



# The Franciscan Times

A 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.

Eastertide 2010

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## Scenes from the West Bank

Chris Cowan

*What follows is a reflection on the Palestinian experience in Bethlehem, West Bank and in East Jerusalem by an outsider who was welcomed in for a time. The Palestinian experience includes the grief of having belonged to a homeland and of having lost land and vocation and self-determination. It includes the poverty of spirit that comes from having suffered invisibly—or worse, becoming a blamed victim. And it includes the people's refusal to allow dignity to be taken away as well. The Palestinian experience includes knowing that one's voice is going unheard as one gradually loses all that is dear. But as it says in Psalm 22:24, the Lord hears the cry of the poor. This reflection is an attempt to help others hear it too.*

In October and November this year, I traveled to Bethlehem in the West Bank to give an exhibition of paintings and teach a short class. I was privileged to live for three weeks on Star Street, which once was a thriving, busy place, full of Christian souvenir shops and Palestinian Christian handcrafts, but which now has many boarded up storefronts and few residents. While in Bethlehem, I was privileged to meet many beautiful and kind people, and to teach in the exemplary ministry of Christmas Lutheran Church, at Dar Al Kalima College.

Dar Al Kalima College specializes in preparing students with interests and abilities in arts and communication majors, such as film, music, fine art and jewelry. Since I am a painter, I taught watercolor painting there for three weeks. (A blog of the trip is at the website <http://christiarts.wordpress.com>.)

Many young people have little optimism about their future in West Bank, where there are shortages of water and opportunity and employment and health care. It is a place where, daily, the people experience the oppression of occupation. For every wish, there is a corresponding "You can't do that because..." and usually the sentence can be completed by the phrase, "you are

a Palestinian" or "you are an Arab." Because you are a Palestinian...you can't go to Jerusalem...you can't cross the road to check your olive trees... you can't pass the checkpoint... you can't have a playground...you can't bring your produce to market...you can't finish college...you can't find a job...you can't go to school...you can't leave the house...you can't be trusted. The Palestinian people live under a system of institutionalized denigration, humiliation, segregation, and violence. It is a system that has become "business as usual."

And yet, in this place, I received hospitality that puts our best welcome to shame. I found people who were amazingly generous, even to strangers. I found people who found a way to go on living and hoping and dreaming and working for the good of others, even though they were living behind the apartheid wall. I found people with ready smiles even in the midst of tears of frustration. I found people with faith in the midst of turmoil. I found people committed to peace in



*A small child plays in the street in Aida Refugee Camp. The camp has been nearly encircled by the 20-ft high apartheid wall, severing the camp from all green space where children could play. The gun turret is armed. The camp is home to 5000 people.*

the midst of daily challenges to their dignity and their livelihood. And I found a church that intentionally nourishes hope in the promises of a God who loves all people.

The situation in the West Bank is one of dehumanization. As Franciscans and people of peace, we can say that the injustice being done against the Palestinian people dehumanizes *both Palestinians and Israelis*. It dehumanizes the Palestinians who, living behind the separation barrier (Apartheid Wall), continually suffer obstacles as they seek to live out their human lives, their vocations and relationships. The Wall creates violence and all sorts of poverty. But the perpetrators also suffer dehumanization, because they are led to believe that some people are of less value than others, and to fear their neighbors on the basis of race. Moreover, fear is self-perpetuating, and is ultimately the father of violence.

A number of Israeli Jewish citizen groups have formed to fight this occupation, like ICAHD, Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, which fights the government policy of demolishing Palestinian homes by demonstrations and by rebuilding. It is wrong to reduce the tragedy of the West Bank by lumping all Israelis into one homogenous group and blaming them. Like us, the Israeli people are not all alike. Many are leading brave lives of witness for justice. Others are actively trying to remove Palestinians from their neighborhoods. But the truth is that the official policy of the government of Israel is oppressive to an entire group of people based on race.

I taught a class of young adult painters. The goal of the course was to provide the students with another medium of self-expression. A secondary goal was to share with them the healing that could be found in spend-



*The settlement roads snake between illegal settlements in the West Bank. These roads and settlements are built on Palestinian land, but can only be used by Israeli citizens. Palestinians cannot cross the road to tend their crops unless soldiers come to open the gates. Here an olive grove owned by Palestinian farmers is divided by a settlement road just east of Bethlehem.*

ing time appreciating God's beautiful creation. As we worked, the longing of the people for freedom became apparent in all my interactions with them. For instance, I began my watercolor teaching with a simple exercise in two colors, an abstract. Although I did not intend to paint a recognizable subject, the students quickly cried, "It's a bird! Because we need to be free!" (International people to whom I showed this painting did not see the bird until it was pointed out to them, because they do not share the same unmet need.)

My exhibition was called *Conversations*. Among those who came to the show, we talked informally about the need to dismantle stereotypes and to begin with mutual respect and humility, as preludes for genuine conversation. One young man spoke in deep pain about feeling stifled by the situation, maligned, misunderstood, and controlled. I was to hear the same sentiments repeated over and over throughout my stay by many, many people in all walks of life: taxi drivers, people I met riding the bus, merchants, tour guides, students, trades people, educators and pastoral leaders. Once the show was opened, the watercolor classes began. Many challenges waited. Although I



*Chris and some students during a small-group painting demonstration at Dar Al Kalima, currently sharing space with Dar Annadwa, the International Center in Bethlehem, while the new Dar Al Kalima College buildings are completed.*



had capped my class at 15 students, 21 enrolled, so we were a bit short on paper and paint. I had brought all the art materials with me, since such things were in short supply in the West Bank. The students were not permitted to go to the art supply store, which was on the other side of the Wall, in Jerusalem, so a member of my host agency, an international, and I went for them. This was the beginning of my learning what it means to accompany others. The materials I take for granted in the United States were totally unavailable in Jerusalem, or were available in scant quantities at great expense. I learned that accompanying those living in a different culture must mean learning what they have to live with, and without, first hand.

Going to Jerusalem, if one has a permit, means walking through the checkpoint. This is a large, warehouse-type building outfitted with a sort of long metallic chute leading from room to room, with turn-styles in between the areas controlled by soldiers with large guns. Since the soldiers determine how fast the turn-styles work, there can be significant delays. It can take up to 3 hours to pass through the checkpoint. For me, with an international passport, the longest time was 1.5 hours. For the Palestinians, permits and handprint scans, x rays of luggage, removal of headscarves and opening of clothing may be required. Sometimes there is shouting. Always there is the armed presence.

One day soon after I arrived, my apartment had no water. This is because the Palestinians have

*The illegal Israeli settlement of Har Homa was built on one of the most beautifully forested hillsides in Palestine. It was clearcut. The settlement continues to be built up as another 170 permits were just issued.*

*Inside the small chapel "Dominus Flevit" (The Lord Wept) on the Mt. of Olives, overlooking the city of Jerusalem. "Oh Jerusalem, how I have longed to gather you together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings!" Matthew 23:37*

water shortages; Israel controls the distribution of water, which comes every week or so and is stored on tanks on the roofs of houses. It took until the end of the day for the water truck to come and refill the tank.

Basics like water cannot be taken for granted by the people living in West Bank. Once again, it seemed to me that there was great benefit in learning how it felt to have no access to water, an experience much more potent than reading about it would have been. (The experience gave me some insight into how radical the ministry of presence Francis' life was for the poor of his day. I experienced a three-week

visit protected by the privilege of a passport—not that I was eager to leave, but that I could. Francis made a once-for-all decision in renunciation of all kinds of privilege, in order to live the life of Jesus who "although He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking on a servant's form, being born in human likeness" (Philippians 2:6-7 paraphrased))

One of my students lives in a refugee camp in Bethlehem. The camps were originally tent cities created after 1948 when they were driven from their homes in what Israel calls the War of Independence and which Palestinians call the Naqba, or the Catastrophe. Now, they are concrete block neighborhoods that are expanding vertically; the Separation Wall completely surrounds the city, restricting all but vertical growth. The



Wall separates the children of the camp from all green spaces, drastically limiting their exposure to God's good creation. They play only in the narrow streets. The United Nations school is inadequate; the students attend classes in shifts and receive education in only basic subjects. Supplies are short and opportunities for enrichment are scarce. I joined a group for a tour of the camp one morning. We were told that the camp endures unprovoked gunfire and invasive military training exercises, which endanger and sometimes kill civilians within the camp. On our tour of the camp, we were told that the residents are beginning to use stone to "clad" the outside of the concrete block houses because stone repels bullets better than concrete.

In the refugee camp were many murals. One especially long mural portrayed the displacement of the people from their homes and lands, not just in 1948 during the Naqba, but also currently, as the Palestinian people lose housing permits and experience evictions and home demolitions. The mural expressed the deep grief of dispossession. Soon I would have a chance to see the results of the evictions first hand.

Brother Francis was fond of speaking of the Holy Spirit's remarkable way of working. I experienced God's way of working things out on one bitter evening. On one of my days off from teaching, I went to spend a night in Jerusalem. It happened that a family of Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem had been evicted from their home at gunpoint that morning, a home in which they had lived for 60 years. Israeli settlers are forcibly removing Palestinians from their homes in this East Jerusalem neighborhood; they have plans to raze the buildings and replace them with 200 new units for only Israeli citizens to live in. I knew nothing of the news of the day, having been en route from my apartment.

While in Jerusalem, I "by chance" met the EAPPI team currently living and working in Jerusalem. ("EAPPI" stands for "Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. " This is a courageous and adven-

turous group of people from around the world who come with the World Council of Churches to stand in solidarity with people who are suffering. They come in on a 3 month visa, and stand as visible internationals in conflict areas, their mere presence tending to tone things down and reducing incidents of violence.) For some time I had been praying for an opportunity to meet the EAPPI team, and here they were, staying in the same facility where I was sleeping that night! They invited me to eat dinner with them, so I joined them, and they got me caught up on the local situation.

On that very morning, the EAPPI team had been called to Sheikh Jarrah because of the forced home eviction in progress. After dinner, I joined them as they went back to that East Jerusalem neighborhood. The decision took some soul searching. It felt a little edgy, but I remembered that while in the TSSF novitiate formation program, we had been encouraged to be willing to take risks for the sake of peace if the situation required it. So I prayed and went.

We shared a cab and arrived at a painful scene. Imagine a street. Now on one side, imagine a 3-generation family sitting around a cut-off oil drum with scrap wood burning in it to stay warm. Neighbors, international volunteers, and people from the UN were all gathered around. This was a family that was evicted in August from their home. Since then, they have been non-violently protesting the injustice of their removal by living in a makeshift tent across the street from their house. On the other side, we could see their house, which their family has owned for 62 years. Three men who appeared to be observant Jews, wearing yarmulkes, were on the roof watching us. Others were in the house at a social gathering. One of their friends came up to us and asked us where we were from. We told him. "Why do you care what is happening here in this country?" he asked. "Why are you standing here?" One of the EAPPIS responded, "Because these people need our support right now."

Because one of the elders inside the tent looked cold, her arms crossed seemingly against the chill, I ventured tentatively into the tent intending to give her my shawl. But her arms were crossed against a different kind of chill, the cold harshness of homelessness and injustice. "I'm so sorry," I said, going up to her. "I'm so sorry that you have lost your home. " "Where are you from?" she asked, and I told her, "America." "Why?" she asked me, her eyes, full of anguish and anger, searching my face. "Why does America support these people?" I told her that many of us question this, send

letters to our congressmen and senators and President Obama, and



*Mural in Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, showing the horror of home demolition.*

that our political discourse is shifting, that there are many points of view in Washington, militant Zionism being only one. I told her that every night I was writing in my computer to my friends, in hopes of showing people what was really happening. I told her that I pray that she will soon have justice and receive her home back again.

Inside the tent, another woman cradled an infant who would soon fall asleep. Perhaps, I hoped, the child would be able to sleep in a bed in the home of sympathetic neighbors. The image of the woman and child in the tent, dispossessed, warmed only by the fire in the burning barrel, was eerily symbolic of the refugee Christ Child of other times. The EAPPI volunteers told me that recently, some of the children of this family were arrested — for riding bicycles and playing in the street in front of the tent. Their presence was disturbing the neighbors. “People talk of peace,” the woman in the tent said to me. “If someone took your house would you be able to talk about peace with him?” I understood; we know that sustainable peace, real peace requires justice for the oppressed.

I am glad I was there. Of course, it would be better not to have such a situation in the world. But I am glad to have been there because of the opportunity to tell the story. We do not understand the reality of what is happening in Sheikh Jarrah. It seems far away, and ambiguous. To the victims, mostly unknown to us, it is as though they suffer and no one cares as all that they have is taken from them.

The family that had been evicted that day did not want to talk to anyone, and we did not see them. Police vans drove by frequently, aware of the situation, not intervening. Eventually it grew late, and we came back to our lodging. It was a very cold night, and I had trouble sleeping, thinking of the family on the sidewalk. How morally impossible a situation it seemed to be, just a mile away, for me to have a bed and for them to have none.

On a Sunday, I wandered into the Church of the Nativity and was able to join a community of Franciscan Friars to participate in the Mass in Italian. I don’t speak Italian, but was able to understand the reading was from the Gospel according to St. John: “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” I got a little teary, for this is the text which is needed here and which the Church here proclaims and lives. Ministries like Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, the EAPPI volunteers in the West Bank, and many others are working to move their society toward the Light shining in the darkness. It is a long and uphill road.

Recently, an ecumenical group of clergy and theologians from a number of Christian denominations wrote an important theological document about the Occupation of the West Bank and the Church’s present role in witnessing together in faith, hope and love. This document is called the Kairos Palestine document. It calls the Occupation a sin against God and humanity, and asks internationals to help to participate in changing the situation. For those who would like to learn more about the situation in the West Bank, the effects of the Occupation and the Separation Wall, or to get involved, the following websites should be of help. Peace and all Good as we walk together into a more just future.

- [www.kairospalestine.ps](http://www.kairospalestine.ps)
- [www.endtheoccupation.org](http://www.endtheoccupation.org)
- [www.icadh.org](http://www.icadh.org)
- [www.annadwa.org](http://www.annadwa.org)
- [www.avh.org](http://www.avh.org)
- [www.fosna.org](http://www.fosna.org)
- [www.ifamericansknew.org](http://www.ifamericansknew.org)
- [www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Peace-Not-Walls.aspx](http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Peace-Not-Walls.aspx)
- [www.eappi.org](http://www.eappi.org)

*Votive candles burn in Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.*





### From the Bursar

*Tom Johnson*

As I write this report, we are 5 months into our 2010 Fiscal Year. Sadly, I must report disappointing news, which, I hope, does not reflect of the capabilities of this humble servant.

For the first 5 months of the Fiscal Year, we have received \$35,030 in contributions from the family, as compared to \$42,479 for the same period last year. It should be noted that this does not include designated contributions to Funds other than the General Fund.

Happily, we have maintained consistency in our level of spending, with \$24,680 spent this Fiscal Year to date, compared to \$24,225 during the same period last year.

What I find particularly sad is that we have received only 121 pledges from 346 Professed and 22 Noviced members in the United States, including Puerto Rico. That is barely 1/3 of our number! The Statutes of the Third Order say that an annual financial contribution is expected from every member.

Friends, even though it be a "widows mite," the Lord will use your contribution to carry forward the ministry of the Third Order, not just in the United States, but in many other parts of the world through our outreach efforts. It's part of our vow of obedience. Let's all pitch in!

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### Living Waters Fellowship

*Tom Johnson*

Prayerfully, our Fellowship recently voted to change our name from "Sacramento-Davis Fellowship" to "Living Waters Fellowship". Although the former name certainly reflected our geographic location, we decided we wanted a name that more fully reflected the spirit of where we live and what we want to experience from our Fellowship.

Living in the Sacramento, California area, we are located in the "Delta" – at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers. A huge percentage of water that supplies the entire state, from the Oregon Border to the Mexican border, comes from this Delta region – truly a source of living water for the State of California.

But more importantly, we considered the spiritual implications of the name, reflecting on the statement of our Lord in John 7:38: ". . . as the Scripture has said, 'out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" It is our prayer that as we meet in fellowship, we will be refreshed and renewed so that as we go into the world, rivers of living water will flow from our hearts to bless the lives of those with whom we come in contact.

### Assisi Performing Arts Music Festival Announces A Pilgrimage Opportunity

A unique opportunity is available for a ten-day pilgrimage in Assisi, Italy. Sightseeing trips are available to locations such as Siena, Rome, Orvieto, Gubbio and Assisi. Participants are able to attend lectures about the life of Sts. Francis and Clare as well as lectures on the culture of Italy. Participants are also able to attend the vocal and instrumental concerts of the music festival, and can even participate in the Festival Choir alongside outstanding instrumentalists and singers.

The dates of the Assisi Performing Arts Music Festival are July 2 to July 16, 2010 with the Pilgrimage from July 2 to July 12, 2010.

The cost of the Pilgrimage is approximately \$3000 depending on the exchange rate at the time of booking. Airfare, meals, and lodging are included.

For more information, please visit: [assisiperformingarts.com](http://assisiperformingarts.com) and call Artistic Director and Founder Greg Scime at (908) 217-6464.

E-mail: [assisifestival@yahoo.com](mailto:assisifestival@yahoo.com).

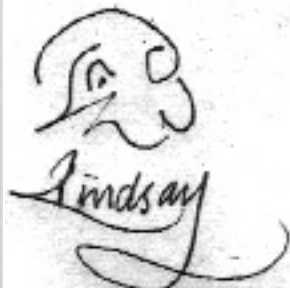
**Ode to Lindsay**

Lindsay, you will be missed. With your great humor and puns, we will miss you. With all your love and caring spirit, we will miss you. Lindsay you lifted up anyone who was down. We will miss you. Love TSSF.

**I Have Enough**

by Lindsay Warren

*I have enough.  
I have enough money  
to pay my bills and buy  
a cup of cappuccino now and again.  
I have enough clothes  
to stay on the safe side of the law  
with a bright necktie or two.  
I have enough food  
to keep my tongue amused and  
my belly from feeling abandoned.  
I have enough house  
to keep my beloved warm and dry and  
our pets in place.  
I have enough car  
to get from here to there and back, and  
keep up with the speed limit.  
I have enough time  
to do what I can if not what I want.  
I have enough books  
to fill my shelves if not my head.  
I have enough because  
I say I have enough.*



Lindsay Warren's Special Gift to Me

Larry Harrelson

"Sister Bodily Death" on January 14, 2010 came to a faithful servant of Christ and Francis: The Rev. Lindsay D. Warren, TSSF. At the time of his passing, Lindsay had been a priest for 54 years and a professed tertiary for 20 years. Lindsay was known for his wit, love of words, puns, humor, writings (poetry and prose), compassion, and sincere spirituality.

I came to know Lindsay in the late 1990's, while a rector in central Oregon. I wanted to deepen my spiritual life through association with a religious order and began formation for possibly becoming a Third Order Franciscan. In the process, I learned of the TSSF fellowship in western Oregon and began to gather with them in varied locations in western and central Oregon.

After about three years I was approved for profession, which was scheduled for our fellowship meeting on Saturday, December 9, 2001 in western Oregon. However, a medical appointment the day before changed my plans. I had some occluded heart vessels and was scheduled for bypass surgery on Monday.

When informed of this, Lindsay said he would travel (over the mountains) to my town and receive my profession in my parish that Sunday, which he did. This was his special gift to me, for which I am deeply grateful. I went to surgery early the next morning with an abiding sense of the Holy Spirit's presence and the grace of having made profession vows.

Gratefully, the surgery and recovery went well, and I was able to enjoy more fellowship meetings with Lindsay. But it was his special love and presence that Sunday, December 10, 2001, that is deeply embedded in my soul. When I join that happy throng on heaven's shore, I'll look for Lindsay and thank him again.

"Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape ... Happy those she finds doing your most holy will." (Francis, "Canticle of the Sun")

**Old Rip**

by Lindsay Warren

*Old Rip woke up one day in a world he didn't invent.  
The rushing river ran no more  
The forests turned to scabs  
Neighbors moved away  
Strangers settled in next door.*

*Old Rip set out one day in a world he didn't invent.  
"I'll get me some spuds, cigarettes, and some candy, too."  
Where the general store stood before a new shopping mall  
spread far as the eye could see.*

*Old Rip made a trip one day in a world he didn't invent.  
"I'll hop a freight, ride the rails, and see what I can see.  
Instead of a ride to the other side he landed in the county  
jail.  
There in a TV box a picture talked "Fly to Vegas and back  
for Ninety-nine ninety-nine."*

*Old Rip took his leave one day from a world he didn't invent.  
To his eternal surprise he opened his eyes,  
"Well whaddya know, I'm home at last."*

## RIP Harold Macdonald

Rev. Harold Macdonald died on December 14, at the age of 81. He was incumbent of Saskatchewan Gateway Parish from 1991 to 1996. A graduate of Trinity College, Toronto, Harold also served parishes in Edmonton, Winnipeg and the Yukon. He also worked at Church House, and received a Master's Degree from Yale University. Harold shared his love of music with many. He created a set of taped music called "The Joyful Noise" for small parishes to use.

*The following piece by Harold appeared here in the Times previously*

Ash Wednesday is for some a very solemn and important day in the Church year. As the first day of Lent, this day leads us to a powerful season of prayer, fasting and reflection on the mercy and grace of our Lord. I could think of no better way to approach this special day than by sharing two poems written with this day in mind.

*Blacked again with ash of palm  
smudged as one remembering death  
dust thou art and dust you're from  
soon, too soon, the final breath!  
Contrite, humble, feel your sin!  
millions sick and millions dead.  
Repent! and once again begin;  
leave heart of stone and feet of lead.  
If you would know the truth for me  
Lent can last the whole year long!  
It's AIDs, the flue or H-I-V -  
each night to misery belongs.*

*This time I shall make others work, finance their staffs  
and let the lengthening Lent light up life's little laughs.*

+++++

*Surely in the brow's sweat we seek the good,  
a jewel desired but in harm's setting placed.  
Gained at a risk, our lives on danger based,  
a chasm 'twixt what's done and what we should;  
Hurt and help are in the single circumstance  
and evil taints the hope, the goal contaminates.  
So Providence submits to bitter fate -  
the cross; its partner in redemption's dance.  
Good comes by increments; so slow its speed!  
Humanity rebuffs the pure, God's Self!  
Gives up! The good is placed back on the shelf  
Two steps ahead, two back, progress indeed!  
Try again! Smudge the tiny ash of grace;  
God helps you make the world a better place!*

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

*Harold Macdonald, Saskatchewan, Canada— "retired" to the shore of Lake Winnipeg. Reprinted from the Prairie Messenger (3/26/97, page 15) This originally appeared in the Fall 1997 issue of the Times.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

I march up and down the single step leading first with the right foot, then the left, beside the computer. "Blessed be truth," I say, beginning to puff. "Blessed be the courage of the Word."

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

"Blessed be the intelligence of animals," I say between ups and downs. The dogs are unimpressed. Then to the stereo I march across the room. I swing my arms. There's less pain—it's the music. Announcer is doing "Stereo Morning." The Spirit catches me up. I dance. Manage a hop to the right, a hop to the left, a twirl. Catch the rhythm if not too fast. She is waiting for me to catch up; she is wisdom, joy, and laughter, tears, and celebration. She is Spirit. "Blessed are you, Spirit, flooding into my aching being like refreshing waters."

I urge the dogs. Now they're interested. I am Gene Kelly, swooping around the room. I am Baryshnikov. The wolf crouches, thinking ballet means ball. The Llassa barks at the movement—I would like to say the

*(continued on page 10)*



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**For Name and address changes**  
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### **T S S F Publications**

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

*Order of Admission* (\$1)

*Spiritual Director Guide* (\$2.50)

*Statutes* (\$1)

*Devotional Companion* (\$4.50)

#### **Please Note:**

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

## **Do You Feel Called to Call? Want to be Our Vocations Coordinator?**

*John Brockmann for Chapter*

We all know there is spiritual hunger in our Province of the Americas and more people would be interested in joining TSSF if they only knew we existed. Chapter feels there needs to be someone who helps all of us recruit, and so we have proposed a new position of **Vocations Coordinator**. Such a person would organize multiple types of publicity including the triptych, brochures, and exhibits for General Convention and Diocesan Conventions which local members would use. Such a person could have a budget for placing ads in *Episcopal Life* or other publications.

Chapter also believes that there are naturally gifted members of the Order who are just good at recruiting; local, unsung versions of Br. Robert Hugh, Father Masud, or Emmett Jarrett. When such *rainmakers* are part of a fellowship, numbers almost automatically increase. One of the key jobs of the Vocations Coordinator will be to identify such folks and give them all the tools they need to do their "natural recruiting" even better.

As Vocations Coordinator, you don't do all the work; you help make it possible for all of us to recruit!

Feel called to call?? Contact our Minister Provincial, Ken Norian, as soon as you can.

### **Convocation Information?**

Southeast Convocation: May 28-30,2010; Ignatius House, Atlanta, GA (Georgia); Registrar, John Michael Shrewsbury. NOTE: We have VERY FEW confirmed dates for convocations. When you know the dates, please let me know so we can help publicize them.

### **Archivist Needed!**

We recently heard from Little Portion that the room where our archives are being stored is in very bad condition and our historical records are merrily rotting away! (SSF is having the same problem.) Ken is going to collect them and move them to a safer location, but we really need to have an archivist to help save our history for the long-term. If anyone has this gift, please contact Ken.

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).

**Stations of My Home (cont. from page 8)**

excitement—of the dance. I am puffing. It's been 22 years since I had a cigarette. Station 3.

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

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

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

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

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

What a bunch of sad-sacks we are! There's more in a wagging tail than this world dreamed of. Then to the kitchen. Station 5. This is where many people are not fed. This little place, with microwave, stove, fridge and food is an island of luxury in a world of want. I have gone from bliss to sorrow. Up a step, down a step. Right, left. Burundi, Nigeria, Rwanda; the nameless millions of the hungry haunt my doorway.

I offer a prayer. "Let us all be satisfied with just the daily bread, so there can be enough for all." I see bread, eggs, butter, meat, coffee, orange juice, milk and fruit. I see shantytowns in Mexico City, São Paulo, Bangkok. How many have none of these? How many only one? I have them all.

I am stepping quite rapidly now. The pain has moved inward, is no longer physical. Then we three move to the other window of the living room, looking north, having now made almost a circle inside the house. I look through the glass into the 80-mile length of the south basin; all ice, horizontals. This is Station 6.

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

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

I see that soldier, filmed during the D-Day attack on a Normandy beach, running and falling once again. Before our eyes he has died a thousand times. I grieve a thousand times; I am grateful a thousand times. I pray

for the dead. I ask for certainty of faith. Now I am back, in a few painless steps, to the glass patio door flanked by large picture windows on each side, facing the east. The Creator. The creation. On the sill rests a pair of binoculars which we used before dawn to see the spectacular view of Hale Bopp. The stuff of the comet, the sun, the molecules of my arthritic joints was forged in the same fire of creation.

Together, we are a huge mystery. At least it will do until we meet you, O Maker, face-to-face. The circuit begins again. I will get around it five or six times. The Creator at my window, the Word at my computer, the Spirit in my music, the play in my animals, the nurture in my kitchen, the death in the bracing, cleansing north wind. These are the stations of my house.

**Caring for Creation**

*Francesca Wigle*

Lent is the perfect season to begin taking steps to lower our carbon footprints and participate lovingly in tending Creation. As Franciscans, we are blessed to have Brother Francis as a role model.

There are some wonderful resources which can help us open our eyes and really become aware of what caring for creation entails. The Franciscan Action Network ([www.franciscanaction.org](http://www.franciscanaction.org)) is offering a weekly lenten series on Care for Creation. It includes readings, prayers, actions and links to help us open the door to new ways of living. At a recent FAN meeting in Chicago, I discovered the book, *Care for Creation (a Franciscan spirituality of the earth)* by Ilia Delio, O.S.F., Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M., and Pamela Wood. The book inspired me to offer a class on Care for Creation at my church in Austin. Those of us in the class are passionate about learning what we can do to change our relationship with the rest of creation. Because the book is written from a Franciscan perspective, it is deepening my understanding of how I am called to live.

The FAN resources offered for the Second Sunday in Lent included a Lenten Carbon Fast 2010 calendar created by the Environmental Outreach Committee of the Archdiocese of Washington. I am using the suggestions to take steps each day to become a more loving member of creation's family.

I felt called to write a poem about Tending Creation as Franciscans and would love to share this poem with you.

**Tending Creation as Franciscans**

*God created the human family on this beautiful planet.*

*All are equal. All are beloved. There are no outcasts.*

*As brothers and sisters, we are called to serve one another in the spirit of God's love and harmony, regardless of our*

*past.*

*But wait, the web is larger!*

*We are also in relationship with our fellow creatures, great and small.  
From large Arctic polar bears to the tiniest of microbes, one and all.*

*We weave the web together.*

*We depend on one another.*

*Let us rejoice that God has provided the fibers for our web!  
How can we begin to understand our relatedness in this web of life?*

*Let us listen to the humble wisdom of St. Francis.*

*“Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Wind, Sister Water, Brother Fire,  
our Sister Mother Earth. “ Could it be any clearer?*

*Are we weaving, or tearing the web of creation to shreds?*

*By our lack of caring, by our strife?*

*Could humans live without each part of the web?*

*The answer is, NO!*

*We need all of creation to survive. Only then can we thrive.*

*Only then are we truly alive!*

*God asks us to care for Creation like a tender Mother caring for her  
newborn baby. This mother understands the meaning of unending  
love and commitment. She is deeply grounded and does not lose sight.*

*Would she mistreat her precious child for money or status,  
and then take flight?*

*Francis learned how to let go of the things in his possession.*

*What things must we let go of to nurture Creation?*

*Paper products made from the trees of pristine forests.*

*We use them once and throw them away before us.*

*Plastic bags, containers, packages...*

*They are piling upon our earth, trapping the creatures in our oceans.*

*Let us refuse to douse the earth with these potions.*

*Francis honored the lepers and the outcasts.*

*Who are the lepers and outcasts in our lives that we ignore and banish?*

*Are they the poverty stricken workers exploited in factories by large companies intent on filling their pockets for their  
corporate advantage?*

*Are they those who live on the polluted and unlivable edges of the  
prosperous societies of our world?*

*Are they those we seldom hear or think about until an earthquake's devastation into the Giant Media's focus their images are  
hurled?*

*Are they the Amazon forests nearing destruction due to the dumping  
of wastes?*

*The poisoned landfills oozing unseen killers into our earth and space?*

*How do we pollute Sister Water, Brother Wind, our Mother Earth?*

*Let truth rally us to action, kindling rebirth!*

*Let us stand together in Community, demanding Justice for our Home!*

*Let us rally our human family to a new understanding of Shalom!*

*Each moment, each hour, each day, each night...*

*We must rally ourselves to welcome God's Light!*

*Let us honor God's voice, aware of our plight.*

*The whisper, the nudge, the call, the shout...*

*Taking action for change, trusting God without doubt!*

*Let us follow the walk of Jesus and Francis,*

*humbly feeling our way, opening to Creation around us.*

*With eyes open, we learn again that we are part of this earth.*

*Air within our lungs, water enlivening our bodies,*

*let us become instruments of peace working for all of creation.*

## The Third Order, Cursillo, and Me

*John Brockmann*

Before I was noviced in the Third Order, I was a member of a Kairos Team in Vermont that took a Cursillo -style retreat into a maximum-security prison. Practiced, prayed, and planned for weeks ahead; slept on the floor of a neighboring church at night; proceeded through three series of heavy doors watched by armed guards; offered our retreat to the inmates in the gym.

It was so grace filled. Inmates found a loving God, ABBA, who had eluded them. And lives changed.

Went on another Kairos team and then finally...sort of...experienced a Cursillio retreat given to me. Yet even then I was so concerned that my spiritual-directee who I had taken along had the perfect retreat that weekend that I forgot to let God in for me.

The founding member of our DelMarVa fellowship, Francis Baum, was a Cursillista in a parish that was heavily-Cursillo, e.g., lots of guitar praise music during the main service. Eventually I became the Cursillo Chaplain for the Diocese of Delaware. Many members of our local fellowship were first Cursillistas, and I fondly remember Jane Ellen Traugott and so many others that led our Northeastern Convocation who were first Cursillistas.

So when I read in October the announcement that our own Rick Simpson had been elected to serve upon the National Cursillo Committee of the Episcopal Church, representing as a Priest, the North Eastern United States, I thought it was time to explore the interweaving of TSSF and Cursillo.

I posted a call for letters and comments on [tssfamericas-l@justus.anglican.org](mailto:tssfamericas-l@justus.anglican.org), and this is what I received. Make of it what the Spirit leads you to...

## Franciscan Spirituality of the Cursillo Movement

*Rick Simpson*

In October of 2009, I was elected to serve upon the National Cursillo Committee of the Episcopal Church, representing, as a Priest, the North Eastern United States. I have been active in the Cursillo Movement since 1984, making my weekend in The Diocese of Iowa. I have also been professed in our Order since 1991. I have on more than one occasion reflected upon the blending line of these two spiritual paths, but when John ask me to write something about this for our newsletter it again brought a few thoughts to mind. What I have discovered along the way is that my Franciscan walk and the Cursillo Movement in many ways are not that far apart.

### Franciscan Joy

Fr. Francis was noted by his life of joy in our Lord. He would walk about singing, and made everyone around learn his favorite song which we know as "All Creatures of our God and King." Francis sang it in Italian with some French tune that seems to be lost to time, and I am sure he would not recognize our Anglican tunes at all. Cursillo is noted for a movement of joy as well. Yes, joy and sometimes silliness too. The weekends often are filled with laughter and songs that help lift the heart and build up community. Joy in Christ springs from God's presence and grace in our lives. It is a life changing, attractive attribute that draws others towards sharing with us our life in Christ. Sometime you just have to let that joy out and sing! Cursillo is

often much better at the joy of faith than our Order because that fun loving joyful spirit is encouraged on a weekend. Sometime we Franciscans just take ourselves far too seriously... It must be an Anglican Benedictine influence that has muted our spiritual exuberance.

### Spreading the Good News

Francis lived at the time in history when the Church was mostly active within the monasteries and inside the doors of her churches. Francis took the good news into the streets and market places, into the highways and by ways. Wherever he went, he taught the people first by the manner of his life and if necessary he used words. He used joy, prayer, a passionate faith, and visible expressions of Christ's love to make known the love of Our Lord. Cursillo's aim is to build up Christ-center-ed leaders for the Church. About the only really unique aspect of the Cursillo method of spirituality is the building up of small groups that regularly meet for the expressed purpose of helping and encouraging each other in the proclamation of the Gospel right where we live and work.

### The Balance of the Active Life and Prayer

Fr. Francis was really delightfully unbalanced in his life of prayer and action. He spent a great deal of time in intense periods of action and ministry in the world. Then he would retreat for intense times of prayer and contemplation leaving the world behind. Our own church has called for a bit more balance in our lives encouraging us not to punish "brother ass" with excessive practices. Cursillo seeks to instill much the same spiritual balance that we find in classic western

spirituality... Piety, Study and Action. Cursillo teaches that we are to be the leaven for Christ that changes our own local environments. In Francis we see a powerful leaven that gives rise to change, by peace making, and caring for the least of our brothers and sisters. In both we see the teaching, vision and call to be useful in this world for God's mission and work. As Christians, as Franciscans, within the context of the community of the church we are the body of Christ and we are expected to act like Christ in the world.

### **Yearning for a Deeper Relationship with God**

What would cause a young man to walk away from wealth and position in society to become the saint that we know and love? Francis yearned for a deeper relationship with Our Lord that would bring meaning back into his life. But first he had to wean his life from money, power, position and being the self centered life of the party in order to draw nearer and nearer to God. He was so good at this spiritual path that the people of his day thought that he was the closest thing to seeing Jesus in the flesh. The Cursillo Movement strives to fan the fires of faith in all who participate as well. The team on a Cursillo weekend seeks one thing, to serve those who make a weekend with the deepest love and respect. "Ubi Caritas" is our one of our favorite Franciscan songs because we so deeply identify it with Francis' style of ministry that the gospel truth of God's love may be made known. For many, the three-day Cursillo Weekend it is the first time they see and know in a real tangible way that the Church community is one of love and communality in Christ. Where love and caring are, there is God. Being a servant of Christ is our way.

These are but a few thoughts about some of the commonality that Francis and Cursillo Movement share. On a personal note, since I have been in the Diocese of Long Island, I have worked several weekends with Brother Dunstan SSF. I call him, "Cursillo's Secret Weapon." His Franciscan joy and love of Jesus shine though in a real, visible and delightful way. Who would not want to join in the dance! When we let our joyful Franciscan spirituality loose people are drawn into a deeper relationship with our Lord.

### **Most Profoundly Spiritual Moments... Followed By One of its Greatest Betrayals**

*Harry S. Coverston*

I have been a professed tertiary for 17 years now. I have attended Cursillo but I am not a Cursillista. My experience of Cursillo was a juxtaposition of one of the most profoundly spiritual moments in my life followed by one of its greatest betrayals. In my own experience, I find Cursillo incompatible with my Franciscan voca-

tion. Here is why.

I attended Cursillo in the Diocese of Central Florida in 1990. At that point in my life, I was adrift, unhappy as an attorney who had just left public defense work to try private practice, uncertain where I was going. I was also just beginning to feel a soft but steady tug on my soul that eventually would lead me to leave my home, my family and five generations of roots in Florida to attend seminary out on the west coast enroute to eventual ordination as a priest and completion of a doctorate in religion with which I make my living today. Cursillo occurred in a rather stormy crucible of my life that ultimately led to major changes.

In my experience of the Cursillo weekend, it was a mixed bag. Always the avid student, I found the lectures on the history and theology of the church interesting if not always compelling, taking copious notes. I found the camaraderie with some of the men from around the diocese uplifting. I relished the weekend in the woods away from the cares of law practice, college adjunct teaching and my duties at the cathedral to simply think about my faith.

On the flip side, as a member of a cathedral choir, the self-described "praise music" was pretty much an abomination unto the Lord in my book which I endured begrudgingly. The sleep deprivation from late night sessions followed by early morning pot-banging wakeups left me cranky and drowsy. The mock drag show ("Gay Dolores, she doesn't know whether she prefers Natasha or Boris") supposedly offered for entertainment after dinner the first night was unsettling in its barely disguised homophobia. And the emotional testimony-driven sessions in which many of us felt subtly pressured to participate were a bit too close for comfort to the Baptist churches I had attended with friends as a youth, always feeling distinctly out of place in this approach to religion.

In the middle of the three day weekend, the palanca arrived. While the bulk of these letters came from people I'd never heard of and used Cursillo jargon that meant little to me (I still find the designation of "babe chick" amusing) among the many pieces were notes from people I knew, many from the Cathedral. I found myself smiling, feeling loved and appreciated by people I served devotedly. I saved the letter from Andy, my partner of then 16 years, until the last. As I read his words of love and encouragement, the tears ran down my face.

It was at this point in the weekend that we were encouraged to go to confession. I had never done that before and didn't know how to proceed. The elderly priest who had volunteered to hear confessions was a kind man. He would later become my confessor

priest as I began living into my Franciscan rule. We read through the prayer book rite of reconciliation together and then he simply asked me what I wanted to say. It was like a dam bursting. Years of failings and self-loathing spilled over the dam's edge along with torrents of tears. And when I was finished, he smiled and simply said, "Harry, do you know that God loves you just as you are?" When I responded yes, I realized it was the first time in my life that I actually believed that. In a world where gay men are demonized with regularity and taught to fear and hate their own existence, that's no small feat.

As I walked out the door of that study that afternoon, the world suddenly looked very different to me. The beauty of the sun setting over the woods surrounding the lake was suddenly a glowing reminder of the presence of a loving God in my life. The singing of the birds celebrating the setting of the sun reflected my own joy of being created and loved by God. It was as if the entire Creation were afire with the joyful love of God. Indeed, when I later read of Francis' ecstatic experiences of Creation, I had a sense of what he was talking about.

That afternoon proved a major turning point in my life. I began to reason that if God loved me, I could also love myself. And if I loved myself, I could listen to my heart's yearnings, leaving the practice of law behind and becoming open to whatever God would call me to do. Within a year, I had applied and been accepted into four seminaries, chose the one in Berkeley, CA, packed up my stuff and headed west. My partner stayed behind to sell our home and joined me a year later. In many ways, I have much for which to thank Cursillo.

But that was not the end of the story. Within a week of arriving home from Cursillo, I received a mailer from the Cursillo organization in the diocese. It began with a huge headline "What if?" and the list of feared events included these lines: "What if women became priests? What if homosexuals became priests?" I was stunned. I checked the envelope again to make sure it had indeed come from Cursillo. Sadly, it had. The letter asked Cursillistas to attend a barbeque later than month at the home of one of the diocesan priests to raise money to send to the Episcopalians United to fight against the feared presence of gays and women clergy in the church.

In that day's return mail, I sent the Cursillo organization a letter expressing my disgust with their mailer. From the notes I had taken that weekend, I quoted back to them portions of their own teachings which the mailer violated. I told them how hurtful their mailer had been for me. And I concluded the letter by asking that my name be taken off their mailing lists since I no

longer wished to be associated with Cursillo.

I do believe that organizations, like human beings, have the potential to change, to repent, to reconsider their understandings, to apologize for the harm they have done to other people and to change direction. My observations of Cursillo in Central Florida lead me to believe that has not happened and is unlikely to occur. Cursillo here remains strongly connected to movements within the church that are fairly described as reactionary and exclusivist. As such, I chalk up my experience with Cursillo as being unexpectedly providential but also temporal, a passing encounter that both changed my life but ultimately had no room for my ongoing presence there. I also know from my experience with Cursillistas elsewhere that this particular branch of the movement may or may not be typical of the movement nationally. Indeed, in California, some of Integrity's national leaders were the directors of their Cursillos.

To the degree that Cursillo teaches its attendees that God loves them just as they are, it is consistent with the Franciscan charism of love of all creation. Where that reassurance is offered to those society demeans, it is the embodiment of Franciscan concern for the lepers and the outcasts. To the degree that Cursillo teaches catholic traditions such as veneration of the sacrament accompanied by contemplative prayer we engaged the first night of the weekend, it stands in a long line of Franciscan tradition and praxis. And to the degree that Cursillo encourages camaraderie and reminds its members of their connections to others within the church and how they are appreciated, it practices the Franciscan charism of joy.

But mock drag shows which demean human beings are not instruments of peace, they are weapons of a culture war which actively inflict harm on some of the most vulnerable people of God, a stark contradiction to our Franciscan calling. Denigration of women and LGBT persons who faithfully serve the church in every order of ministry from Sunday School teaching to the episcopacy, often despite that denigration, is a betrayal of Cursillo's own stated purpose of "help[ing] those in the church understand their individual callings to be Christian Leaders" and the antithesis of the Third Order's own policies of non-discrimination. And the marshalling of organizational processes to support a faction in the culture war does not serve to break down the divisions of the church, much less the world, it serves to increase them.

As a priest, I have encouraged parishioners to attend Cursillo. I tell them to make up their own minds about the program. I answer their questions honestly when they ask about its theology, its politics and its process-

es. But I also tell them about the life-changing experience I had at Cursillo and my debt to the organization who provided it. Cursillo is a mixed bag on a good day with enormous potential for both good and harm. I thank God for the experience I was provided there even as I continue to see any ongoing affiliation with Cursillo as sadly incompatible with my vocation as a Franciscan and an Episcopalian.

## Becoming a Franciscan through Cursillo

*Calvin E. Hefner*

In the early 1990's I was called to "quiet time". The Society of St. John the Evangelist had a retreat house in Durham, North Carolina, to which I applied for five days of silence. I was asked, and agreed to a retreat leader, as this was a new experience. Mid-morning of my second full day an elderly Brother came to my room and we discussed the days of silence. He offered the following passage from Revelation 3: 20, *Listen! I am standing at the door knocking, if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.*

I pondered this scripture verse for four days, wondering why this was given to me. I thought that I had opened the door to Jesus.

Two years later, in the midst of EFM studies elsewhere, there was talk of Cursillo. I thought, "What a strange name!"

I began inquiring about Cursillo and was told that I would probably not find Cursillo welcoming because of my sexuality. I thought, well, I'll just see how I fit in. I found a Sponsor and was whisked away to the Diocesan retreat center in North Carolina.

The team and participants were accepting and lovable. During the healing service, I sat and watched as people moved forward; shaking, crying, and more tears after speaking with a spiritual advisor. I was not about to take part in anything like that, and actually felt uncomfortable. Nonetheless, before long, the Spirit lifted me forward with tears in my eyes, and my nose running. As I approached the spiritual advisor, I told her I wanted to open my heart and my life to accept Jesus, the Christ, as my Lord and my Savior. At that time, I felt the Presence and knew that my life was being transformed.

Upon completion of my Cursillo experience, I went to the parish's assistant rector, who is still my spiritual advisor, and asked him who in the Parish was on fire for Jesus. He thought for some time, replying, "No one in this parish has a relationship with Jesus".

I came from a parish of 1,200 members and could not believe that no one had that love and relationship

with Jesus, the Christ. He said, "If you want to be with people who love and want to follow Jesus, consider becoming a Franciscan. They live the Gospels of Jesus, the Christ."

I applied for Aspirant status and was accepted after many months. The Franciscans moved slower then, compared with today. After four years I was professed. As I look back on my Franciscan life, and the Scripture on which I was to meditate, the door was opened as I made my Cursillo, and my Cursillo took me to the life of St. Francis.

Cursillo gave me confidence in my parish life to become a Spiritual Formation leader for six years, a Chaplain for prison ministry and a Franciscan Chaplain for our area. Through the Cursillo movement I have sponsored about 18 Cursillistas, served on many teams, served as Lay Rector for both the Western Diocese and the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. I now serve on our Secretariat as vice-chair and chair of our Servant Community.

I found that Cursillo gave me an excellent foundation to live the life of a Franciscan with Piety, Study and Action.

## Cursillo-Really?

*Denise Passmore*

I had heard a lot about cursillo since entering the Episcopal church. I was initially rejected because my husband did not go to church and so I would not be allowed to go. That should have been a tip off. Many years later, I was divorced and was curious because I had a need for a spiritual experience. It kept getting put off and I heard some really bad things about it, but wanted to judge for myself, so I went. It was, to say the least, a horrifying experience.

It begins with an evening of "silence" where you are not allowed to talk with your bunk mates. Everything was "controlled", who you could talk with, when you could talk, and then you find out that two of the members of your cohort are in fact "spies" who are there to ensure you behave properly. We were bombarded with sweets and caffeine and actually DENIED sleep at some points and prohibited from resting in the middle of the day. On occasion you would be told you were going to be able to sleep or rest, but they would pull something out to "surprise" you so you didn't get the rest you had anticipated. The group sessions were so controlled that we were not able to say what we really felt or needed to say but forced to stay on target. There were a number of experiences that I just found humiliating. For example, when we went to eat or do anything we were lined up against the wall and counted

before being allowed to proceed. Everyone had to be there. One evening at dinner I was prevented from going to the bathroom because they were planning a "surprise" and my bladder issues did not fit into the scheme. During our so-called "breaks" we were supposed to sit around and sing these insipid praise songs. I usually managed to hide in the woods but had to be close enough to hear the call to start up again. Oh yeah, and we had to make posters. Did I tell you that one! And then every night we had a poster competition. By the end of the weekend I was dazed from lack of sleep, sugar high, and even constipation. The cursillo people at our church used the group to rally and drive out our beloved priest. Then I went to a weekend Franciscan retreat. I left feeling recharged, peaceful, loved, and devoted to God. So you tell me, which experience helps the spiritual journey?

Additionally, our new, watered down version of a priest led a study group on cults. He recommended a book that I read. One evening I came to class and read a passage of practices cults use to brainwash people: chanting, sleep deprivation, bombardment of emotional messages, control of access to outside world. I asked Father if that reminded him of anything. He smiled and knew EXACTLY what I was referring to.

Any questions?

### **Dynamic Relationship between Cursillo and TSSF?**

*Donnalee Hart*

I was deeply involved in Cursillo in the mid-eighties to mid-nineties as a music leader in both English and Spanish, primarily in the Diocese of Southern California, also a little in Diocese of Olympia. Didn't connect (at last!) with TSSF until 2006, so the experiences were not simultaneous. I'm very out of touch with what is happening today in the Cursillo movement, and didn't think I had much to say on this until today's Principle hit me between the eyes with memories of Cursillo. It seems to me that the chief form of service which [Cursillistas] have to offer is to reflect the love of Christ, who in his beauty and power, is the inspiration and joy of their lives.

Offering God's unconditional love to others, pouring it out in a flood that could not be ignored, meeting together in small fellowship groups in which we endeavored to help one another live the gospel in every aspect of our day to day life, praising God with all our heart and soul and mind.... It was an Acts of the Apostles way of life (including bystanders thinking we were drunk or something).

So much of my Cursillo experience was very Francis-

can. Our joy was incredible, our commitment to Christ intense, our prayer constant, our fellowship challenging and encouraging. It offered so many of us the support we yearned for to help us live our faith deeply and vibrantly, a way also to bring renewal into our local congregations, which many of us were experiencing as lukewarm at best. As is so often the case, what was "wrong" with Cursillo was intimately entwined with what was "right."

Not surprisingly, some people found us obnoxious, uncouth and extreme. To some extent this was an excellent sign that we were close in the footsteps of our Lord (and Francis). It is equally true that we were deeply in need of more humility and courtesy. Sometime the vitriolic response we received in our local congregations was really shocking and painful for everyone. Too often we all (Cursillistas and non-Cursillistas alike) engaged in blaming and criticizing each other, rather than seeking to understand what God was showing us about ourselves.

Frankly, my experience (so far!) in TSSF fellowship, precious as it is to me, falls short of the "standard" of radical, committed Christian fellowship in community that I experienced in the 4th Day groups of Cursillo. And, odd as it sounds, many Franciscans seem more than a bit fussy in comparison.

At the same time, much of what engages me now in my faith journey was not present at all in Cursillo at the time, for example strong concern for social justice and care for creation (are there "Green Cursillos" today I wonder?) And I would be very put off by the narrowly fundamentalist approach to scripture that we embraced then.

The more I think about all this, the more I see the possibilities for a dynamic relationship between Cursillo and our life in TSSF. I look forward to hearing more on the subject! I also hope we can begin to heal rifts that are doubtless present in our fellowship over Cursillo.

### **For Everything There is a Season, and a Time for Every Matter Under Heaven; (Eccl. 3:1-8)**

*Tina Ferriot*

This Scripture passage was the theme of the Cursillo Weekend I attended in June 1989. Have you ever wondered whether or not God was present in your life? I surely have especially as I sat in my living room awaiting the arrival of my Cursillo sponsors on that June day. I was reading and meditating on Ecclesiastes 3:1-22. I had been told to leave my watch at home, and so as the time drew near to leave; I left my watch on top of my open Bible at this passage.



My heart was excited with joy as my head wondered what God had in mind for my life. After dinner with my sponsors where the Cursillo was being held, they left for home. At the beginning of our weekend those present, heard the Rectora's description of what the Weekend held for us.

And there it was! The answer for those many questions I had concerning my relationship with God.

Yes, there all around me was the Living Word come alive in that passage from Ecclesiastes 3:1-13. I shivered as the theme was read aloud and recalled that this is the very passage which God had placed on my heart at home before arriving to the Cursillo Weekend.

This most joyous weekend thrust me into an unbelievable journey toward my Franciscan life before I could even understand its treasures. Even going to Cursillo brought tension to some community members who thought I wasn't Christian enough to attend. Then after making my Cursillo, and applying to work the next Weekend, the same controversy arose. I learned many spiritual lessons on mercy and justice surrounding the Christian life during those early days in the Cursillo community. Mercy and justice were not the only ideals I am passionate about. It is the gift of Christ's love that inspired my servant heart.

I began to experience an unquenchable desire to renew and dedicate my life to prayer and following Jesus where He called me. One day came an invitation from a Franciscan tertiary to come to a Fellowship meeting. My heart was stirred with gladness, a Religious Order experience! I didn't realize it at the time but I, in fact, had already had an experience early in my time in my current parish of Franciscan companionship. My introduction to the Episcopal Church and St. Michael's Church was our beloved Franciscan brother, Father Deane Kennedy.

Father Kennedy was involved in the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis for many years and was a compassionate role model of prayer. When my close friends and I first came to St. Michael's, Fr. Kennedy invited us to attend a meeting at a woman's home. At the time, I admit I saw no connection for my future until long after my Profession in March 9, 1996.

God's marvelous plans and the mysteries of His love never cease to amaze me. In October of 1996, I was privileged to be the Rectora of Cursillo #72 in the Diocese of Northern California. During this time, I had discovered my heart's desire for the gifts of intercessory prayer and healing. I found out that wonderful saying is true, be careful what you pray for and I might add "There is great joy and surprise when His will is done".

I continue to learn and deepen my Franciscan spirituality through prayer and have come to a new part of the path in my journey. I realized through guided discernment that as a Third Order Franciscan, I am called to the Single consecrated life as a vowed celibate.

I am eternally grateful to all my brothers and sisters of the Third Order and First Order who have worked and prayed with me on my discernment. A public service will be held at St. Michael's in Carmichael, Ca. on April 17, 2010 at 11:00am. The Bishop of the Diocese of Northern California, Barry Beisner, will receive my vow before God's people. This vocation is a call to build up the Kingdom of God and as a follower of Christ, St. Francis, St. Clare, and all the saints, I ask your prayers for patience and perseverance. God's Joy and Peace to all!

## The Sounds of Silence

*Tim Daplyn (reprinted from The Chronicle, TSSF European Province, Summer 2009)*

I now live most of the year as something of a hermit at a remote place where land meets sea in the north of our islands. During winter months, I see other people only when I make a weekly 44 mile round trip to church and village store or the 220 mile excursion to attend the Inverness Area meeting. The absence of other human life forms does not mean however that I live in a silent world — the force 9 (soon to be severe storm 11 — thanks Brother Wind!) gale thundering outside the croft house as I write belies that notion.

Even on calmer days nature's many voices are present in the sea's lap on the rocks, the stonechats' clirk among the ruins or porpoises far out in the bay which are heard to breathe before they are clearly seen.

Inside the house, other voices make themselves heard. One of the best things I did was to move my library here and like old friends, their familiar words break upon my inner ear as I turn the pages. Studying, saying the Office and reading scripture are essentially audible experiences for me even when done alone and in silence.

One is never alone at prayer. The half-remembered voice of my parish priest when just the two of us turned up for communion: 'No matter - we won't be alone - just think of all those angels and archangels ascending and descending!' Quite often now on long dark evenings my study oratory is stuffed full of their comforting wings gently muffling my pitiable attempts at sung Compline for one!

So you see, while the 'signal to noise' ratio may be better here in the wilderness of Western Ross it is by no means a silent place. There is so much to listen to. The Incarnate Word is always making himself heard if only we have ears to hear him. And as He himself remarked (in the face of Pharisaic criticism of his noisy friends) 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would shout out.' And so they still do on wild winter days in these parts!

**RIP: Heber F. Peacock**

Heber Fletcher Peacock, professed for 24 years, died on March 9, 2010 at his winter residence in Raleigh, NC. Heber's last words were "I am your faithful servant, Lord." Those words were a reflection of the spirit of his whole life.

Heber's wife June wrote this poem that was included in the bulletins at his funerals:

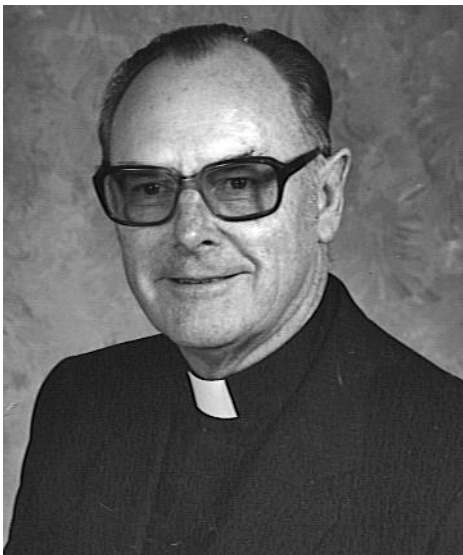
*He Taught Us by Example**How to live:**Love**Humility**Patience**Joy**How to die:**Quiet acceptance**Raw courage**Enduring faith*

He was born on February 4, 1918 in Tucson, AZ. He received Th. M. and Th. D. degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, and was a candidate for the D. Phil. Degree from the University of Zurich in Switzerland.

He worked with the United Bible Societies, was a translation consultant, and was one of the translators of *Good News Bible: Today's English Version* under the auspices of the United Bible Societies in the 1960's and 70's. He was the UBS Africa Regional Consultant and

later served as World Translations Coordinator.

He became an Episcopal priest in 1976, served as Associate Rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Asheville, NC, and priest-in-charge at numerous small parishes



in Western North Carolina. His most recent charge was St. Francis Episcopal Church, Cherokee, NC.

He is predeceased by first wife Edith Tyner, and son William Edward. He is survived by wife June Skinner Peacock, children David, James, and Elizabeth (professed for two years), step children Ann, Robert, and Stephen, grandchildren Fletcher, Jessica, and Kathryn, and two great-grandchildren.

Heber was a wonderful soul, who will be remembered as a man of immense kindness, thoughtfulness, and humility. He was in all ways a peaceful, gentle man of great faith.

**Sermon Preached at Heber Peacock Funeral**

*The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor, The Bishop of Western North Carolina*

Today we gather to mourn and to sing Alleluia—both at once. We gather as faithful people who grieve the loss of our brother Heber, but we do not gather as people without hope because we believe that Heber Peacock is not dead but alive in Christ Jesus.

So we gather to grieve. There is nothing unchristian about grief. Jesus wept at the death of his friend Lazarus. We weep for those who die for a simple reason; we miss them. They are part of us and we are part of them, and when someone we love dies, it can feel as part of us is gone. The truth is, if you love anyone or anything, you will grieve. It's what it means to live in this world of time. We live in what Paul calls the incomplete: everything passes; every living thing dies. So we are to let the tears of mourning run down our faces just as Christians have done for 2000 years.

We gather to give thanks. We give thanks for having known such a wise and faithful person. Heber Peacock spread the Good News all over Western North Carolina: Saluda, Flat Rock, Cullowhee, and Cherokee. At 88, when I first met him, he had more energy than I. It's our privilege to have worked with him and walked with him. He was a humble, wise, gifted man who never puffed-up his intellect or knowledge. He served.

Most of all we gather to celebrate. When I was first ordained as a priest and served with Bob Cowperthwaite, Heber's step son, I was standing at the door after Sunday service shaking hands, and some 6 year old out of the blue asked me: Why do we pray for the dead? I went blank. I tried to think of all my seminary classes; I asked myself what would Richard Hooker say? I just blurted out the first thing that came to mind—because they aren't dead. They are alive with Christ.

That's what enables us as Christians amidst our grief to dare to sing Alleluia because we know our Redeemer

lives. We know He will raise me up, and I shall see God who is my friend and not a stranger. This is our hope; this is our faith; this is the Truth and the Way and the Life.

Our assurance as Christians is that nothing separates us from the love of Jesus Christ. Nothing. Neither hardship, nor peril, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor death, nor anything in all creation. Nothing. I know my Redemer lives and He will raise me up, and I shall see God who is my friend and not a stranger.

Christ has taken away the sting of death and given us a hope that allows us to sing Alleluia even at the grave—even when tears run down our faces. We know today Heber Peacock is with Christ and all the company of heaven. He is at that heavenly banquet with all the saints. We are in the incomplete, the world of time and death. Heber is beyond that now.

Paul says we will know even as we are fully known, and I can only imagine all the things Heber wants to know. Our consolation is not just that we will see him one day, but that he and all the saints gather with us this day at this table. We gather with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven—All of them—including Heber Peacock—to eat the bread of heaven and have that taste of heaven right now. He is with Christ, and our consolation, our faith, our conviction is that one day we will be there too.

### Job Loss, Lady Poverty and the Abyss

*anonymous TSSFer*

Government statistics say ten percent of the people in the U.S. are out of work. Losing a job is one of the most stressful things that can happen to a person. Very often the unemployed person ends up looking at the abyss. St. Francis gave the world an alternative to the difficult reality of the abyss. That alternative is Lady Poverty.

Lady Poverty is

*Chaste*

*Companionable*

*Full of humorous insights*

*Beautiful*

*Relaxed*

*Gentle*

*Forthright*

*Loving*

*Tender hearted*

*Knowledgeable of the world and all its ways*

*Lady Poverty will visit with anyone who asks for her presence. If you are suffering a loss take some time to visit with*

*Lady Poverty*

### The Challenge of The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful

Stephen Pastick SFO (reprinted from *Tau-USA*, Publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, Autumn 2009, Issue 64)

“The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful,” as you know, serves the Secular Franciscan Order as the Prologue to our Rule of life. Many would readily say that the challenge in this letter, written by St. Francis for the first members of his newly formed Third Order, would be his graphic description of what happens to a soul that has not done penance at the moment of the death of its host body: “The devil snatches the soul from his body with such anguish and tribulation that no one can know it except he who endures it.” [p. 4 SFO Rule] There have been some Inquirers who have lost interest in our Order after reading this, and it has proven to be a challenge to Formation Instructors as to how to explain the medieval mindset of St. Francis of Assisi. Yet I tell you, that it is not the primary challenge.

The treasure and the challenge to be found in this letter is the worldview of St. Francis of Assisi contained within. What is it? And can we of the 21st century make it our own? How binding is it? First, it must be acknowledged that there are those who feel that this Letter to the Faithful is really the first rule given to the Third Order. Benet Fonck, OFM, has written that, “Just as he did for the Lesser Brothers and the Poor Ladies, he gave these seculars a ‘way of life,’ or rule, which is preserved as the First Version of his ‘Letter to All the Faithful.’” [p. 03-7 Fully Mature] We can dig no deeper than this for our spiritual roots. Forget that lifeless Rule of 1221, which was not written by Francis. Consider this letter and the one that soon followed, “The Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful,” as our earliest Rules. I see the second version as an answer by St. Francis to those Third Order members who wanted Francis to better spell out as to how to do penance. How binding are these two documents? I think that the salvation of this world may very well depend on how we choose to live out these two exhortations of the prophet, St. Francis of Assisi.

What is St. Francis’ worldview? Examining the first letter we can see that there are 3 kinds of people who inhabit it. There are those who do penance and, then, there are those who do not do penance. These two groups are in the minority and are in constant tension with each other. I will suggest to you that it is no less than mortal combat over the Kingdom of Heaven becoming a reality here on earth. The third, larger, group is only hinted at by St. Francis. He writes, “We (who do penance) give birth to him through a holy

life which must give life to others by example." This group of "others" is the majority of men and women in the world, who are caught in between the tug-of-war between good and evil. They are a noble group as they are made in the image of God, but many of them are fast asleep, content as long as they have enough to be happy. In a sense, they are the prize that is being fought over. Sometimes they are the required sacrifice to the gods of those who do not do penance, so that they may have even more, to possess what they covet. Fear and might and rules of right are coercive means of manipulating many of them to actively support the spoilers who would have it all without regard to cost. While the ones who do penance, knights in the happy employ of Sir Francis, can only enter the fray armed with faith, hope and loving kindness; wooing and winning souls by loving service, heralding the Peace and Goodness of Christ their only king.

What camp is it that I am a member of? I must confess to you my brothers and sisters, that I have had a foot in all three camps at one time or another. At present, I have a foot in the "others," and a foot in the camp of those who do penance. I am a house divided, a work in process. What I want and what I desire most, and I beseech thee Lord most heartily for, is this: to "love the Lord with my whole heart, with my whole soul and mind, with all my strength, and love my neighbors as themselves...and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and produce worthy fruits of penance." [Paraphrased from the opening of The First Letter to All the Faithful] I want to have both feet firmly entrenched in the camp of those who do penance, to be counted among the holy, one of the Kingdom, who serves only one King, Jesus Christ and no other. For God's sake, believe me, brothers and sisters. You do, too, you do, too. What if God the Father, Abba, sacrificed His only beloved Son for nothing? That the Prince of Darkness wins and eternal night reigns?

The question begs an answer. Is St. Francis' worldview still relevant today? Is the Prophet's truth of yesterday, still the truth of today? Is the Gospel of yore still the page of the play today? Jesus, over 2000 years ago, said, "The kingdom of heaven has been enduring violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it by force." [Mt 11:12bc] Who could testify that this may yet be the truth? Ask Oscar Romero. Ask Franz Jagerstatter. Ask one of the children, who dies every three seconds in our world from hunger. St. Paul has warned us that our wrestling is not "against flesh and blood, but against the Principalities and the Powers, against the world-rulers of on high." [Ephesians 6:12] If it is true that there are those amongst us who are ones who do not do penance, who wield such power and might and are

so very persuasive, then we, little lambs of God, are in their way. Once St. Paul, one of the greatest examples of one who does penance, walked as a little lamb into a room and placed his head in the lion's mouth. It was Nero, the Roman lion, one of the greatest examples of one who does not do penance. I can hear St. Paul boast just before his end, "When it is that I am weak, then it is that I am strong!" I think that they are few in number. Most are safely locked behind walls of security. But there are some of their minions within our midst, who work to persuade and dupe and make us out to be fools for an unsound truth. It is the Gospel of Peace and Love being attacked by the Gospel of Violence, where their end justifies the means. It is all idolatry, so many bloody sacrifices to their gods. Beware the wolf in sheep's clothing. Francis cautioned his brothers about the world and quoted the Master, "Behold, I am sending you forth like sheep in the midst of wolves. Be therefore wise as serpents, and guileless as doves." [Mt 10:16] Do not think it otherwise. Once, I thought St. Francis too severe when he described what happened to a soul who does not do penance. Now, I do not think so. Those who do not do penance are small in number, without a conscience and knowingly do much harm. They live to serve another master, not our Master. They are spoilers. All they touch is spoiled or destroyed. Ultimately, the real challenge is Perfect Joy. Can we go about doing what is ours to do with a happy heart, no matter what? To do so, we must be as St. Francis admonished us to be, simple, humble and pure.

## Minister's Musings

*Ken Norian, TSSF*

It's been quite the winter here in the Northeast. I've lost track of the number of snowstorms – but my aching back is a reminder that there have been several. As I write this, it's 60 degrees outside... and still a foot of snow in some places in my yard!

After a respite from travel since October, I'm gearing up for a busy spring/early summer. I'll be heading to the NAECC (National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities) annual meeting; the OEF (Order of Ecumenical Franciscans) Chapter/Convocation; the JCFU (Joint Committee for Franciscan Unity) conference of Anglicans, Romans and Ecumenical Franciscans; and the 1st Order Brothers Annual Chapter.

As I've been making my travel plans and mentally preparing for these gatherings, I've been thinking of our own community. Last October, I celebrated my 20th anniversary of profession in TSSF. My reflections on milestones moved me to drop postcards to those in our order as I try to take note of milestones that they are celebrating in their own journey. I have also been thinking a lot about how I felt when I began my journey as a

Tertiary and what it means to me now to be a member of a religious order.

Some of us may have had a moment – or period of time in our lives where we fell in love with Jesus and/or our identity as Franciscans. I thought of Rev 2:1-7 where the angel of the church at Ephesus talks about “abandoning the love that you had at first”. That “first love” is something that we must always come back to in our individual walks with Jesus, as well as with our walk within the community of TSSF. As I pray the Daily Obedience, I think about each person as I pray for them. Some I know well. Some I’ve met and remember fondly. Some I don’t know – but can probably tell you where they are from and when they were noviced/professed!

Sadly, though, I also know that only 33% of the professed support our mission and ministry. In order to be professed, a commitment to the work of the order by means of a monetary offering is required. Still, of the 368 professed members of TSSF in the Americas, only 121 professed support all the work we do.....

The Third Order isn’t a private devotional society, a club, or fraternal organization. It’s a community, an order, and novices and professed take vows before God and their brothers and sisters to do certain things. These include annual renewal, annual reporting (for professed), and an annual financial contribution. Of course, I am aware of specific circumstances because of infirmity or other situations that make this impossible. And, there should be no guilt on the part of those whose hearts wish to fulfill the fullness of their rule, and can’t.

The applicable sections of our “Norms” are:

*Our Provincial Statutes require that professed members report annually, renew annually, and contribute financially annually. It is therefore a requirement that persons holding any leadership position in the Province must meet these requirements.*

Our concern is to minister to the ill and infirmed members of the Order. If a person is a member of a fellowship, the primary responsibility for this will generally reside with the fellowship convenor, working with the area chaplain. All members of the Order have a responsibility of informing the Chaplain or Area Chaplain of any known members who are infirmed or ill. After consultation with the Area Chaplain, the member who for health or other reasons cannot full fill his/her rule in its entirety will remain in the Third Order in good standing by assenting to pray and receive communion regularly, if available.

For the rest, I challenge you to report, renew and contribute. At a recent Warden’s workshop, it was

mentioned that the church’s business is not to keep the lights on, but to be involved with mission and ministry. The Third Order can do so much more than produce literature and formation material. We have a wealth of talent that we should encourage and enable to do the work of Jesus and Francis. Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation.... That is a part of our charism. We can do so much more if many just do a little. Times are tough. Contributions are down 18% from last year this time. I really don’t like shilling for dollars. But I’m encouraged by the fact the Francis wasn’t ashamed to beg. And he wasn’t bashful about chastening those in his community when they weren’t living into their rule.

May our loving God bless you and those you love. Peace and all good.....

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have had requests for continued education for the professed. Some feel that after formation, there should be options available or some formalized program for general development and even for specialized ministry. This was discussed at Chapter 2009 and we have decided to explore this possibility. Those who are interested in working on an exploratory committee are invited to contact me so that we can begin the discussions.

Pamela Redhead predm@hotmail.com.

Send in your contributions for the Summer issue by June 1

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