world, and take away the alms of the poor; begone I say.'"

If then he refuse to open to us, and leave us outside, exposed to the snow and rain, suffering from cold and hunger till nightfall—then, if we accept such injustice, such cruelty and such contempt with patience, without being ruffled and without murmuring, believing with humility and charity that the porter really knows us, and that it is God who maketh him to speak thus against us, write down, O Brother Leo, that this is perfect joy.

**Perfect Joy, The Traditional Version (cont.)**

And if we knock again, and the porter come out in anger to drive us away with oaths and blows, as if we were vile impostors, saying, 'Begone, miserable robbers! to the hospital, for here you shall neither eat nor sleep—and if we accept all this with patience, with joy, and with charity, O Brother Leo, write that this indeed is perfect joy.

And if, urged by cold and hunger, we knock again, calling to the porter and entreating him with many tears to open to us and give us shelter, for the love of God, and if he come out more angry than before, exclaiming, 'These are but importunate rascals, I will deal with them as they deserve'; and taking a knotted stick, he seize us by the hood, throwing us on the ground, rolling us in the snow, and shall beat and wound us with the knots in the stick—if we bear all these injuries with patience and joy, thinking of the sufferings of our Blessed Lord, which we would share out of love for him, write, O Brother Leo, that here, finally, is perfect joy.

And now, brother, listen to the conclusion. Above all the graces and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit which Christ grants to his friends, is the grace of overcoming oneself, and accepting willingly, out of love for Christ, all suffering, injury, discomfort and contempt; for in all other gifts of God we cannot glory, seeing they proceed not from ourselves but from God, according to the words of the Apostle, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received from God? and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' But in the cross of tribulation and affliction we may glory, because, as the Apostle says again, 'I will not glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Amen."

**My Version (cont.)**

When Francis and Leo arrived at the friary, the porter had been up all night and he had had enough of being awakened every fifteen minutes by another homeless person. There was no more room in the friary. People were sleeping standing up. The porter finally had enough of Francis' continued knocking and began beating Francis and Leo with a piece of firewood to drive them away. A theoretical description of the circumstances that lead up to St. Francis' appearance at the San Damiano Friary door is the easy practical part of understanding what happened to St. Francis that cold winter day. The porter was angry enough to chase Francis and Leo into a ditch. In the ditch Francis had a mystical experience of God's love that touched the depth of his soul.

Mystical experiences are difficult to explain. We can't know the content of St. Francis' experience. By definition such content is unexplainable. There is yet more context that may explain how the experience came to take place. In the how rather than the why or the essence, it is possible to know something more about St. Francis' experience. There is great irony here. St. Francis has been forcefully turned away from his own home and he finds 'Perfect Joy' standing in a ditch. The contrast between expectation and reality is very extreme. This contrast may have pushed Francis to look anew at his relationship to God. A person who looks to God from an extreme point of view is bound to see new things.

A Franciscan philosophical point of view may also shed some light on St. Francis' experience. It is possible to understand Francis' life work as a continuing effort taken on his part to remove all the things that stood between himself and God. Most of the things that Francis identified as standing between him and God were material things. Francis was continually giving away whatever material possessions came into his hands. The description above of the circumstances that brought St. Francis to the door of San Damiano Friary had a great deal to do with Francis' drive to live a life of total poverty.

Francis was as poor as he could be the night he came to San Damiano. One can only imagine that he must have had expectations of the fellowship of friends, a warm, dry bed and some small amount of food to eat before going to sleep. The angry porter took these expectations away from St. Francis. Francis, with his will to remove all and everything that separated him from God may have seen this deprivation as a gift. Such an attitude from St. Francis would be consistent with many other situations where Francis responded to deprivation with thanks to God. It's a very short step from the gift to the Giver. St. Francis was a person primed to have a mystical experience. He purposefully gave away everything he had so that he could be vulnerable to God. When unexpectedly deprived of worldly comfort, Francis sees a God-given gift and uses that opportunity to take another step toward God.

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**Perfect Joy—Kathleen Collado (cont.)**

with your heart we will have unbounded love for all.”

In this glorious condition I met the Collados and they taught me what it really means to be a Franciscan. Kathleen had superb social work skills. She knew how to access the system. If a poor person needed help, she knew how to get it from the Church, the Federal government, the State, the County and private charities. She was so good at this that the Ecumenical Church Ministerium in the area she lived (Wind Gap, Pen Argle and West Bangor, PA) hired her to provide for their most destitute and hopeless poor. She joyfully took care of all these emergencies.

Angel and Kathleen loved their Franciscan life so much that they saturated themselves with Franciscanism. They celebrated the Office together, read all the Franciscan literature, said Franciscan prayers, filled their home with Franciscan images. Kathleen was skilled with the computer. She developed a Franciscan website. She founded a Franciscan outreach called Cardia Christ!, heart of Christ, which was her heart. The Collados formed a Third Order fellowship called Bethel Community, and invited me to belong. I accepted and got to know them well; I fell in love with them.

What amazed me the most about them was their positive attitude even in the worst kind of suffering. Kathleen had caught an incurable, rare, tropical disease when she was a Pentecostal missionary in Panama. It was a form of elephantiasis, a parasitic infection which causes an enormous enlargement of the infected parts of the body. The pain is very severe, and, after the antibiotics failed, she survived on morphine. For about two years, completely bedridden, she continued to help the destitute from her bed of pain. A few days before she died, even though she knew she was dying, she called me and asked that a priest be called to celebrate the Eucharist for an elderly group on Sunday, a group that she started at the Episcopal Apartments of the Slate Belt in West Bangor, where she lived.

Kathleen’s spiritual director and confessor., the Rev. Beth Haines, ministered to her shortly before she died. Fr. Nicholas Albanese, a fellow Franciscan priest and myself, along with Angel (truly her Angel) attended her the day she died on February 26, 2004, a week after her sixtieth birthday. Kathleen’s beautiful body was enormously enlarged due to her illness. However, her spirit of love and joy was magnified beyond measure. We miss her very much, but she is in our hearts forever, and we will see her again. She taught us that perfect joy is being Franciscan!

P.S. There are no words for her and there are not

enough words for her. I wrote this from my heart. She had the most humiliating illness you can imagine. She never complained. She accepted her illness totally. She was filled with humility, that mysterious virtue that is the gateway to all the virtues.

**From Dioscean Paper**

**Sister Kathleen Collado**, 60, of Bangor, died Feb. 26 in her home. She was married to Angel Collado. She was a secretary for the Slate Belt Ministerium. Also a minister, she did missionary work around the world.

She was a founder and mission coordinator and Christian life counselor of the Cardia Christian Community, a Christian community of Episcopal and Lutheran missionaries and advocates serving Christ by ministering to people in need. The community maintains a web site, with listings of social services, medical organizations, and Christian education resources. According to Canon Clifford Can, Sister Kathleen “had an incredible ministry of advocating for the least and the lost. When she arrived in the Slate Belt she took over the outreach of the area ministerium to any and all who needed help of any sort. She accomplished wonders over the telephone and touched many lives.”

## WAITING ON GOD

Harold Macdonald

Better to look towards God and see Him naught  
than view the world and see it all!  
To expect a Love which limits not  
than witness love that fails and falls!  
The former stretches soul and mind  
the latter, pallid, shrinks from hurts.  
The one seeks peace, its Source to find;  
with violence the other flirts.  
Better, kneeling, plead for light  
than picture phantoms in the dark.  
Prayer’s vacuum waits throughout the night,  
not distracted, startled by a bark.  
Unannounced God enters patient minds;  
the vacuum overflows as He the seeker, finds.

*Poems from the Eighth Decade*

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## People Who Work!

(reprinted from *Franciscans Canada*)

### ***Living and Moving in Love!***

Many of us live and move and minister in very different worlds still bringing the humble message of service and love in the spirit of Christ after the example of Francis of Assisi. The Rev. Alex Asmah has joined us for a while from one of those worlds that is very different from ours here in Canada. Alex comes from Ghana in Africa. He is married and has four children, a family who surely miss him while he studies here in Canada at St. Paul's University. Alex's wife teaches in a Junior Secondary School in Takoradi, Ghana.

Alex has studied in English and French schools and did his Licentiate in Theology work at St. Nicholas Theological College in Cape Coast, Ghana. He then did some advanced French Studies and Profound Studies in French at the University of Conakry.

Alex has spent three years as a teacher, two of the years teaching French. He has worked as a college and school chaplain, a teaching assistant in Greek Studies at the St. Nicholas Theological College. He was ordained a deacon in 1987 and a priest later that year, and has worked in several parishes and a cathedral in his home country. He also spent some time working in challenging conditions as a missionary in Senegal and Guinea. He has been honoured with awards from his area debating club, and cited by the British Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea for his church work there.

Alex was installed as Canon on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1997, and he became a professed member of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis in the African Province on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001.

Alex describes his homeland as peaceful and fruitful. Ghana is on the West Coast of Africa and is covered by tropical rainforests where they grow lots of cocoa beans.

Alex is presently working on a master's program in Pastoral Theology, exploring the connections between the language and culture of the people in his country with Christian traditions and message.

When individuals and/or local TSSF fellowships create websites that reference TSSF, it should be clearly indicated that the site is not an official site of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis in the Americas. Additionally, a link should be included to [www.tssf.org](http://www.tssf.org)

## An Experience of the Church in Nigeria

Rick Simpson

In late September 2003, I participated in a diocesan mission trip to the Diocese of Oji River, Nigeria to begin a new Diocesan Companion Relationship between the Dioceses of Long Island and Oji River.

In the Church in Nigeria, I witnessed a visible, palpable, real spirit of welcoming. St Francis had the gift of seeing the very presence of Christ in all people, and his final moment of conversion was to embrace the very people he feared the most. I saw and experienced this same spirit from the smallest mission churches in the bush that might only be a few hundred members to the huge parishes in the villages which might include 700 households with a average family having six members. There are 18 million Anglicans in Nigeria.

### **A Nigerian Welcome**

For a mile or so along dusty red dirt roads the people placed palm branches along the paths towards the Church. I was asked, "Do you see the palms? The people welcome you as they welcomed Jesus." Again and again we experienced this outward sign which was expressed in song as we approached dozens of parishes we visited. The people sang to us, "You are Welcome in the Name of the Lord, We see in you the beauty of the Lord, Your are Welcome in the name of the Lord." We would then be swept into the church with smiles, handshakes, and more songs,

This kind of welcoming was not just for visiting Americans. I saw this same exuberant welcome for newcomers at a regular Sunday Worship. The priest would ask all the newcomers to stand. The congregation then launched into the welcome song, "We see in you the beauty of the Lord, you are welcome in the name of the Lord" while they queued up to greet the newcomers and shake their hands. Sometimes this welcome might take 15 or more minutes.

This spirit of welcome did not stop there. In Nigeria, membership in the Church means you belong and participate in a seven day a week community. Belonging to the Church community is as real as belonging a biological family. It means fellowship, food, life itself in a country devoid of any social welfare systems. The Nigerian Church is growing because they have a zeal for others to join with them in their life in Christ.

What irony: in our western culture we may express a greater openness in our theology, but in the Diocese of Oji River I witnessed first-hand what an inviting Church feels like. Truly, we have important things to learn from each other.

**Franciscans Alive in Seattle**

Barbara Baumgarten

Imagine spending an evening playing Franciscan Jeopardy with categories ranging from Franciscan History, Franciscan Geography and Franciscans Today on a 4'x5' game board against contestant Br. Robert Hugh! Further the fun with snacks named after the *Canticle of the Sun* elements such as Sister Water in the guise of watermelon, Sister Earth in an oreo pudding cup complete with gummy worms, Brother Fire in a hot salsa, and Brother Wind in a bean dip. Such an evening did take place at last summer's Western Convocation hosted by the **St. Clare Fellowship of Seattle**, and is exemplary of the life, creativity and playfulness of this group of Tertiaries.

On Friday, February 13, 2004, two new members were professed into St. Clare's Fellowship: Bill Berge and Susan Pitchford. **Bill Berge** is the father of Br. Clark, SSF, prior at Little Portion. Bill's profession marked the



*The St. Clare Fellowship (l-r), back row: Edith Burkhalter (post), Steve Best ('93), Beverly Hosea ('84), Mary Lyons (asp), Susan Pitchford ('04), Tony Boxwell (nov), Adrienne Papermaster (asp), Darrell Powell (nov); front row: Dianne Aid ('93), Jeanette Hoerdts ('02), Bill Berge ('04), and Ella Maria Nora (trans).*



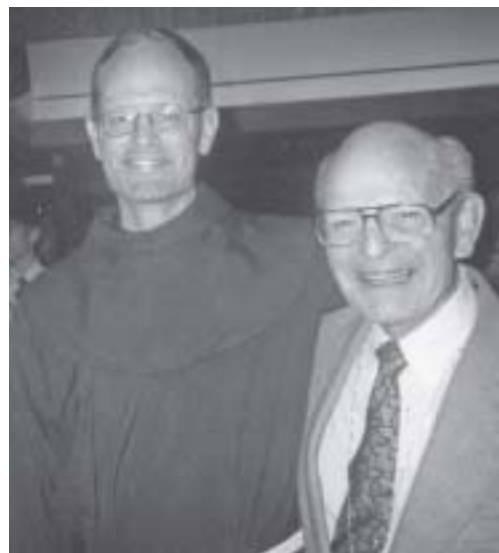
*The Rev. Marilyn Brandenburg ('94)*

first intergenerational membership between the first and third orders in the Society of St. Francis. Bill has been dubbed "the evangelist" of the Fellowship due to his enthusiastic spreading the word about TSSF at the cathedral center. **Susan Pitchford** is a sociologist and professor at the University of Washington with a focus in the area of race and ethnic relations. At work, at church, and in living daily life, Susan is dedicated to overcoming inequalities among people. These newly professed were guided through formation in a class setting led by Tertiary Marilyn Brandenburg.

**The Rev. Marilyn Brandenburg** is a native of Seattle who raised her family and taught first grade on Bainbridge Island. This is where she joined the Episcopal Church (1960's), and continues to worship and live today. After leaving teaching in 1988 to care for her elderly mother, she resumed her career as a jazz singer. Dedicated service to her community and her church, along with the spiritual direction of Gloria Goller, led Marilyn to the Third Order in 1990. The Principles and personal Rule of Life have guided her life ever since and she has, in many ways, spread the Gospel, as our brother, Francis, told us, without using words. Her prison ministry has been significant. Marilyn serves on Kairos weekends and is in her ninth year as a chaplain and pastoral care volunteer at the women's prison in Gig Harbor. In 2000, Marilyn was ordained to the diaconate which expanded her service to include two churches in addition to the prison.

Marilyn's prison ministry led her to persuade our sister, **Crystal Bradford**, currently a novice in TSSF. Crystal is involved in pastoral care as an inmate at the prison. One of Crystal's ministries at the prison is horticulture. Crystal has used gardening as a way to beautify the prison grounds and to reach her sister

inmates.  
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*Br. Clark with his newly professed tertiary dad, Bill Berge.*

**Alive in Seattle (cont.)**

Through digging in the dirt and making things grow, Crystal has shared God's love and brought hope to many whose lives are seemingly hopeless.

Last August, Caroline Benjamin, Bett Wood, and Barbara Baumgarten had the opportunity to visit Crystal with Marilyn's assistance. The prison grounds burst with flowers and joy, as did Crystal. Her enthusiasm for Christ and life permeated our experience in the prison. While visiting with Crystal in the chapel area, a number of inmates joined us. Then cake and ice cream were brought in—an unheard of incident within the prison walls. The surprise occasion was to honor Marilyn's ministry. While eating huge servings of the cake and ice cream, the inmates shared how Marilyn has touched and changed their lives—usually by her actions and not necessarily by words. We visitors were most fortunate to participate in this striking sharing of love and honor for one another.

Three tertiaries have joined together to live in intentional community. Last summer **Jeanette Hoerd** purchased a five bedroom rambler situated on the edge of a small northwest town (Burien) outside of Seattle and dubbed it "Clare Place." This working class dwelling in a peaceful setting is a "Tertiary place" where the Holy Spirit has called two others to join Jeanette to live.

The Third Order Rule is their common bond. Each one's prayer life, study and ministry is defined by each one's personal rule. Sharing the daily office, obedience and intercessions takes place in their modest oratory. The prayer room is situated in such a way that one must walk through it several times a day, and it serves as a reminder that their lives are centered in prayer.

Jeannette maintains the home through her loving and welcoming presence. She is a contemplative who spends a large part of her day in prayer, and in play with critters—domestic and feral. She keeps two bedrooms ready for guests who are welcome anytime for quiet retreat and to experience the blessings of Clare Place.



*Dianne Aid*

**The Rev. Beverly Hosea** is a priest who serves the diocese of Olympia as a transition specialist and interim priest to supplement her work as with the *Community of the Lamb*. She applies the Total Ministry and baptismal ministry models to congregations in transition between rectors and has found these models foster health in struggling parishes.

Beverly nurtures her spiritual life through a dedicated meditation practice that has generated the *Community of the Lamb*, an intercessory community centered in practicing the Prayer of the Lamb, "Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us". This ministry of intercession offers prayers for the whole world through personal prayer and meditation that is community based. Beverly offers instruction in the concept and practice of the Prayer of the Lamb, with training for the formation of intercessory communities. She also provides a liturgical format for the Eucharist that incorporates the Prayer of the Lamb as a sacramental way of offering intercessions. Currently, Beverly is leading the Seattle area formation class since Marilyn's "retirement" in January.



*St. Clare Place with Dianne Aid and Jeannette Hoerd on the porch.*



Tertiary **Dianne Aid** is an icon of lay ministry who is currently weaving together ministries. She has worked with immigrant communities since high school. In 1991 this took the form of Hispanic Ministry, specifically congregational development and formation work. The "Decade of Evangelism" and the EFM program have deeply impacted her work, especially in the area of formation and the catechumenate process.

Dianne is the Hispanic Ministry Coordinator and catechist for St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Auburn, WA—her third such congregation. She is initiating a new formation program in Spanish that is similar to EFM and training two Spanish speaking congregants as mentors. They have recently received a Trinity Wall Street Grant to develop resources and tools for spiritual formation and growth of Hispanic people in the Episcopal Church.

Another native of the Northwest, **the Rev. Steve Best** is passionate about protecting and enjoying God's creation, especially hiking, camping, or fishing with his wife, Jannie, and their daughter, Rachel. His professional life, both as a mental health professional and deacon, centers on serving those on the edges and the margins of society. In addition to his counseling practice, he serves as a deacon at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Medina. Often, he finds himself drawn to a variety of ministries of reconciliation and to ecumenical work. Steve represents the ethos of the fellowship with his quick smile, relaxed demeanor, and welcoming attitude that radiate Franciscan joy!

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*Bill Breedlove, Terry Rogers and Bret Figlewski (aspirant)*



## Extravagance

*Harold Macdonald*

The mind of God is not to count the cost,  
but spend, exuberantly! Spend again!  
Extravagance, God's way, all sense lost,

Is heaven's middle name.

Rather the table groan with food  
and overflowing wine,  
than parsimony, (a scrawny good)  
with sister prudence, draw the line..

God rages that we come to own  
His best

He cares not where the seed is sown  
nor who, His guest.

He sets with golden fork and knife, the beggar first;  
Unless God pours the torrent of His love, He'll burst.

Poems from the Eighth Decade

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## Peace March in New York City

*Terry Rogers*

"What shall we put on our sign?" "How about: Lord Make Me An Instrument of Your Peace."

We were meeting at my NYC apartment before the peace march on March 20. We were several Tertiaries from New Jersey, Connecticut, New York plus Brother Freddy SSF, some friends, and a spouse. The idea to meet and march came from an aspirant in the NYC fellowship.

One sign in English; one in Spanish. We prayed a litany together, based on the prayer of St. Francis. Then we headed for Grand Central Station, and found the end of the march nearby which was filling up Madison Avenue block by block. The crowd was peaceful, as were the police. We were in the midst of people of all ages, representing a number of communities and walks of life. There were drummers and dancers, babies in carriages, Vietnam veterans, balloons and banners. We walked quietly, staying connected by keeping our eyes on our two small signs bouncing along ahead of us.

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### **On Pledging - Part Two**

Frank Romanowicz

I have no idea what resulted overall from my words in the last issue about Pledging to the Third Order. I did however receive two personal notes, one lamenting why the article was necessary in the first place since he thought it was a "no-brainer" that being a member of TSSF and pledging was a given. The other response I received resulted in a gift to our fellowship and a pledge to the Third Order.

As said in my first article, I'm not a big pledger at all. Mine is about the equivalent of a Big Mac combo a week. I am sure some do more, some do less. The amount's not the issue, in my opinion. The pledge of a gift of some of our financial resources is the issue, and a spiritual one at that!

I recently became a formation counselor, and in my reading materials about that responsibility was the following reference to pledging: All members of the Order, at whatever stage, are expected to make and keep a pledge of some kind to the Order. It is absolutely necessary, and an important part of sharing the responsibility of the Community. The amount of such a pledge is strictly confidential between the Bursar and the Tertiary, and is never revealed. It is easier for some than for others to do this, but even if the pledge is only \$1 per year, it is absolutely essential, and part of the discipline of the Order, reflected in the rule under "Obedience".

### **A Walk to the Cathedral**

*Josiah W. Noel+, Dean and Rector (Reprinted from Franciscans Canada, Easter 2004 issue)*

Six months ago life changed significantly when I began a new ministry at our Cathedral Parish in St. John's. It is very humbling to preside and preach in this beautiful large neo-gothic stone church. Our Sunday regimen is Matins at 7:30 a.m., Holy Communion at 8:00 a.m., a sung Eucharist at 9:15 a.m., and another at 11:00 a.m., and Choral Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m. The Cathedral celebrates a daily Eucharist on behalf of the diocese. So along with the Daily Offices, I get to spend much more time in a formal worship setting.

This has had a profound effect on my spiritual journey. Physically being in church for the Daily Offices and making my communion more often has enabled me to refocus my priorities. I have always believed and, on occasion, preached that the most important work for a parish priest is to pray. First and foremost priests are called to be people of prayer.

While I do not think I pray any better here at the Cathedral, I do pray more regularly. Up to this point I would focus on Morning Prayer as my main time for prayer and personal reflection for the day. Now it is the Eucharist with the Daily Offices to complement it. The opportunity to serve the church in this capacity has enriched my spiritual life.

Now that we no longer live in clergy housing one challenge I face is coping with having an office/study at work that I was accustomed to having in a rectory. It demands that I organize my time, reading material, etc., because I cannot work out of two places. Having our own home, our own private space, on the other hand is such a blessing after living in a fishbowl for the past fifteen years.

Working with another priest introduces me to issues involving team ministry where we discern our strengths and particular gifts, unlike being the sole priest in a parish. I am blessed with how this relationship with my senior colleague is growing.

For many Anglicans in Canada 2004 may be bringing some feelings of uncertainty as we prayerfully consider various issues at the national Church level in preparation for General Synod. At this point I am very excited about the future of the Church and how we, in our part of the vineyard, will continue to be faithful in the proclamation of the gospel by word and sacrament. I am expecting that things will get better!

## ***Minding Your P's & Q's, Or How to Have a Good Retreat***

**Andrew Dotchin**, *reprinted from the European Province's TSSF Chronicle, Winter 2003*)

Good retreats, sadly, do not fall ready made from heaven. After a few retreats we all realise that, like most things that are of value, a little preparation will go a long way to help turn our annual retreat from a chore or only a 'holy' holiday to a place of genuine encounter with God and our self.

Over many years I have developed a sort of 'Retreat check-list' which includes several points, P's and Q's if you will, that makes it easier for a retreat to do its job. They are presented in this article, in no particular order, as a hopefully useful aid to planning a retreat. Readers are free to peruse them, attempt them or discard them altogether. However I do offer one word of caution. If we do not plan and prepare for our retreat and aim to achieve nothing in particular whilst on retreat, we will be successful every time!

### Place

Perhaps the most important part of any retreat is the place we choose to retreat to. For many people this may be a place that has had an important part to play in their faith journey in the past, a monastic house, a diocesan centre or a country house. This is always a matter of personal taste but some things which may influence choice about a retreat venue are accessibility, especially if you are frail or need assistance, comfort—a place where our bodies can be at ease for at least some part of the day will aid reflection, good cooking with more than enough food—rumbling tummies do not aid prayer, and a space for prayer—be it a church, a specially set aside room or a natural beauty spot. Most of us will find our own special retreat house and go there frequently. This is good and healthy as God then knows where to meet us. However, part of a long-term retreat plan might include visiting a different house or using the annual retreat as an opportunity to complete a pilgrimage around the many holy places of our islands.

### Practical

I have always found it helpful to take something on retreat that I can use to keep my hands busy. A handcraft packed along with your prayer book can be an immense help to focus the mind on the content of the retreat and stops distractions from creeping in. Something of this sort will often be a good way to encourage quiet and open the soul to the voice of God. There are many simple crafts that can be taken with you, sketching, painting, simple clay modelling with plastic clay, ornithology, or poetry writing. The list is

endless and limited only by your imagination. On a recent retreat I discovered again the delights of cross-stitch, something I had not done since I was a very young child! If this aspect of retreat going appeals to you remember that the Creative Arts Retreat Movement specialises in organising retreats which tie the creative and the spiritual sides of life together.

### Personal

At its heart a retreat is an intimate personal encounter between the retreatant and the God who loves them perfectly. For many the retreat is the spiritual zenith of the year, and it should be with great hesitancy and, if at all, only at the behest of the Holy Spirit, that we intrude on another person's space during retreat. This is more than a refusing to break the silence of the retreat (more on that below) and applies equally well to retreats that are conducted with a series of seminars or of the 'Benedictine experience' type where talking is permitted.

We do not know each other's story, and so it is with trepidation that we enter into them. By treating retreats as first a 'personal' experience we allow God, who knows all of our stories, to be the chief conversation partner. This is not to belittle the immense value of going on retreat as a community. Much strength is given to those who are struggling with their faith journey by the knowledge that we are sisters and brothers together in prayer. Retreats are meant to be one of the most precious times of the year for each of us and so we should learn to be gentle with other retreatants and care for each other without intruding on personal space.

For many members of our community it is a 'costly' business to make a retreat. There are not only financial concerns, but also other, perhaps more pressing costs associated with retreat making. For a parent with very young children to go away for a day let alone a whole retreat incurs a great deal of 'expense' in re-organising life to make the retreat possible. These social 'costs' also have to be met by those who have the care of an aging relative, those who have a partner who does not share their faith, or those who eat into the annual family holiday to take time to be alone with God.

### Persevere

Whatever type of retreat we attend, most retreat leaders, be they a conductor, director or facilitator, will normally give the retreatants tasks to do during the time between addresses or seminars. These may take the form of challenges to our life or suggestions as to how we could approach important things from a different perspective. These tasks, the fruit of the prayer of the retreat leader, may sometimes seem very

*(continued on page 10)*

**P & Q's of Retreats (cont.)**

small, over-familiar or even threatening. However they come to you persevere with them until they are resolved. Sometimes the content of the retreat can be akin to Jacob wrestling with the angel. It is worthwhile holding on to what God has put before you during a retreat and refusing to let go of it until the blessing it holds has been revealed.

**Prepare**

Retreats, like most things that are worth doing well, are worth preparing for. There is a certain level of common sense about this in the preparation of physical things which are needed for our day-to-day events: washing kit, medicine that may be required, a few edible 'treats' (one of my personal favourites!) everyone will have their own check list of 'must takes'. We also need to remember other things to bring that will be needed. A familiar copy of the Scriptures, some means of note taking, a prayer book and, for Franciscans, a copy of our Personal Rule of Life and the Manual.

So much for the bits you pack into a suitcase but there is other preparation to be done. To go on retreat means to leave the world behind so part of our preparation will include letting things go and making sure that when we are on retreat our minds and hearts are not elsewhere. A good retreat begins when retreatants have learnt to close the door on their everyday life and turn themselves completely towards God. Another useful list to make might be one of things to be done when you have completed your retreat. Having addressed them in this way, they can be left on the shelf until the retreat is over, and should not disrupt your time away at all.

Some things, however, are so large they will not go away, and they may form the basis of intense prayer during the retreat or even a conversation with the retreat leader. Yet even in the most difficult circumstances an attempt should be made to leave things behind—after all they will still be there when you have finished your retreat so why waste a perfectly good retreat on something that is probably consuming more than enough of your personal energy already?

**Pray**

This may seem obvious, but we should remember that retreat is a time when we can fill up with prayer. Retreat is the time to extend the skirts of our personal tabernacles of prayer. A time to explore new ways of prayer, a time to really 'chew the cud' in our familiar prayers. Time to light a candle and pray with it while it burns out, time to learn to play in prayer. On retreat there are no boundaries to our prayer. If we want to

see what it must have been like to keep the correct hours of the old seven-fold monastic office why not give it a try? If we want to renounce the formal offices that are part of our Rule and pick up a different way of praying, we can. If we want to dispense with formal prayer altogether and simply sit in a holy place and soak up God's presence that will be prayer enough.

There are two kinds of prayer that seem to come to people more naturally on retreat so keep an eye out for them. Because of the usually quiet bucolic places where retreats are held, it is easier to make prayers of thanksgiving, especially for the created order. Franciscans should welcome and seek this kind of prayer. A second kind of prayer, which is more easily made on retreat, is contemplation. When praying this way I am often reminded of the story of the Cure D'Arns (a Tertiary by the way) who, when questioned by a parishioner as to how he made his prayer before the Blessed Sacrament said, 'I look at Him and He looks at me.' Retreat is pre-eminently a place where we are given the time and space to look at God and be aware that God is looking at us.

A word of caution about prayer on retreat. Be careful not to set the bar too high. Simple prayer that is completed is better than complicated prayer promises which confound us and crash around our ears. Then of course there is the practical business of getting back to ordinary life after retreat. No one will thank us on Monday morning at work if we are not up to snuff because we have been awake all weekend keeping the offices of Matins, Lauds and Prime!

**Punctuality**

Because we are careful of each other on retreat, and because we are keeping an appointment that we have made with our Lord, punctuality is an important part of a good retreat. This allows others to keep their retreat according to the way they have been led by the Spirit, as we will not hinder their journey. Being punctual also allows us to receive more from God. In our day-to-day life we all too often have to rush to and from prayer. Retreat gives us the space to surround events with the time they deserve. Planning to be punctual on retreat adds numerous small moments of stopping and waiting for God's presence to be fully realised amongst us. This is a gift that the world that does not go on retreat needs to receive from those of us who do.

**Quiet**

The silence on a retreat is not about not talking but about listening to voices that are normally drowned out by the 'noise' of the world. There is no particular merit in keeping a totally silent retreat if the silence has not been used to come to a place of quiet with God. Many a retreat has been kept in total silence yet little true inner quiet and peace has been present. So talk if need be—



there can be nothing more disruptive to the quiet and peace of a retreat than extensive amateur theatrics at the dining table to get people to pass the salt! A gentle request is less disturbing to the silence than windmill gestures. This is one of the reasons why it is sometimes helpful to have music played at mealtimes—if we are listening to something else the temptation to chatter dies.

However, inconsiderate talking does not help anybody, not even the one doing the talking. If on retreat you really must talk—and this should only be in the case of a holy necessity—then take your conversation partner away from everyone else. And if you are annoyed by the speech of others, and they won't move, then move yourself! Being a self-appointed warden for silence does not help people settle into quiet and tends to a spiritual pride on the part of those who have nothing to talk about.

### Question

As part of my retreat preparation I always try to take at least one question with me. This is regardless of whether I have planned what I call a 'refreshment retreat', in which all creature comforts are built-in and the knees get a good rest, or a 'work retreat' in which there is strict silence, custody of the eyes, and blood, sweat, and tears in the prayer times. On retreat we have the gift of time to work through important things with God. It may be helpful to meet with your spiritual director before you go on retreat and work out with them what your personal aim is for the forthcoming time away.

The other side of the coin, when it comes to asking questions of God whilst on retreat, is that we shouldn't be surprised if God asks one of us in return. Go prepared to hear God's further call on your life and use the retreat to begin to

### Quest

The aim of retreat is to learn to live a life in which we are constantly 'recollected'. It is not a shelter from the storms of life, though it will often be the only recognisable safe haven we might meet in a year. It is much rather a springboard from which we learn to dive into the ocean depths of God's love. Our quest on retreat is to learn how to be so recollected to the presence and provision of God that we do not leave the retreat as we go back 'into the world' but rather take the retreat with us and so change the world. Our quest is to waken the whole world to the call of its Creator and to help it to sing with the joy that comes with the knowledge of being perfectly loved. Catherine de Heuck Doherty, writing about the Russian Orthodox spirituality of the Poustinia (a small personal place of prayer) describes the aim of recollection to be like that

of a woman pregnant with child. Though carrying the child within her, growing and being nourished by the silence of the womb, she continues about her normal business, greeting the day in the knowledge of the new life within yet continuing in all she would normally do, at work, at home, at play, and at rest. To the sight of others she may sometimes appear to be doing just as she normally does, but she knows that all her actions are shaped by the life growing within. This is our quest, to teach the world how to listen to the whisperings of the Spirit deep within each of our hearts. To the end that we might be changed, and in being ourselves changed, change the world.

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## Contemplation

*Alice Wright*

Too often most of us relate solitude as being necessary to contemplation, assuming that contemplation can only occur in the proper frame of separation and quiet. We feel the need for preparation and prayerful stillness to enter into the presence of God. And, because we are busy people, as much as we feel drawn to be more contemplative in our prayer lives, it is easier to say, "No, I just can't manage the time right now and must leave that to others less active."

My own experience with the contemplative life of prayer is still quite limited, yet it is from this experience that I find contemplation - the contemplative times of prayer in which I sense I am truly and actually in the presence of God - seldom has anything to do with employing solitude, meditation or stilling my mind in preparation. In fact, one of my moments of the deepest sense of his presence occurred sitting in a McDonald's having coffee while around me a group of youngsters celebrated the birthday of one of them!

It is true that, when I find I am alone in a forest or by a flowing stream, contemplative prayer comes more easily, but God doesn't demand such situations. He is seen, felt and known as well in the noise and confusion of everyday life if we will but look for Him there. It may be only a momentary surprise sighting of the loving God, or it may last longer - as the Spirit chooses. But each can, by being inwardly open to the unexpected presence, surely experience the contemplative life and find its call to a deeper relationship with God a welcome source and fulfillment of our prayer life.

Deserts, silence and solitude are not necessarily places, but rather a state of mind and heart. Centers of silence, brief solitudes, may occur anywhere when we assume the attitude of listening, letting the wholeness of God

*(continued on page 12)*

**Contemplation (cont.)**

take over. For it is then that we come to understand that the contemplative life has no practical use or purpose whatever except to place me where God wants me to be.

The question is not how do these events occur. They occur when God wills them. Rather, the question for us is how do we become attentive and open to God in a contemplative way? I have found a way that works for me, because I can do it in the midst of mindless tasks or in all sorts of busy places. I simply but clearly place myself (in my imagination) in the arms of God. I imagine myself being wrapped in those loving and comforting arms while I whisper, "Thank you for loving me" and his presence becomes reality.

Probably your contemplative path is quite different. Whatever form it takes, as a tertiary seeking to respond to the desire for a more contemplative life within the Franciscan community, you are invited to contact either Judith Gillette or myself (Alice Wright) if you are interested in receiving a small newsletter twice a year, the aim of which is sharing thoughts and experiences of the contemplative charism among us.

**Introducing Our New Assistant Chaplain, Rick Bellows**

As a child I was attracted to Franciscan spirituality through some children's books which I still have and treasure. I appreciated how Francis combined love for God and love for nature. During my idealistic college days I grew in my appreciation for simplicity, and fell in love with the film, *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. This movie added a critical dimension—care and concern for people, to my Franciscan soul.

A dozen years later, I first connected with the Third Order in the Long Island Fellowship, New York, and continued as a novice in the Mustard Seed Fellowship, Central New York. I was professed in 1997 at the Provincial Convocation in New Orleans. I had been attracted to the Order for the rule and the spirituality, but what surprised me was how important community would be for me.

When I moved to Massachusetts, I connected with my third Fellowship, Brother Juniper. Though each of the three Fellowships has had their unique character, it has felt natural to come together. I particularly appreciate the depth of some of my brothers and sisters, and how we easily understand each other because we come from a similar place spiritually. I also like the equality: how I am respected as a priest but not put on a pedestal or thought as less than human. That is rare in the church, and in the world.

Lately I find my greatest challenge in the Third Order emerges out of my appreciation for community. I find it very hard when people leave the Order, especially people with whom my soul has resonated so easily, whether they leave through death or life's circumstances.

Our chaplain, Julia Bergstrom, asked me to assist her by writing articles and be available to lead quiet days, regional convocations, and fellowship retreats. I hope to help people in the Order to continue to grow spiritually, to reflect together on Christian and Franciscan themes, and to build an even deeper sense of community around Jesus, Francis, and Clare.

Peace and all good blessings,

Rick Bellows, TSSF

*Rick Bellows Cross-country Skiing*

## **A Meditation on "Work", part of the Third Order Rule of Life**

Janet Moore

My interpretation of work has changed a lot over the years. For a long time, work as part of my rule, was pretty much what I did for a job. I used to spend a lot of time on my novice reports, and work was one of the more difficult points for me. This question has come up many times in social arenas, and I'm sure it has for you too - "What do you do?, or What is your job?" as if this is a definition of oneself. The question has always made me uncomfortable. For years now I have felt tempted to answer that I am first a child of God, and then go on to explain further. But I have never dared to do it. Although most of my jobs have been time intensive and self-absorbing, part of me has never felt that that was whom I really was. Now that I don't have a "job." I have been looking at work differently.

### **The Principle for the Third Way of Service: Work:**

*Jesus took on himself the form of a servant. He came not to be served, but to serve. He went about doing good: healing the sick, preaching good news to the poor, and binding up the broken hearted. Tertiaries endeavor to serve others in active work. They try to find expression for each of the three aims of the Order in their lives, and whenever possible actively help others who are engaged in similar work.*

How do we incorporate these three aims into our work? Briefly the first aim is one of obedience - to make Christ known and loved everywhere. How do we do this? By being Christlike, and seeing Christ in all persons, and through writing, speaking and teaching. I am lucky enough to have a classroom of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in Sunday School, which I have taught now for over 20 years. I enjoy them and I'm comfortable with them. Some classes go more smoothly than others, and every now and then, as I am speaking to them of the love of God and Jesus, I get this very peaceful feeling that everything is all right. It's hard to explain. My prayer is that some part of their hearts will hear and not forget the message because they are the next generation in the church. We also teach by setting

Missing from action in this issue—"Olden Days Memories." If you have some of your own "olden days" memories, the *Franciscan Times* would be VERY interested in publishing them for all the newbies of us to read and learn from. Any pictures or illustrations would be gratefully included.

example in our lifestyles, activities, etc.

The second aim is one of charity - in the name of Christ to break down barriers. To fight against ignorance, pride, prejudice and against all such injustice. The chief object being to reflect the openness to all, which was characteristic of Jesus. I have found that as I grow older, I have become a better listener, and when possible an aid in reconciliation.

The third aim - to live simply, is to reject society's artificial values and adopt Gospel values - to share what we have with others who have less, to care for one another in extraordinary ways, to be compassionate, tolerant, and self-giving. Taken from our Formation Letters, it is an inner simplicity of heart, which includes stewardship of our time and resources as well as the inner emptying of our souls to God. Ultimately it means surrender, a letting go. The letting go of our self-image as hard workers, our titles, our public image, our need to be in control, to be right. A letting go of the need to be someone special, and of past hurts, successes, or futures filled with worries. I believe that work is not only out there at the soup kitchen or classroom or wherever, but work includes working on our inner selves - becoming more Christlike, dying to self, becoming vulnerable, and learning to trust in God. For me right now, this is a large part of my work because physical disability has a way of challenging everything we do and the images that we hold of ourselves. As part of my remarks about simplicity as including stewardship of time, I will read a quote from Peter Funk's *Formation Letters*.

*The rarest element on earth is time. Time cannot be stored or saved, or consumed at a rate faster than it is produced. The rich man has no more of it than the pauper-and no less.*

*When I prune away things, I should examine carefully where and how I spend my time.*

*I must be in a position to give as generously of my time as I do of my money. I am just as much of a steward of my time as I am of my material wealth.*

(continued on page 14)

### **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:

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**Contemplation on Work (cont.)**

*This means also that I must have enough time left over to refresh my self, and enough time for my family and friends and those others who depend on me.*

To return to the principle on work, the last sentence says, "The chief form of service which Tertiaries have to offer is to reflect the love of Christ, who in his beauty and power, is the inspiration and joy of their lives." All of us received a letter from Masud dated Dec. 13, 2003 along with our pledge card. You may remember it. The message is very intriguing to me. He had just finished leading a retreat at St. Margaret's House, New Hartford, NY, and one of his themes was *Let Every Heart Prepare Room*. In his words: "We, the people of God, are charged to prepare room for the Lord to enter, to prepare an environment for Christ to be made manifest. Pushed further, we are charged to assure that there are environments where God's Presence can enter and thrive. In a fresh way, during the weekend, I came to understand that the religious communities of the Church exist to do just that. We provide an environment of faithful community wherein which and through which Christ can be made known and loved, and from which we work for justice and compassion for all. Whether in one of our Franciscan First Order houses, or at a Third Order Fellowship meeting, or in the everyday work and ministry of Tertiaries, in some way our task as Franciscans is to foster and sustain environments that help to make the Presence of Christ real for those around us. Our Principles and Rule guide us to be people who intentionally create and support such Christ-filled spaces. I am thankful to be a part of such an intentional community. We never consistently succeed in our effort, but thanks be to God, we continue to be committed to the task." How can each of us intentionally create and support such a Christ-filled space? I think joy plays a part in this. From our principles: "This joy is a divine gift, coming from union with God in Christ. It is still there even in times of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment, and an inward serenity and confidence through sickness and suffering. Those who possess it can rejoice in weakness, insults, hardship, and persecutions for Christ's sake; for when they are weak, then they are strong".

I'd like to finish by reading an excerpt from the book *Saint Francis* by Nikos Kazantzakis. I'm sure many of you have read it. In this part, Francis is near death, and is recounting to Brother Leo what transpired in the cave many years earlier near the start of his ministry when he was beginning to understand the terrible and awesome hidden meaning of God's command to him.

*It was then, while I sat up with him that night, that he revealed to me what had happened inside the cave.*

*As soon as he had found himself alone he fell on his face and began to kiss the soil and call upon God. "I know Thou art everywhere," he called to Him. "Under whatever stone I lift, I shall find Thee; in whatever well I look, I shall see Thy face; on the back of every larva I gaze upon, at the spot where it is preparing to put forth its wings, I shall find Thy name engraved. Thou art therefore also in this cave and in the mouthful of earth, which my lips are pressing against at this moment. Thou seest me and hearest me and takest pity on me."*

*"So Father, listen to what I have to say. Last night in this cave I shouted joyfully: 'I did what Thou instructedst me to do. I rebuilt San Damiano's, made it firm!'*

*"And Thou answeredst me, 'Not enough!'*

*"Not enough? What more dost Thou wish me to do? Command me!"*

*"And then I heard Thy voice again: 'Francis, Francis-make Francis firm, rebuild the son of Bernadone!'*

*"How shall I make him firm, Lord? There are many roads. Which is my road? How shall I conquer the demons within me? They are many, and if Thou dost not come to my aid, I am lost! How can I push aside the flesh, Lord, so that it will not come between us and separate us? You saw for yourself, Lord, how troubled my heart was when I faced the young girl at San Damiano's, how troubled it was when I faced my father. How can I save myself from my mother and father, from women, friends, from comfortable living; and from pride, the yearning for glory, from happiness itself? The number of the mortal demons is seven, and all seven are sucking at my heart. How can I save myself, Lord, from Francis?"*

*He shouted and raved in this way the entire day, prostrate on the floor of the cave, throbbing convulsively. Toward evening, while I was still making rounds of Assisi begging for alms, Francis heard a voice above him:*

*"Francis!"*

*"Here I am, Lord. Command me."*

*"Francis, can you go to Assisi- the place where you were born and where everyone knows you- can you go there, stand in front of your father's house and begin to sing, dance, and clap your hands crying out My name?"*

*Francis listened, shuddering. He did not reply. Once more he heard the voice above him, but nearer now- in his ear:*

*"Can you trample this Francis underfoot; can you humiliate him? This Francis is preventing our union. Destroy him! The children will run behind you and pelt you with stones; the young ladies will come to their windows and burst out laughing; and you, exultant, dripping with blood from the stoning, will stand your ground and cry, 'whoever throws one stone at me, may he be once blessed by God; whoever throws two stones at me, may he be twice blessed by God; whoever throws three*



stones at me, may he be thrice blessed by God.' Can you do that? Can you? Why don't you speak?"

Francis listened, trembling. I can't, I can't, he was saying to himself, but he was ashamed to reveal his thought. Finally he opened his mouth:

"Lord, if I must dance in the middle of the square and cry out Thy name, couldst Thou not send me to some other city?"

But the voice, severe and full of scorn, answered, "No! Assisi!"

Francis' eyes filled with tears. He bit into the soil his lips had been resting upon. "Mercy, Lord," he cried. "Give me time to prepare my soul, to prepare my body. I ask three days of Thee, three days and three nights, nothing more."

And the voice thundered again, no longer in Francis' ear now, but within his bowels: "No, now!"

"Why art Thou in such a hurry, Lord? Why dost Thou wish to punish me so?"

"Because I love you..." said God's voice. It was soft now, tender, and it came from within Francis' heart.

Suddenly all the bitterness fled his breast and a force entered him, not his own force, but an omnipotent one. He rose. His face had begun to shine; his knees were firm. He stood for a moment at the entrance to the cave. The sun was about to set.

"I'm going," He said, and he crossed himself.

Just then I returned from my begging, my sack full of stale bread. I saw him standing in the opening of the cave. His face was like the rising sun; it was dazzling, and I had to place my hand over my eyes to shade them. I had planned to say to him: I've brought some bread, Francis; you must be hungry, you haven't had a thing all day, sit down and let's eat. But I was ashamed to say this, because the moment I beheld him I sensed that he had no need of bread.

As soon as he caught sight of me, he raised his hand.

"Let's go," he said.

"Where?"

"To leap!"

Once more I was too timid to ask him to explain. To leap? Over what- and why? I didn't understand. But he started out in front, striding hurriedly over stones and soil, and, together, we made our way to Assisi.

*Forming the Soul of a Franciscan*, revised 2000

*Saint Francis* by Nikos Kazantzakis, Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1962. pp. 74-76

*The Formation Letters* by Peter Funk, 1967.

**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.

Convocation	Dates	Center	Location	Contact
Trinidad	January 9-11	Charismatic Center	Carone	Pamela Redhead- Mongroo
Southwest	May 7-9	Canossian Spirituality Center	Albuquerque	CecileEvola
South Central	June 11-13	Cedarbrake	Belton, TX	Francesca Wigle
Midwest/OEF	June 25-27	Ecumenical Center	Chicago, IL	Sid Mohn, OEF
Western	August 13-15	San Damiano	Danville, CA	Joan Kidd
Northeast	August 27-29	Graymoor Spiritual Life Center	Garrison, NY	Bill Breedlove
S. California	August 27-29	Cathedral of St. Paul Retreat Center	Los Angeles	David Burgdorf
Southeast	Sept. 3-5	St Ignatius House	Atlanta, GA	Elsie Amos

West Indian Regional Convocation held in Trinidad, Jan 9-11 2004



*Berkley and Primus*

*Masud,  
Janice, and  
Their Two  
Daughters—  
Amina and  
Jasmine*



*New Postulants,  
Ozmond  
McDonald and  
Winston Lewis,  
beside Masud*



*The Newly Professed—Doreen Cooke, Estelle Yallery,  
Edwin Primus—and Masud*



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## **Reflections on the January Third Order Caribbean Convocation**

*Janice Syedullah*

The most impressive experience for me during the convocation was the warmth and hospitality shared in the group. My family was given an enthusiastic welcome and very quickly made to feel like we had known them for a long time. Sitting around the circle and sharing the stories of our lives and the dreams we had of Franciscan community made me realize how much we have in common in spite of the differences in culture and geography. It was apparent that the Third Order is alive and thriving in the Caribbean. There are struggles and triumphs much the same as those we have experienced, but the enthusiasm and the determination to persevere were real. It is so easy for Americans to become isolated from their neighbors and to forget that there are members of our family living in other parts of the world; some that are in close proximity. As we consider the charge we are given in our *Principles* to pray for one another and to honor one another in spite of differences in race, education, and character, we can rejoice when given those opportunities to express that respect and honor. Our Caribbean brothers and sisters demonstrate the kind of openness and love we should be sure to demonstrate with all.

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## **Planned New York Peace Vigil in September 11 through September 17**

*Terry Rogers*

Last October there was a meeting of the SSF/CSF/TSSF JPIC Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission in New York City. One of the ideas that came out of our meeting was a Franciscan Peace Vigil. The inspiration came from a peace vigil in NYC's Union Square sponsored by Dominicans for Peace in September of 2002, which one of our members encountered.

Our plan, as of now, looks like this: a peaceful witness in Union Square, NYC, from September 11 through September 17 (Feast of the Stigmata) 2004. The Feast of the Holy Cross would thus also be included. It is seven days of much significance. Invited participants would be members of all orders of SSF and Associates, perhaps also including some RC and OEF Franciscans who may wish to join us, and others who want to identify as Franciscans and support our purposes. While we expect mostly to have participants from this part of the country, we would be delighted to have folks from around the country or around the world!

Union Square, as its name implies, has a long history of vibrant political speech, and was the site in NYC of a spontaneous huge "people's" 9/11 memorial that largely focused on peaceful rather than warlike responses to the tragedy.

We would expect to spend several hours each day there, some of us fasting, being available to people who want to talk. Participants can come for all or part of the time, as they are able. We don't need a permit for fewer than 20 people and are likely to be only a handful at any one time, a small and quiet presence.

Someone in NYC has offered to make us one or more banners to make us visible and express the purpose of our vigil. We would also need things like a little table, a few chairs or stools...what might we want to hand out in the way of written materials.

Places to stay: St. Elizabeth's in Brooklyn has a few guest rooms which are on a pay-what-you-can basis. There's some, but limited, capacity for the NYC TSSF Fellowship to offer hospitality (limited because of tiny city apartments, plus Tertiaries who actually live outside the city.) Some folks may have friends in NYC who can put them up. General Seminary has guest rooms for people who want something more hotel-like but somewhat reasonably priced.

In addition to a public witness "in the marketplace," we envision a chance to build our own community...witnessing to and sharing with each other...joining in prayer and Eucharist. There are other possible and related activities such as helping on the soupline at the Catholic Worker house in Manhattan, visiting Franciscans International and hearing about their work, and having our JPIC Commission meeting in conjunction with this witness.

JPIC has Chapter funds for its meeting, but we will not be spending provincial money on the witness per se. We will try to do everything as economically as possible, and as we make this project known to the membership, some of you may wish to help out with some of our expenses.

If you are interested in coming and might also have additional ideas for activities, please let me hear from you. And please pray for us and for all those around the world working for peace.

## **Bishop Mark MacDonald of Alaska Achieves Victory for Arctic Drilling Opponents at British Petroleum General Meeting**

*By John Johnson (reprinted from the Episcopal News Service)*

For the first time publicly, BP, third largest oil company and fifth largest corporation in the world, announced today that it has no future plans to drill in the Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The announcement came immediately following comments made by Bishop Mark MacDonald of Alaska (a professed Tertiary), who was present at the 2004 BP Annual General Meeting in London to co-present a shareholder's resolution directing BP to report on the risks associated with operating in sensitive and protected areas, including ANWR.

"This is certainly a significant announcement for the Gwich'in people, who are arguably one of the most Anglican native nations in the world," said Bishop MacDonald to reporters following the shareholder's meeting, which drew nearly 2000 investors, media, environmentalists, and protestors to London's Royal Festival Hall. "The scope of the resolution would have recognized the concerns of other indigenous peoples in its operations around the world."

The announcement was made by Peter D. Sutherland, chairman of the Chairman's Committee of BP. This is the first time BP has publicly announced that drilling in the sensitive Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is not part of the company's current business plan. Sutherland was careful to portray BP's concern for the rights and needs of indigenous peoples.

"For centuries, the Christian moral tradition and the Western legal tradition have consistently promoted aboriginal rights as a fundamental element of basic and minimal commitment to justice," said MacDonald in his presentation to the board and investors. "These traditions have been underlined in the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

Article 25 of that declaration, which is supported by many nations but not officially by the United States, says, "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual and material relationship with the lands, territories, waters and coastal sea, and other resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard."

"Though these traditions are accepted almost unanimously in theory, governments, corporations, and sadly, even religious institutions have far too consistently undermined or stolen the capacity for aboriginal peoples to survive," MacDonald said.

The resolution was supported by a number of socially responsible and institutional investors. In a letter written to BP chief executive Lord Browne of Madingley, shareholders expressed concern that investment values could be negatively impacted from operating in protected and sensitive areas and need to be disclosed. "Failing to do so could place BP's reputation and brand image at significant risk," the letter stated. "While we commend BP for recognizing the value of integrating biodiversity conservation into future oil and gas development projects, we feel that an essential element of any biodiversity conservation strategy must be to refrain from operating in designated protected areas."

In its posted response on the Internet, BP recommended that shareholders vote against the resolution. "We will continue to develop and implement our policies and guidelines on operating in sensitive areas. We are sympathetic to elements of the supporting statement [of the resolution] and believe that there is room for continued debate and progress. We will continue to meet with many more interested parties and will benefit from the dialogue and mutual learning. However, in view of our already comprehensive approach, we believe that the report requested in the resolution is unnecessary." In the days leading up to the annual meeting, company officials posted to its website new and improved statements regarding support for biodiversity.

At its February meeting, the Episcopal Church's Executive Council voted in support of a resolution instructing the treasurer to vote in favor of all resolutions asking companies to report on the potential of environmental damage from oil drilling in the coastal plain of the Arctic. A shareholder's resolution similar to the one offered by BP investors is now also pending before Conoco Phillips. BP stock was restricted from ECUSA financial holdings several years ago as a result of BP relations with subsidiaries or interests in operations in the Sudan.

Browne met with MacDonald after the meeting, joined by Athan Manuel, director of the Arctic Wilderness Campaign of U.S. PIRG's Education Fund, who co-presented the shareholder's resolution.

"The Episcopal Church has been a powerful ally in the legislative campaign to protect the coastal plain from oil and gas exploration," said Manuel. "The church has proven to be an equally powerful ally as a socially responsible investor."



## The Lord Gave Me Brothers (and Sisters) (cont.)

- What are my significant personal relationships? How do I feed them, and how do they feed me? Around what do they occur?
- In what moments do I experience fraternal life, and how do I feel helped by it?
- In what moments do I feel the fellowship as a cross for me, and I as a cross for it?
- What type of fellowship would mine be if all of its members acted as I do?
- For what am I most grateful to God in relation to the brothers and sisters in the fellowship?
- Do I try to understand what God wants of me as a result of the foregoing?

**Exercises:** Before Christ: I place myself in prayer in the presence of Christ. I ask that He be in my eyes and look with me at the relationships that I live. We look together at each situation as if it were a landscape of my surroundings. I try to imagine the feelings that Christ feels for what He sees. I imagine what He tells me. I am grateful. I ask to share in Christ's feelings, the light or the dark situations, the forgiveness of faults, and healing of resentments, prejudices, and wounds....

**With a biblical text:** I place myself in prayer. I imagine myself before Christ who looks at me. I see that He accuses me of nothing. God accepts me as I am, but I perceive that He has something to tell me. I take the biblical text thinking that within that text is what Jesus wants to share with me. I read and re-read the text, slowly, as if imagining what is written there for me.

Suggested Texts: Romans 12:3-21, 13:8-14, 14:3-23, 15:1-7, and 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

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## The False Self, The True Self, and the TSSF Rule-Part 1

Lance Renault

### Who am I?

How often have we heard the comment that someone—particularly a young person—is trying to “find themselves?” What does that really mean? What does it mean for us as a society? What does it mean for us as Christians? The allusive “self” seems to be something apart—an identity that must be captured and understood for us to be whole, happy, and complete people. Perhaps this is a search that each of us must pursue as we consider our personal identity and mission. However, I submit that the popular concept of self needs to be examined as an illusion—an illusion that has kept us

separated from the image of God with which we are all endowed and from our awakening to the kingdom within.

*The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, “Here it is,” or “There it is,” because the kingdom of God is within you.” [Lk 17:20-21]*

### False Self and True Self

I believe that the terms “false self” and “true self” were first popularized through the writings of Thomas Merton, the well-known Trappist monk and writer. In fact, we have to recognize that we have all created for ourselves a false self—an identity that holds us apart from God, others, and our environment—a concept that tells us that personal success or survival requires us to dominate and control our circumstances. Popular culture tells us that “God helps those that help themselves” (not in the Bible) or “You are the master of your destiny, the captain of your ship.” While true at one level—how to get along in contemporary western society—this attitude will in no way draw us closer to the Captain of our soul. It is in fact a disconnect from the Creator and the creation. It's the result of an inward focus driven by fear and self preservation—a mask we each have put on to “get along” and be accepted in a world where everyone has a mask. Sadly, most of us have come to believe that the mask is the true self.

Another way of understanding the mask we wear—the false self—is to see it as a manifestation of original sin, a natural inclination to see ourselves as independent from God. However you wish to understand the creation story found in Genesis, the lesson is that we decided to go our own way which introduced sin and death into the world. The spiritual process is fairly straightforward.

### Separation from God = Sin = Spiritual Death

The false self seeks independence; the true self seeks dependence.

The false self seeks a unique identity; the true self seeks to be an expression of God's identity. The false self will draw attention to itself; the true self will draw attention to God. The false self seeks prosperity; the true self seeks simplicity.

The false self will work through others to satisfy personal needs; the true self will serve others to satisfy their needs.

### The False Self Must Die

We cannot be separated from the creation (our true self, our neighbor and our environment) and be at union with the Creator at the same time. In fact, if we want to

experience union—to find the wholeness, happiness and completeness for which we were designed—it's the false self that must die. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus, said it well.

*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self [the false self] which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self [the true self], created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. [Ep 4:22-24]*

How do we put on the new (true) self? Writing to the church in Rome about our identity with Christ in his death and resurrection, Paul says that when we are baptized into Christ Jesus, his experience of death and resurrection becomes our experience. This is because Christ, who now lives in the eternal present, transcends time and space. His past becomes our present. Our old (false) self dies with him and our new (true) self is resurrected with him.

*Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death [death of the false self] in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. [Ro 6:3-4]*

This baptism that Paul talks about takes place at two levels. We are baptized by the church with water symbolic of a transformational anointing by the Holy Spirit. This water represents and seals in heaven the Holy Spirit baptism that Paul talks about. Paul's dramatic Holy Spirit baptism, that he personally experienced, may or may not be ours during our earthly life. But Paul would have us ask for it.

### Discovering the Child Within

We are all spiritually pregnant with a child within us—a child that desires to express itself in and through us. This child represents our true self, an identity that is an integral part of our creation and undefiled by fear, parental programming, or society's conditioning. It is the embodiment of God's love expressed in an individual.

*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. [1 Jn 1:12-13]*

We can call it God's "love child" that each of us carries. When John tells us that we are children of God, we can think of the love child that is hidden within, but too often has not been birthed because it is suppressed by fear and the false self. Fear and love are opposed to each other.

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. [1 Jn 4:18]*

The love child—the true self—becomes expressed in us when God's love is allowed to begin its transforming work in us. This divine love has three characteristics: it heals, it cleanses, and it nurtures. These are in fact the three basic functions of the blood that is coursing through your veins and arteries at this moment. So when the Bible speaks of the blood of Christ, this is a metaphor for the transforming power of God's love. When we as Christians have been "washed in the blood" we have been cleansed, healed, and nurtured by God's love. Paul's "old self" has been buried and we can at last become an expression of the true self, the child within.

### Getting from here to there—being an instrument of his love

According to Watchman Nee in his classic book *The Spiritual Man* the soul is where the Spirit of God (the essence of love) intersects with the flesh. Here is the seat of temperament, personality, and everything that defines us as unique individuals. This is where we live. The soul may be dominated by the flesh and all its worldly desires (the false self) or by the Spirit and its selfless, love-inspired desires (the true self). The flesh pulls us away from God and looks inward. The Spirit draws us near to God and looks outward.

So the ultimate question is, how do we move from the false self to the true self? How can we be a true child of God and thereby an instrument of his love and peace? How can we live out the vision described in the well known prayer attributed to St. Francis.

To answer these questions it helps to understand more about the nature of God's love.

First, love is a person. Jesus of Nazareth so perfectly expresses the love of God that we can equate him with God. Yet he was also fully man, so we can identify with him and learn from him. And now that he has conquered death (death being a manifestation of sin) we can speak of him in the present tense and call on him as an intercessor in our human affairs, to impart his love to us.

Secondly, we need to recognize that this cleansing, healing, sustaining power of God's love is outside of ourselves, or at least outside the reach and command of the false self. While the false self looks inward and draws to itself, love looks outward and gives of itself.

So the false self cannot introduce us to the true self because the false self is concerned with preserving itself. The true self—the love child of God—exists only to love and serve God and by extension, all of God's

creation. The only thing we can do in our own power is to prepare the ground for God's harvest.

*My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. [Jam 3:12]*

Finally, the love of God must ultimately express itself in community. Note the use of the plural in the great prayers and biblical passages of our faith:

*This, then, is how you should pray:*

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.... [Mt 6:9]*

*Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. [Ro 12:4-5]*

*For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." [Mt 18:20]*

*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? [the love of God] And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? [the children of God] Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. [1 Cor 10:16-17]*

Where the Spirit of God resides, that is where our own spirit seeks to go to have communion with him. His Spirit is in our neighbors, as it is in all creation. But the false self cannot see it. However St. Francis, for one, did see it. He saw community in all of creation because he saw God's presence in all creation. Here was his family

But we whose spiritual vision is distorted by the mask of the false self don't see the family. We think that we're alone and so we go our own way. Yet like the son in the parable of the prodigal son, we have a Father who yearns for the joy of our homecoming—our restoration to his family. He is patient and loving, and he wants to say, as the prodigal's father said,

*..... Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." So they began to celebrate. [Lk 15:23-24]*

Then what hope is there for us who all inherit the false self? How does the false self die so that we can become an expression of the true self—an instrument of God's love? How do we awaken to God's glory that already exists in and about us, waiting to be revealed?

(To be continued in the next issue)

## **Franciscanism in Puerto Rico**

*By Anita Catron*

I was excited to participate in a Franciscan dialogue in San Juan, Puerto Rico on May 1, 2004. Added to my anticipation was the novicing of The Rev Luis Guillermo Rivera the following day. I had been to San Juan once before very briefly and I was excited to return for a longer visit.

Luis Guillermo met me at the airport, and we recognized one another immediately with only the Franciscan Tau cross as an indicator. Luis had worked in the Department of Tourism before his second career as a priest of a small church in Aibonito, Puerto Rico, about 45 minutes from the capital of San Juan. Luis Guillermo knew early on that he was called to be a Franciscan, even though he was virtually the only one in all of Puerto Rico. His is a strong call and motivation to spread the Gospel of Christ in the manner of St Francis.

The afternoon I arrived I visited the Diocesan offices to meet with several staff members. Bishop David Alvarez, who was out of the country during my visit, gave Luis Guillermo full support for starting a Franciscan ministry in the Diocese. The Communications Officer interviewed me on tape about the Third Order to be aired on the Diocese's Sunday radio program.

In the evening we toured the old part of San Juan with its beautifully restored historic buildings, reflecting Spanish and African cultural influences, with a hint of French culture, all surrounded by an island atmosphere.

The Dialogue Day to introduce St Francis of Assisi and Franciscan spirituality was held at Luis's church in Aibonito. Forty-one persons from around the Diocese attended the ecumenical event. I gave a talk in Spanish on the worldwide character of the Society of St. Francis, especially the Third Order. Two other presentations concerned the person of Francis and the Franciscan spirituality. The Dialogue Day was well received, and people there resolved to start a Franciscan fellowship group. Luis Guillermo and I are working on the structure of the program, in consultation with Barbara Baumgarten. Materials in Spanish—translated mostly by our translator in Mexico—were handed out to each individual.

Sunday's Eucharist was a special day because I noviced Luis Guillermo before his congregation in Aibonito. When he recited the novicing words in Spanish, we all felt the dramatic moment that was happening in the life of Luis, of the parish, and of the Diocese of Puerto Rico. The work of the Spirit, of course, has only begun but is confidently at work in us!





Hot News To Come

## You Need To Make Some Decisions!

### Will Your Fellowship Host the 2007 Convocation of the Americas?

The due-date for Fellowship bids to host the 2007 Provincial Convocation of the Americas is September 15, 2004 because the next Chapter will decide on a location. So far we have a very good proposal from the Br. Juniper Fellowship of New England. To meet or beat their proposal here are the criteria you must meet:

1. A target cost for housing and food per person of \$300 to \$350—about the cost of the last two Provincial Convocations.
2. Airport accessibility and good local transportation.
3. Handicapped accessibility and a menu to fit varied food constraints (e.g., vegetarian).
4. A chapel or room that could work as a chapel.
5. Family activities in the vicinity.
6. The ability to handle about 200 persons.

### Would You Like to Receive The *Franciscan Times* Electronically?

One of the easiest ways to save money for the Order is to let us know that you would be willing to receive the *Franciscan Times*, monthly *Hot News*, and important updates electronically via e-mail attachments. If you are so willing, please send an e-mail notification to the Provincial Secretary—

*Caroline Benjamin*

*PO Box 1030*

*Bandera, TX 78003-1030*

*caroline.b@indian-creek.net*

### Would You Be Willing to Host Visiting Franciscans?

We have tried doing this in the past, but we need your notification quickly so that it can be included in the next Directory. What we will do is to put an icon beside your name in the directory of a house with a heart in it to indicate your willingness. Please send an e-mail or postcard notification to the Provincial Secretary—

*Caroline Benjamin*

*PO Box 1030*

*Bandera, TX 78003-1030*

*caroline.b@indian-creek.net*

Send in your contributions for the Fall issue!

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