

FRANCISCAN TIMES



the third order, society of St. Francis, number 20, January, 1980

Here's what happened at Chapter

Third Order Chapter at Little Portion November 8-10 was so many things not mentioned in the official meeting: a time to meet new brothers and sisters and renew and deepen ties with those who knew one another already. It was a glorious Fall with multicolored leaves and sun interspersed with drizzle and a lovely, soft fog engulfing the friary in the morning. For a joyful omen, the friary's Easter lilies bloomed for the meeting--several months out of season. For an evil, y'r servant the newsletter editor was bitten by the ancient Friary dog, a most embarrassing experience for a Franciscan.

I especially enjoyed watching small groups, of two or three, wandering off to explore the landscape and each other's thoughts and feelings--one poor soul had no other time to discuss Rule with the area chaplain except on the road of the estate across the highway from thy friary, in rain and after dark, from which they both returned in good spirits.

We seem to have been the eatingest group: always some form of nibbles in front of us, and Br. John George gave us a special treat of cheese the last night we were there. Franciscans may and do practice asceticism, but we also know how to enjoy good food in good company, for which may God be praised!

Here follows the report of Chapter. But as you read this serious business--and it is both serious and important to us all--put it in the context of humor,

good fellowship, and beauty of both folk and landscape:

REPORTS

From the Provincial Minister:

The First Order was, at the time of Chapter, in the process of electing a new Provincial. [This is an amazing process, and our Third Order elections are conducted in the same way. No one may politick. Everyone prays and then votes. If one ballot does not result in a majority, the next one may. Br. Bede has been elected Provincial Minister and also Third Order Visitor.]

When Br. Luke began his work as Provincial, all the friars were at Little Portion. Now, there are friaries or houses at San Francisco, Bishop's Ranch (Healdsburg, CA), Trinidad and Yonkers as well. There are now 43 friars. As many of us know, Luke had open-heart surgery in August and while he is recovering nicely he will need several more months of rest to be fully healed.

The Trinidad Friary is in dire need of money for housing, to the tune of \$30,000 for five years. The American Province First Order and Interprovincial Central Fund are providina much of this money. They will gladly accept donations.

From the Guardian

"I come with a sense of tremendous thanksgiving for what's happening in the Third Order," From John Scott began, continuing, "We've spent several years getting together by-laws and all. Now we

Chapter....

can get on with the primary business of caring for the people who belong to us.

"We haven't lost anyone in the sense of not knowing what happened to them," but perhaps members have failed to renew vows from lack of care on our parts. He considers Trinidad and Guyana a chief concern for the next few years.

Although John is determined that this was the last meeting at which he would preside, he expressed his continued devotion to the Third Order and interest in serving in another capacity. In fact, now he will be a member rather than a leader, his wife, Fran, has expressed interest in trying a vocation in the TO.

John emphasized our need to continue to pursue ecumenical relations, especially with the Roman Catholic Church, as well as peacemakers throughout the world.

In haste, and without due process, John sent Jean Jordan and Jim Dubois (you'd never know it from their names, but they are husband and wife), and Mr. and Mrs. David Catron from Mexico to the Third Order World Congress of Secular Franciscans in Assisi this Fall. Their expenses were paid by the Clinton Legacy. [Sorry, I'm not entirely clear what this is, but it seems to be a trust fund left to the TO by a member who has died. If I'm wrong, someone correct me.]



Br. Luke receives novice, professed & renewed vows.

From the Novice Directors:

These are Muriel Adey, for women, and Ken Cox, for men (although occasionally a woman may report to a man or vice versa).

"I feel I'm in my second year of novice as novice director and hoping to be professed very soon," Ken began. He is a long, lean government employe, who had ten novices reporting directly to him this year--which is an improvement over eighteen last year. [Think about at least an hour a letter, multiplied by number of novices, plus the paperwork that goes with keeping up with the counsellors and assistant directors who report to him--and wonder when his family see him.]

"People who withdraw," he continued, "are often lost through our own inadequacies, because they get dropped in the shuffle. It would be nice to have someone coming on who had a secretary."

He also expressed a need for more novice counsellors. Search your heart and your conscience: Is this a job you could do--and enjoy? If so, tell Ken or Muriel.

Muriel Adey, for those of you who do not know yet, is English and so self-effacing she didn't tell Chapter her mother had died in England the Saturday before Chapter began, because she didn't want folk fussing over her. Besides keeping track of all the female novices and postulants, she has four postulants and three novices reporting directly to her.

Muriel has twenty counsellors [including four assistant novice directors--if someone knows the difference, pls. enlighten me and I'll pass the information on] helping her. And fifty-four novices and postulants. This should come to about 2.4 novices per counsellor, but it doesn't work that way. Fourteen counsellors are either beginning or ending, and have one or two or no novices--so the rest are divided among the others.

Ken's situation is similar. He has two assistant directors and thirteen counsellors, plus Gooch. They have among them sixty-three novices and postulants.

Now, if you are a novice reading this, or a postulant, don't let it send you into a guilt trip. Each counsellor WANTS to do this, or (s)he is free to quit. We

only wish there were more of us, so each novice could have the most possible attention. The pressure on counsellors is a sign of growth. That's the way we want it.

From the Chaplain:

"We have grown to the point where we have a problem keeping up with the traffic," began The Rev. Robert (Gooch) Goode. "As the volume increases, it's natural to have more releases from vows, disciplinary action and the like. ...it goes with the size of the order.

"Our statutes are vague about noviciate," Gooch continued. "I am able to terminate noviciate. Ruls is meant for ordinary stresses and strains. Finding your husband's an alcoholic, or your wife dies or there is a divorce are not ordinary stresses. When this happens and a person asks to be released, if they come back later, I ask them. But they must be in communion with the See of Canterbury.... We've lost a few people to Rome, but only one person, to my knowledge to [a splinter group.] That maelstrom seems to have passed.

"Concerns now are better pastoral care and combining better administration with greater flexibility. We are approaching a day when area chaplains have to take more responsibility.... The area chaplain should be able to give authority for a fellowship to meet, for example." [Up until now, this has been a task of the Chaplain.]

During the past year, Gooch said, the area chaplains' responsibilities have been focused upon receiving the quarterly reports of professed tertiaries.

Gooch is working with two assistant chaplains: Br. Dunstan for Central America and David Catron for Mexico.

A pamphlet, "A Brief Guide for Spiritual Direction of Tertiaries" by Gooch is now available from Helen Webb. Gooch intends to edit it further and include a bibliography. [This pamphlet is, in my opinion, excellent and gives both directors and directees a clearer notion of what to expect of each other.] Gooch would like to have a comprehensive guide for novice counsellors as well. He emphasized the difference between the two roles. He is planning a series of let-



The community at prayer

ters for newly-professed tertiaries, "to ween them," as one person put it. Lee Malloy is writing on those.

Area chaplains should receive any changes in any tertiary's Rule as well as reports four times a year. These reports need not be in writing [this is for professed].

From Trinidad via Br. Dunstan:

When Br. Dunstan arrived in Trinidad four years ago, he said, there were two tertiaries there. Now there are twelve in Trinidad/Tobago, one in Barbados, four in Guyana, and four in Colombia. Quite a far-flung cure!

Listening to Br. Dunstan, who generally sat with his knees beneath his chin on the floor, I was reminded of a ponderous, ageing, genteel and altogether delightful camel. He is tall and stooped, and talks with a British brogue.

He described each of the tertiaries who answer to him, some of whom some of us met at Convocation in Miami. A sampling:

Jackie Richards [was elected to profession later at Chapter] is a natural leader and by now is conviener for Trinidad/Tobago. Because distances are great and transportation a problem, meetings are every two months.

Irene Payne has a gift for intercession. People on the islands perhaps take intercession more seriously than many of us do and we might do well to learn from them. Irene is ready and willing to pray for anyone, if asked. Her telephone number is in your directory. Better, find out

who the gifted intercessors are in your own community.

Albert Ashby is a very simple construction worker with a gift for visiting the sick. Simplicity is a Franciscan virtue some of us lack.

Jean Walker, whom some of us loved on sight at convocation, is now in Bridgeport, Conn., studying physical therapy. Dunstan described how this very shy girl had come up to him at a party, saying, "Come on, Dunstan, dance." Whereupon he (of course) fell in love with her.

Sometimes, Dunstan said, people expect always to find the friars at home when they telephone. "Are we monks or friars?" he asks them.

Building up a library is a particular project in Trinidad now. The friars have a membership in the Episcopal Book Club and accept donations, but ask if it's a book they need first, for space is limited.

In Guyana, Canon John Dorman, a man in his sixties, ministers to the Amerindians, which should be differentiated from the East Indians who also live there. His parish is the size of several states, all jungle. He travels by motorized canoe whenever possible; by plane where there is a landing field; otherwise on foot.

Three postulants in Guyana are Arowak Indians. Their prayer combined song and dance. Their "Hallelujah Church" is a building six times the size of the Little Portion chapel with clay floor, an altar in the center. The church is filled at services, and the lay reader leads the shuffling dance (Dunstan said he always put the wrong foot forward).

A problem in Colombia is translating into Spanish, especially the source documents.

All novices and postulants in these countries report to Dunstan once a year on October 15. In between, they keep in touch with one another as best they can. Distances and transportation are a problem.

From Australia with Br. Leo Anthony:

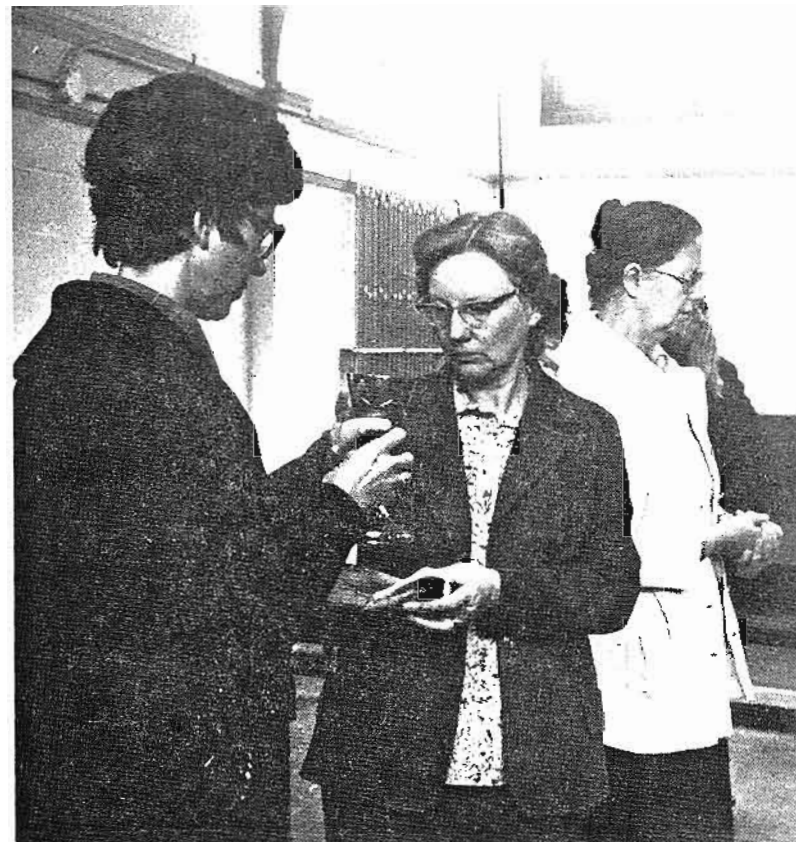
Where Dunstan is tall and lean, Leo Anthony is short and--well, plump, with a shaggy mane of reddish brown and a jolly ho, ho, ho.

"What I like best about our tertiaries, he said, is they have an apostolate....

I work at a home for delinquent boys. One tertiary comes several hours a week and works with these boys. Each tertiary sets his own apostolate. It can be 15 minutes a day, eight hours a day, three hours a week, or whatever. One priest goes to a mental hospital once a week and writes letters. It's done quietly.... They just do it.

In the Brisbane area, tertiaries gather once a month for a barbeque. There are about 20 tertiaries, and they may drive 200 miles for this. Three times a year, they may come for fellowship with the brothers at the friary.

"The Australian church is very polarized," Leo said, between high and low church. Recently, the Third Order has greatly increased in the Sydney area, where before they would have been very suspect. There also are "companions," who may more closely resemble associates. About 40 of these meet in Sydney, where they cause an identity problem. "Because this is a very protestant area, they sort of meet in catacombs, sneak out candles.



Passing the chalice

And yet more....

Many tertiaries come to these meetings." The question is, should all be made tertiaries?

Throughout Australia, the number of indigenous people and lay people in the Third Order is increasing. "The problem with indigenous people is that they often feel unworthy." He told of a man with a huge and famous collection of orchids, most of which he had gathered himself. He felt unworthy of being a tertiary because of his orchid collection. "I often feel I should crawl under a gum tree before their humility," Leo concluded.

Much discussion of "apostolate" followed Leo's report.

Leo: "Apostolate should be in our back yards, but we don't know it yet."

Muriel: "We're probably doing this already; just change "work" to "apostolate."

Bea: "It may be for only a few minutes a day."

George: "With a baby, another on the way, a household and a husband, you already have an apostolate."

Ken: "The Third Order isn't living two lives, but living from here on the life you have been living in light of the Third Order. I try in my work to be alert to needs around me."

Leo: "Apostolate is a word and some words have more meaning than others. It sounds more romantic than "work" and if that helps, that's good."

Glen-Ann: "A person who is physically handicapped often feels put down because they don't work. But in listening and intercession, they are the most valuable of all."

Responses to Br. Geoffrey's letter:

"Bigness Hurts" seems to have been the conclusion of the committee appointed to discuss that controversial letter. The image we came up with was of an elephant sitting on a porcupine. It may hurt the elephant, but it's going to hurt the porcupine more.

We all agree that we should simplify our lives. In Guyana, this may mean using a clay cook pot rather than a more-convenient aluminium one so no one will have to work in a factory to make his pot.

Growing vegetables is practicle in many places; in Arizona it is not. Many of us shop at food co-ops. Eating less meat works for some people and not for others. Some suggestions:

- ° Reduce consumption of energy, especially gasoline and electricity.

- ° Boycott products produced by or resulting in injustice (e.g., Nestle or J.P. Stevens products).

- ° Unclutter your lifestyle by listing possessions under three categories: needs, conveniences, luxuries. Begin to eliminate luxuries, then start on conveniences.

- ° Clean out closets and knick-knacks regularly and give them to needy people instead of garage sales.

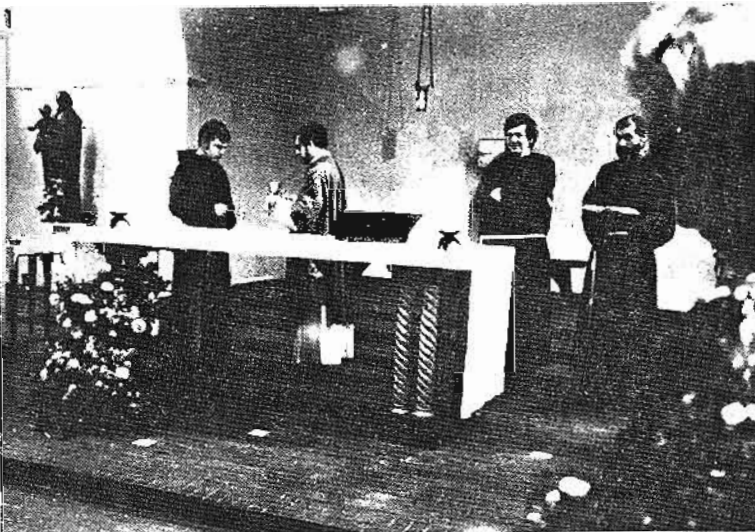
- ° Invest in institutions that build up minority causes and work toward just and humane causes rather than those which support oppressive or discriminatroy governments or institutions.

"If we reaffirm one another so we know we are lovable and loved, there will be less compulsion to surround ourselves with things," Jane Ellen suggested.

Possibilities for dealing with simplicity are endless--and can get complicated! If you have suggestions, send them to Dee Dobson, who will put them all in order for a future newsletter.

1980 Elections:

About February 1, all professed tertiaries will receive from Helen Webb a ballot for Guardian and five openings on Chapter. After much discussion, all that was actually concluded was that, of those on Chapter, Peter, Lee, John and Gooch said they absolutely would not (they all meant it) run for Guardian. You will hear more about this soon, from Helen.





Financial Report:

N.B.: John is treasurer; Jane Ellen, under his supervision, is bursar.

"I think it's obscene that we have \$19,000 in the bank now, but there it is," John began. "And it does not mean you should reduce your pledges for 1980."

Whereupon we set about the happy business of reducing that amount thus:

- \$500 to Sante Trinite School, run by the St. Margaret Sisters in Haiti;
- \$5,000 (as mentioned above) from the Mollie Clinton Legacy for the SSF Friars in Trinidad building fund;
- \$1,000 for Little Portion;
- \$1,000 to the SSF, American Province;
- \$380 for blankets for Little Portion;
- \$500 for Concept House in Miami, for mothers and infant children;
- \$500 for Asian Relief, to get through the winter the Vo family in Hong Kong, whom Gooch knows.

That took care of the surplus. If you want more exact figures, write Helen for them. Math isn't one of y'r servant's strong points.

Franciscan Third Order Communities:

This concept was discussed at length. Apparently, it has been at other Chapter meetings as well. Its time seems not to have come yet, but interest is growing. If you have thoughts on this, write to Gooch.

Miscellaneous:

Chapter will meet next November 7-8, 1980, preceded by Counselors' Meeting at Bishop's Ranch in California.

Convocation in 1981 is tentatively scheduled for Seattle, Washington. No firm date yet.

There was no report from the Fellowship Coordinator.

On Thursday night, Benet Fonck, OFM, addressed Chapter. The person who was writing that report didn't get it in, so you can't share it. Sorry.

PLEASE send checks directly to Jane Ellen, our bursar, regardless of the return address on the envelopes your statement comes in. This will get checks through and contributions recorded much more quickly. "One of these years", Jane ellen says, "I'll finish the envelopes I inherited and then I'll get some with my address."

This is written by a Victoria "Street Kid"--who comes into a drop-in center run by a group from two churches which includes Muriel Adey. He has given permission, through the director of the center who is the only one who knows who the author is, for us to publish it.

Father,
 I turn to you in my need
 for I am
 troubled and afraid.
 I have searched
 but can find none that care.
 They of this world give me
 doctrines
 for my questions.
 conditions
 for my tears.
 judgement
 for my actions.
 I am alone
 and lonely
 and look to rest in the sanctuary
 of another's silence.
 Yet, where shall I turn
 in this abyss of noise and
 confusion?
 I am sick of their words.
 Weary of the righteousness and the
 reminders of my downfallings.
 Oh Lord!
 Grant to me one who will listen
 without words.
 One who will advise
 without lecture and doctrine.
 One who cares for the sake of caring
 and not for the sake of teaching.
 One who will listen and then
 speak in a way that I can understand.
 One who knows me because of who
 I am and not because of what I am.
 Oh Lord!
 Grant me
 one just one
 who really cares.

Amen.



The Minnesota Fellowship

The Minnesota fellowship continues to grow in beautiful ways! We now have ten professed, three novices, two postulants, and four aspirants. Though Les and Carol Lundquist have moved to Colorado, they are still very much as special part of us and we will continue to keep closely in touch. Fr. Russell Northway, who has recently moved to Wisconsin, is a part of the fellowship as well and wants very much to attend meetings when possible. All of us continue to grow closer and stronger as a fellowship and we are excited about the coming months.

We have begun to meet monthly for the first time and have begun, at those meetings, some regular study together. January 12 brought a joint meeting of our fellowship with representatives of the local Roman Catholic fraternities at which we will hear a report of the World Congress, held at Assisi in October of this year, from Jim DuBois. We will also see a slide presentation of Assisi.

We Oregon Tertiaries finally managed to get together for a fellowship meeting. In a state 300 miles long and 400 miles wide we decided to find a compromise location. We met in The Dalles, several miles up the Columbia River from Portland. Donna Groth of La Grande and Fr. Mike Davis of Milton-Freewater came west. Hank Morrison came north from Madras. And I went East from Portland. Fr. Davis brought his wife Pam and their two children. We celebrated the Eucharist, had lunch together and said Evening Prayer together before we parted. In between, we became better acquainted with such topics as how we became Tertiaries, what it means to each of us and where do we go from here. By the time we parted for our long trips home, we had decided that an annual meeting is about all we can manage from such distances.

-Pat Mahon

On May 2, the Miami--Ft. Lauderdale fellowship met at Holy Cross Church, attended the Spanish Mass (a joyful experience!), and then Virgilee Ehmer was noviced. Discussion centered around the Convocation and we listened to taped portions of it.

It met again at Holy Cross on September 23, and at which time Mario Cuellar and his wife, from Bogota, Columbia, visited us. He was on his way back home after being in Denver for the General Convention. He is studying for the priesthood and works with alcoholics (similar to Fr. Jim Jones' work with drug addicts). We enjoyed having him and his wife with us and found his account of a tertiary's life in Columbia very interesting.

On October 28, we met for lunch and renewal of vows at Dee Dobson's. Fr. Jones came up with an exciting idea of training us to take the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and shut-ins, of course pending the new Bishop's approval.

-Marguerite Witzig

From Rosie McFerran:

There was a fellowship meeting on November 27 at my home. It was a neat meeting. We have a really good group, and sometimes we achieve a really great feeling of communion, fellowship and unity. Not to mention love. We noviced two postulants, Bobby Crummev and Diane Allen. We didn't discuss the Minister General's letter, as we had planned, but we talked about hunger and the Cambodians and the Iranians, and we prayed for Khomeini, "whom God loves," as Fr. Kennedy reminded us, and it was all good. We don't have another meeting until January because of the busy-ness of the next few weeks.

about sin from feelings about the sinner. Although our discussion sounded much like I'm sure most on this topic sound, we concluded without any hard feelings and went on to other ideas.

One of the Christmas cards I received...let me know that prayers are offered for me daily. It is a nice feeling to know that other people pray for us. It isn't only the efficacy of prayer, it's the realization that some one cares about us, enough for prayerful remembrance.

From Ken Cox

On December 2, the San Bernadino met at the home of Ted Conwell in Fullerton (near Disneyland). WE really enjoyed our evening together. There are now three professed, two novices, and two aspirants in our feelowship. All but one of us were at Ted's and there were three guests. We discussed the section of the Way of St. Francis dealing with Love and this got very interesting as the subject of Iran and the hostages came into discussion. Most of us see life as the good guys and the bad guys. It is hard for us to see the role of motive and it's very difficult to separate basic feelings

In case you still have questions:

First requests go to Little Portion, where Brother Teudesman takes care of them and sends them on to Helen Webb.

Postulants and novices report monthly to the counsellors. If, God forbid, a postulant or novice loses touch with a counsellor, write to Muriel, Ken, or poor Helen.

Professed tertiaries--everyone, no exception--write quarterly reports to their area chaplain, unless they prefer to report orally. Just so they report.

As of this latest Chapter, area chaplains may appoint local conv enors.



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This persistent light

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The Christmas candle in our parish had been extraordinarily contrary this year. In fact, it's a pesky nuisance. About everyone has taken a turn at it: the altar guild ladies, acolytes, an occasional person (me) who happened by at the right--or--wrong moment, even the officiating clergy. All have emerged with red faces and giggling worshippers. (I have concluded, after some consideration, that one CAN worship while giggling if one is a Franciscan. I don't know about anybody else.) At the end of the Holy Name Eucharist tonight, the candle again outwitted the altar boy, and the celebrant muttered (fortunately my hearing aid was turned way up and I was able to hear him) "The light of Christ doesn't want to be put out," and left with it still burning.

I left the church looking like the Cheshire Cat. For it had been an annoying day, of book-balancing that wouldn't and a novice's letter that never surfaced from my office clutter, and barking at kids who dared enter my domain when I had intended to find some time to play with them. I felt like a candle that wouldn't be lighted when I went into the church.

I didn't want to be there, didn't much like anybody I saw--least of all myself. I went because my Rule requires attendance at any feast day Eucharist my parish offers. Because I went, I experienced the light of Christ in a new way.

Supposing we are each a candle-- a perfectly adequate, if contrary, candle, of whatever shape or size or color, whenever we pray, God sets us afire. He really does, at least a little, whether we know it or not. That delights me. Whenever I really pray, God lights a fire in me, and sometimes under me which is what it takes to get me moving. In time, with the day's frustrations, the light goes out, to be rekindled when next I pray. But the light of Christ doesn't want to be put out. He wheedles or goads me back to prayer sometimes, when the flame flickers. Or he lights it again when I extinguish it.

But the light of Christ isn't only at Christmas or Easter or on an altar. It's inside you and me. We carry the light of Christ in us. We are the candles. The Holy Spirit lights the flame whenever we pray. And the light of Christ, in each of us, struggles not to be put out. Thanks be to God.



On Francis & absurdity

Of course Francis was absurd. I think maybe that he had to be to get attention. He was so consumed with the love of Christ that there were not limits to what he would do to get the attention of the people of the world. How about Yourself? Do you not want to shout at times when Christ envelopes you with his spiritual caresses? Shouting Methodists had something when from the corner of the Church congregation an old man would shout AMEN...BLESS THE LORD. When I was a child, old man Pingree of the Methodist congregation we visited once a year would

be so absurd and so shout...on Monday he was the sedate president of the local bank. When the FIRE hit, something had to give...well, Francis took off his clothes, it is said. Of course, I think that there are more convincing ways of expressing that elation which comes from a touch by the Holy Spirit. If you think that you are going to explode with his touch just sit down and hold you chair before you take off in an "Absurdity"...Alleluia, Alleluia.

Oh well, you know what I mean.
Love in Christ.

Father Thaddeus Nicholas, TSJ
Canon Harley Wright Smith.



Because this book is largely an account of the part Francis played in Clare's life and she in his, it is a story of intimacy, but an intimacy of mystery and space. Clare and Francis revered the mystery in each other and allowed enough space between them to preserve that mystery. (Foreword, page x.)

What these words mean to you will determine what you make of "A Light in the Garden" where Clare and Francis walked with God. For those to whom love means the all-too-familiar cycle of attachment, passion, fulfillment, boredom, and parting, this partially documented love story may well seem to be the product of innocent piety and romantic imagination. Yet to the Franciscan, for whom the essence of life with God is contemplation of His Being and Beauty revealed both in creation and in His mystical and sacramental Presence, the lifelong love of Clare and Francis for one another in Christ is a normal event.

We must, therefore, ask the key questions, "What is normal?" and "Are we normal, or were the saints normal?" We believe God found His creation to be good; that man with (some) free will fell from the blessed norm of creation to where redemption is always needed. If so, we are sub-normal, returning through repentance and renewal to a norm more nearly shown by such saints as Clare and Francis.

For they, like many before and after, found in the evangelical counsel of chastity the positive freedom to love most fully in and through the Christ. This is not a theoretical love for humanity in general but a particular love for individual children of God, their brothers and sisters in the Lord. Furthermore, this love includes an inevitable, invaluable, God-given sexual component in which we should rejoice. For in that simplicity of life where God comes first in possessions, affections, and will there is a freedom to love not possible outside of such evangelical discipline. As God showed Moses a tree that healed the bitter waters of Marah (Exodus 15.25), so through the liberating cross of Gospel simplicity (poverty, chastity, and obedience) He frees men and women from the bonds of self-serving and self-consciousness with respect to gender so that they can work together in and for the love of Christ. Franciscan Third Order community life depends upon this grace. Clare and Francis knew it fully.

They did not often meet; but they were consciously together in heart and mind. The scanty record, dealing mostly with St. Clare, has served Fr. Bodo as foundation for his tender, imaginative sketches. Some readers have expressed regret that these pictures cannot be true, because we have no detailed account for their support. The poet-author, however, "believes that imagination sometimes brings us closer to the truth than does fact." To which this reviewer would add that contemporary evidence of like relationships, based on similar commitment to the evangelical counsels, makes likely this story of creative love.

Clare and Francis were divinely normal in their loving dependence upon each other because they so fervently shared the same devotion to the Lord Who loved them both.

George R. Metcalf, T.S.F

CLARE: A LIGHT IN THE GARDEN.
By Murray Bodo, O.F.M.
St. Anthony Messenger Press.
Pp. xii, 128. \$2.75 paper.



About Baxter Liebler

Hat Rock Valley Retreat Center

In the last newsletter we heard from Baxter Liebler, who said that he was retiring "a little more" from his work at Hat Rock Valley Retreat Center. Fr. Liebler has been blessed with many long and fruitful years in the service of Our Lord, but one thing he doesn't seem to be able to do is retire!

After spending 25 years founding and building St. Saviour's Church in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, Fr. Liebler came to Utah, where, in 1943, he fulfilled the dream of a lifetime by founding St. Christopher's Mission to the Navajo at Bluff. Another 25 years later, in 1966, he and three of his staff members retired together to a spot they named Hat Rock Valley Retreat Center saying that they were "retreatants from years of labor."

At Hat Rock Valley Retreat Center, Fr. Liebler has continued his work with the Navajos. In 1978 he married one of his fellow retreatants, Joan Eskell, thereby providing their respective children and grand-children with a new and no doubt confusing array of relatives! When asked how he became a Franciscan in the first place, and how it has figured in his life, he sent this reply:

For a person who has not kept a diary, except for a few straggling weeks at a time, reminiscences are easy enough, but the fixing of dates is a difficult matter. When I am asked when I became a Tertiary of St. Francis, the answer does not come easily. I do recall a deep devotion to St. Francis, our Blessed Father, from soon after my conversion to Jesus Christ, which was during my first year in college--1907-08. After I had been a priest for six or more years (I was made a priest on St. Francis' Day, 1914, by the Bishop's choice!) I read in some church papers about an effort to set up a Franciscan Order in the Episcopal Church. I noted that the founder was classmate in seminary of a man who had been my classmate and roommate in college, and I asked him what he thought of the venture. I recall his precise words: "Anything that is associated with Claude Crookston is of God; fear it not!" Such words from a classmate are not to be taken lightly!

When I became rector of St. Paul's Church in Riverside, Connecticut, where I had been confirmed in 1908 and married in 1914, I invited Fr. Joseph to the parish to preach a mission, which he gladly did. While he was staying with us, I asked him about the Third Order. He gave me an outline of the Rule. I asked if he would accept me as a postulant. He immediately said, "I'll enter you as a novice--you don't have to be a postulant"--which he proceeded to do. Discussing the rule with him, I found that I was already following a self-imposed rule which, except for the periodic reports, was the Rule for Tertiaries. He was delighted with this, and released me from the necessity of writing the periodic reports except when I felt I needed help. Years later, having realized the poverty of my meditations, I asked him for advice. Foremost among his suggestions was to start writing them. This I did, and I still enjoy reading *Anima CHRISTI*, Meditations on the Prayer of St. Ignatius. It was published in 1925, and a copy is on my book shelf within easy reach as I type!

While pastor of two shorelands parishes--Riverside and Sound Beach (now known as Old Greenwich)--I frequently took groups of parishioners to Little Portion, across the Long Island Sound in a borrowed motorboat, to the great edification and enjoyment of the people as well as the Friars!

Those days have gone, but I can still, as I near 90, say the offices of the Seraphic Breviary, and pray especially for all who love and follow our Blessed Father Francis.

from a sermon preached by
Brother Mark Charles, SSF

Throughout my time in Community, whenever I have had the opportunity to preach or to talk about the community around the church, someone will invariably ask me this question: "Brother, why did you become a Franciscan?"

Searching my memory for an answer on those occasions, I usually discard the truth in favor of some platitude that will rescue me from the moment. It is true that we all come because we believe this is where God wants us. But God, with his peculiar sense of humor will, in getting us here, have his little joke. The first time I visited a house of the Society of St. Francis, I had already made up my mind to join another community. But, just to be fair to myself, and to say I had seen it all, I arranged for a visit to San Damiano Friary in San Francisco on a Labor Day Weekend. The evening I arrived, a party was going on; it was a send-off party for Br. Leo, who was going to visit his family in North Carolina, and a welcome home party for Br. Jeremy, who had been away during the summer working

with the Navajo community in the South west.

As the front door of the friary swung open, my first view of the Franciscan life was Br. Bede dancing with a 300 lb. lady! There was also a tertiary reading tea leaves by candle light, and the first and third orders singing familiar tunes from "Godspell" while they ate cheese and crackers. I had expected to see a pious bunch standing around looking HOLY! Boy, was I surprised--and I might add, delighted! As I passed through the portal of San Damiano, I said, in a low voice, "Lord, I'm home. And so I was. That first, positive experience is what got me into the Franciscan life.

Whatever our reasons for coming to the Franciscan life--good, poor, insan misguided, or inspired, they are rare! thank God, the reasons we remain in the Franciscan life. St. Francis said, "Salvation through hospitality". And, for whatever the reasons we begin a journey in our vocations, whatever reasons we continue the journey in our vocations, for a true understanding of that journey, we owe a great deal to the hospitality of God and of one another.

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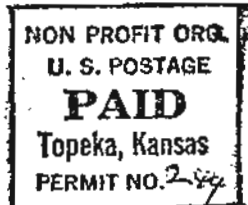
Send first enquiries about the Third Order to Tertiary Bob Teudesman, Little Portion Friary, P.O. Box 399, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766.

Praise and thank Ruth Groves, P.O. Box 4013, Topeka, KS 66604, for taking over the wretched job of printing and mailing this epistle.

Address Correction Requested
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Keith Banks, son of Carolyn and Warren Banks, 1109 Sunset Drive, Fayetteville, AR, 72701, committed suicide on January 20th.

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