



# The Franciscan Times

A NEWSLETTER HELPING MEMBERS OF THE THIRD ORDER,  
SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS, PROVINCE OF THE AMERICAS  
SHARE THEIR COMMON JOURNEY THROUGH NEWS FROM FEL-  
LOWSHIPS AND INDIVIDUALS, REVIEWS OF BOOKS, CDs, DVDs,  
POETRY, STORIES, ESSAYS, REFLECTIONS, MEDITATIONS,  
GRAPHICS, AND WHATEVER THE HOLY SPIRIT MIGHT BLOW  
OUR WAY ■

Summer 2014

## Love Never Dies: At Casa de Soles, Children of Murdered or Imprisoned Parents Find A Place in the Sun.

Victoria Tester

I stand in a thin field of weeds along the international border fence in Anapra, Juarez, watching a Mexican woman dreaming. Yes, this woman is a dreamer, but for the past 15 years she has waged daily battles of love in one of the poorest, most torn communities in Mexico. “Here,” she explains, as we look out over the barren, sandy plot, “is a playground for the children. Do you see it? And look, here is a garden. And there — “ She points to the closest deserted house, a little larger than its neighbors. “ — is the new Casa de Soles.”

After a while we look down at what might be dusty *verdolagas*, *purslane*, at our feet. Maybe something that can be added to today’s meal of beans and rice that will feed the Casa de Soles—children and volunteers. No, we decide, disappointed, it is not *purslane*. Not something to eat.

A US Border Patrol truck, a hundred feet away, moves closer. “Be careful,” she warns me. “Don’t go too near the fence. They shoot at us with bullets. They’re only rubber, but...”

She motions towards the many patched places in the tall border fence where it has been cut by smugglers. Nearby houses, patched together with wooden pallets and now empty, stored guns, drugs and desperate people who paid to be smuggled across the border.

She leads me into a house whose owner was murdered three weeks ago.

“This is where she lived. This is where they brought kidnap victims. Hostages. Where they kept them.” It is a dirty hovel with little left inside. Long, fingerlike black stains, a candela-bra of darkness, mark the walls of the first room. An evangelical pamphlet lies abandoned on the floor.

We go into another filthy room. On the bare wall, a child’s bright drawing. A love letter to his or her small world. “Even here,” the woman says, in wonder. “Even here, in this place where they hurt people. Even here they speak of the love of

God.”

I am sick with fear. I am afraid of the other, closed door that might open. I am afraid of the very walls around us.

“I stand here,” the woman tells me, gently. “But it isn’t fear I feel. It is sadness.”

This woman is Lourdes Contreras, known affectionately as “Lulu” to the many children served by Casa de Soles, a day shelter that functions mostly for the children of murdered or imprisoned parents. She feeds, educates and heals, with the vital support of the women of her Anapra community, across the border from Sunland Park, NM, with more than 65 children in a building that served, not long ago, as a devil’s workshop. According to their size, age and progress, here in this same building, children were taught to rob, to steal cars, to kidnap, and to kill.

The children color pictures. Here, they have a place to be together before and after school. Those too young for school, or not enrolled, can stay all day. Some ask my name, and draw me love letters with winged hearts. Here, they are taught the values printed in Spanish on the wall: Sharing. Tolerance. Love. Respect. Compassion. Justice. Gratitude. Responsibility. Honesty. Humility. Order. Courage. Solidarity. Forgiveness.

Here, they are taught a language for the monster that may still destroy their lives: What is violence? Rape. Murder. Child abuse. Animal abuse. Sexual abuse. Fighting. Yelling. Alcoholism. Robbery. Drug trafficking.

Together, they happily eat a breakfast of donated peanut butter on thick bread.

“These three children here,” Lulu tells me quietly, “we’re still struggling to get registered for school. They have no mother, and their father won’t enroll them himself because he says the two little girls will only marry, and the boy will work.” All three children are well under 12. But Lulu found them school supplies, a donation. The oldest reaches into her backpack and takes out her box of crayons, touching its

*Continued on page 2*

**Love Never Dies (cont.)**

promising rainbow.

This morning Casa de Soles is out of propane. Two large pans of food are raced off to cook at the home of a woman in the community who will sacrifice her own propane. Most of the children are now at school.

We women gather at the scrubbed table in the kitchen.

Lulu encourages each woman to share her own story with me, what has brought her to volunteer at Casa de Soles. Their eight stories differ in details, but all the women have suffered deeply from violence, worry, depression.

All are mothers. Nearly all mention God. Some were abandoned by men they loved and would not leave their houses anymore or else they saw their children did not know how to treat others because they only watched television day and night, if they had televisions. They suffered violence from their fathers or other men they loved.

At least one is an alcoholic, but someone entrusted her with a task that would make a difference to someone besides herself and now she does not drink so much or sometimes even at all. They were not raised to value themselves and are learning to do so. Some want to share the new strength they'd found through therapy, and others resisted going to therapy because they said God was all they needed, that they had cried enough as children on the banks of rivers in faraway places like Oaxaca. One has leukemia, wears a surgical mask. One is a trained teacher, doing her practicals.

They all count their blessings. All seek unity with each other. They see their eight individual stories as truly one story. All sacrifice. All work hard, sweeping, mopping, cooking, carrying, teaching, calming, loving and listening to the children and each other at Casa de Soles. They see they are making a difference.

I start crying. I call them miracles. I hide my own story. I don't tell them I have been broken, too.

The teacher hugs me.

"I'm going out to beg now. We all have a job here, and that is mine," another volunteer says with a smile. "I go to local vendors, and all over the city, to ask for food to keep the children going."

Five children fall apart. It is a therapy session where they voice their silent rages and their griefs over their murdered loved ones. The children close their eyes and one by one, we women become their lost mothers, their lost aunts, even a lost uncle.

The children hold to us more tightly than anyone has ever held us. They wail. They sob; they keen into our shoulders as they tell us how it feels to have lost us. They beg us to forgive them for the precious lost pencil, for that morning

they misbehaved. They beg us to forgive them, and they sob and thank us and thank us when we do.

They tell us they have no one to play with now, they tell us they are so lonely without us, they do not want to go home to do the washing or the cleaning or to take care of tiny brothers and sisters. They want us back, they want us back, they soak our shoulders, and the places over our hearts with their tears.

They want only to be where we are now. They will be good so they can be with us one day. They want only to be with us now, wherever we are.

They sob that they do not want to let us go. They thank us for coming to see how they are; they know we cared enough to come to see how they are. They tell us they know they have to let us go so we can be where we have to be now. But, they tell us, they don't understand why, why they have to be so alone.

We hold them to us as they mourn, and we, their dead loved ones, let them go, slowly, only as they let us go.

"No te quiero soltar, no te quiero soltar," a little girl wails. I am her dead mother and she will not let me go. I wait, then say, very gently, into her agony: "Love never dies."

Her mouth parted in despair, she opens her eyes and stares into my face for a full 30 seconds. I think she has not heard me. Then she whispers it, as a question, a way, maybe, to go on. "Love... never dies?"

Today, I am holding the broken heart of the world in my arms, and this Love is the only thing on this earth I still know. "Love never dies," I say. Then she nods her head softly and is willing, very slowly, to let go.

## **A Review: *The Sacred Gaze* by Susan Pitchford**

*Reviewed by Bishop Gordon Scruton, Bishop Protector*  
In her new book, *The Sacred Gaze*, Susan Pitchford has given us another treasure, a reservoir of deep wisdom flowing from a life of honest wrestling with what it means to be healed from our wounds and fully alive in Christ. She invites us to join her in reflecting on and engaging in the profound journey of inner transformation in Christ, following the experience and guidance of Francis and Clare.

Christians who long for a deeper relationship with God and members of the Third Order in particular, know the persistent temptation to merely go through the motions of spiritual practices and keeping a Rule of Life without really engaging in an honest whole person relationship with God. We can project an image of being "religious" or "Franciscan" without allowing God to actually transform our core identity. We can go through the outward motions of being a follower of Christ, yet inwardly continue to live out of our false/little self

instead of recognizing our wounds and blindness, emptying ourselves and allowing the Spirit of Jesus to shine through us, through our True/Authentic Self, hidden with Christ in God.

Drawing on her vocational and lived experience as a sociologist and a Franciscan, Susan invites us to reflect on our identity just as St. Francis asked in his mature years, “who am I?” Through personal stories, grounding in Scripture and the saints, with an expansive perspective and gently practical wisdom she invites us to explore the journey beyond spiritual stagnation to let God lead us into new dimensions of spiritual transformation. She takes us to depths that many books on prayer never address. Yet amid the profound subject matter, she keeps a lighthearted touch. I read the book out loud to my wife as we took a long trip in the car and we never got through a chapter without laughing out loud together and being drawn into rich conversation about our own spiritual journeys.

Inspired by the work of Ilia Delio, Susan cultivates a theme of Franciscan spirituality that has often been neglected. While embracing poverty, care for the poor and outcast, being peacemakers, delighting in God’s presence in Creation are all Franciscan themes, the transformational wellspring from which the life of Francis and Clare flowed was their practice of gazing on the crucified Jesus. We know about the transformational moment in the life of Francis while he was gazing in prayer on the icon cross of San Damiano and heard Jesus speak to him: “Francis, rebuild my church, which as you can see is falling down.” But this was not a momentary experience for Francis. For the rest of his life he prayed gazing on the Jesus he saw and heard on that icon cross. And Clare spent 40 years gazing on that icon cross which was the treasured center of the chapel where she worshipped daily. She writes spiritual direction letters to Agnes of Prague, inviting her to gaze daily on the crucified Jesus so that she can be transformed into his image.

Susan helps us discover how we can learn to embrace “gazing” as a healing and transformational way of relationship with Christ. Gazing is two-way experience: we gaze on Christ and Christ gazes on us as his beloved. Her chapter on “gazecraft” opens many pathways for contemplative gazing and invites us to let the Spirit guide us to gaze in ways we might never have imagined before so that our intimacy with God and ourselves is honed and expanded.

*The Sacred Gaze* is a trustworthy guide for a lifetime transformational journey with Christ. I hope you will read this book more than once, deepen your own practice of “gazing” and ponder with others the wisdom Susan shares with such clarity and generosity.

**Liturgical Press (April 7, 2014) paperback, \$14.12 on Amazon.com**

**The Franciscan Times**  
is a publication of The Third Order  
Society of St. Francis Province of the Americas.

**Minister Provincial & Editor**

R. John Brockmann

Editorial contributions and all  
correspondence send to:

R. John Brockmann

jbrockma@udel.edu

**Editorial Staff**

Anita Catron Miner, Tom Johnson,  
Verleah Kosloske, Julie Goodin & Terry Rogers

**Where to Send**

- Name and address changes
- Convocation Dates
- Profession & Novicing Dates
- Notification of Deaths

Send to Secretary of the Order:

Anita Catron Miner

PO BOX 17016

Salt Lake City, UT 84117

anitacatron@gmail.com

**For Chaplaincy Matters**

Chaplain of the Province

Dominic George, 797 Corbett Avenue, Apt. #3

San Francisco, CA 94131-1361

cdom@att.net

**Editorial Corrections:**

The article on **Doreth Sylvester-Brown** in the last issue had an error: “As a student she was assigned to the Church of St Mary The Virgin under the direction of Canon Ernle Gordon” is correct, the church, however, is not in New York City.

Also the picture accompanying the biography of a new professed person, **Charmaine Hensley**, included the same picture of her in the 2014 Directory--and both are wrong. The lovely lady pictured is novice Diana Turner-Forte. The actual picture of Charmaine Hensley is here--please use it to update you Directory on page 113.



**T S S F Publications**

*The Principles of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis for Daily Reading* (\$2.50); *Spiritual Director Guide* (\$2.50), *Statutes* (\$1), *Devotional Companion* (\$4.50), *Forming the Life of a Franciscan* (2012) \$15.00

Please contact our Literature Coordinator,

Janet Fedders, to obtain copies.

janet.fedders@gmail.com

## RIP: Mary Alice White (Professed 53 Years)

[In the Summer 2003 edition of the *Franciscan Times*, John Brockmann printed an interview with Mary Alice and here are some excerpts]

But finally in 1959, I did indeed become a novice. In those days, when we were professed, we took the name of a saint as our name

within the Order. I chose the name of Sister Magdalene Claire at my profession on October 2, 1961 at St. Andrew's Church and Marjorie Nevels, mother of one of our priests, became Sister Mary Dominica. We were received with much ceremony and, of course, it was a momentous occasion for us both.

In those days, we reported directly to the brothers at Little Portion. I remember Father Hugh answered one of my reports with the following which I quote verbatim:

*Dear Sister Magdalene Claire:*

*Thank you for your report and note.*

*Please say the 84th psalm as penance for the reported infractions of the regulations.*

*God bless your striving to obtain the great virtue of Humility, which is basic in the development of the Life of Christian Perfection. (Note: Alas I'm still striving!)*

*I think it is a good idea to have a checklist and to mark it at the close of each day. The Lord grant you His peace!*

*Faithfully yours in Him,*

*Fr. Hugh, O.S.F.*

...In 1968 at the urging of Peter Funk I became a novice mistress. That's what it was called at that time. In other words, novices reported to me, and I answered them. It had become too much for the brothers to do this work of direction as our



numbers increased. This was a fruitful if fairly arduous job since I taught full time, and had three teens at home. In 1971, I asked to be relieved of this responsibility when my husband died in March of that year, and I went through a very stressful period.

...Aftermath: After many years in the Order I'm still enthusiastic.

## Recently Professed John Cooper

*John Cooper*

I was born and raised in Milwaukee, WI to a middle class family, married in 1988, moved to the suburbs, and joined the small Episcopal church I still belong to today.

In June 2000, I was convicted of a crime that didn't happen

and sent to prison. It turned my world upside down and cost me everything I knew or cared about, and I didn't understand. I've lost my wife and most of my family since I've been in prison, but friends from my little hometown church still stick with me.

Since the day I was incarcerated I turned toward the presence of the Lord as the only true justice and hope; everything else failing in its reason. For 14 years I have lived a life cloistered from the world, in prayer and study, making friends and neighbors of the men that no one wants.

Due to the way I live, the reason behind what I do, my dear friend and brother, Ken Castello TSSF, suggested that I might consider formation in the Third Order. Since only one other incarcerated person had ever entered formation and been professed (Crystal Bradford, see *Franciscan Times*, Easter 2003, Winter 2005), I was cautiously optimistic and thrilled. In May 2011, I was graciously accepted to formation.

There were challenges to this, being where I am, and still are, but there is now the seed of a Franciscan presence behind these walls because many of you believed it was possible, and were willing to try.

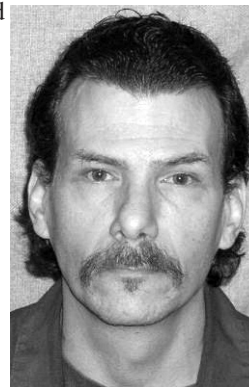
I owe an infinite gratitude to my Third Order brothers and sisters, and wish to thank especially: Ken Castello, Liz Peacock, Linda Caraway, Lance Renault, Bill Carroll, Caroline Benjamin, Paddy Kennington, Janet Wakefield, Dominic George, our Provincial Chapter, and, foremost, our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Connecting the Third Order Financially, The Central Fund

*Robert Dimmick*

Our Order includes Tertiaries in five Provinces all round the world, and it's sensible for our Ministers Provincial, and occasionally others, to travel throughout their Provinces and to meet one another and the Minister General from time to time. The Provinces which are most geographically scattered are also those with the smallest numbers and the least wealth, and as Brothers and Sisters we share the costs of this travel among ourselves.

The Central Fund of TSSF arranges this. Each Province contributes a small amount per Tertiary into a shared pot. This pays for necessary travel by the Minister General and by the Ministers Provincial in Australia and the Pacific within their Provinces, for meetings of all these Ministers every two years, and for the Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter every six years.



In addition, an extra amount goes into the Africa Travel Fund, which provides for the African Minister Provincial to visit remote parts of that province.

The Central Fund also administers the Ministers' Provincial Fund for emergency needs, financed by voluntary contributions from Provinces and individuals, and helps the Provinces to send money to Franciscan Aid, Franciscans International and other similar bodies while minimising exchange costs.

The formal rules of the Fund are in Appendix A to the Rule of the Third Order, and the Trustees of the Fund are the Minister General (Ken Norian), the Minister Provincial for Europe (Averil Swanton), and the Bishop Protector for Europe (Michael Perham). The Treasurer of the European Province (John Reynolds) and the Secretary/Treasurer of the Fund (Robert Dimmick) also attend biennial Trustee meetings. For legal purposes the Fund's money is treated as part of the European Province, but it is held in trust for the Order throughout the world.

The Trustees met in London on 18 March 2014, and agreed to keep contributions unchanged in terms of sterling (their value in other currencies naturally varies). This should enable the Fund to finance the IPTOC meeting planned for 2017, estimated to cost up to GBP 40,000, as well as its other commitments.

They felt that Franciscan Aid is the most appropriate way for Tertiaries to support development, but those who particularly want to give more to help communications within the Order can do so by giving to the Central Fund.

The Central Fund can accept donations from Areas, groups and individuals, especially those who wish to see the Provinces of the Third Order go forward together in their Franciscan vocation. If you want to make a donation, please send money in your own currency to your Provincial Treasurer. Please say whether you want the money to go to the Ministers' Provincial Fund, to the Africa Travel Fund, or for the Central Fund generally.

## Franciscan Aid

*Angela Alexander - Franciscan Aid Secretary*

Franciscan Aid is a charity exclusively funded by the Third Order through donations, collections and legacies. The aim of Franciscan Aid is to help alleviate poverty in the developing countries by supporting projects not necessarily assisted by larger charities.

Examples of the projects recently assisted by Franciscan Aid: school fees for families with AIDS in Zimbabwe; school equipment for children in Uganda; building wells in the Gobi Desert, Mongolia; hearing aids for a special school in Palestine; and sewing machines for widows in Sri Lanka.

All projects must be sponsored and monitored by a member of the Third Order or First Order to ensure that funds are passed directly to those in need and that they are spent on the

project. Reports are sent back to the Trustees who continue to review the use of funds sent.

The administration costs of Franciscan Aid are minimal as Trustees give their time voluntarily. This means that a huge percentage of the donations pass straight to those in great need.

All Trustees are Professed Tertiaries: there are currently seven, plus three ex officio (Minister General, Minister Provincial, Minister General SSF). We meet once every four months in London at the Oratory of St Alphege in Southwark. There we consider the funding of ongoing projects and applications for new projects.

We would welcome support or applications from the Americas Province. Indeed we were very grateful to receive a donation of nearly £2000 recently from the Australian Province.

For further information about Franciscan Aid please do visit our website or contact us [secretaryfaf@tssf.org.uk](mailto:secretaryfaf@tssf.org.uk).



*Canadian House of Bishops Invited All Canadian Christian Communities to Come Together In March For the First Time—TSSF Was Well Represented By Diane and Frank Jones of Vancouver (first row center) (An extended report on this meeting will be in the next issue of the Times.)*

## The Recent Evolution of Our Long Island Fellowship

Our lives here on Long Island have allowed us to be associated with Little Portion Friary (LPF) and our SSF brothers for many decades. This has always been a wonderful connection that made our particular group unique just as are tertiary groups in close proximity to any of our West Coast SSF friaries or CSF convents.

However, this wonderful connection, over time, led to a complacency that allowed us to become a little too comfortable in the routine

*Continued on page 6*

## From the Bursar

Tom Johnson

The role of the Bursar is to receive, record and disburse the funds of the Order under the guidance of Chapter and according to a budget approved by Chapter. In receiving and recording pledges and contributions, the Bursar by the very nature of the task has certain insight that others would not have.

Sadly, one of the things I observe is that many of us are negligent in fulfilling all the promises we make at the time we join the Order. Obedience is one of the things we promise and under Obedience (p. 52) in *Forming the Life of a Franciscan* it notes the requirement of:

*... maintaining a financial pledge to the Order – a commitment to the work of the Order and to sharing the expenses.*

Additionally, this aspect of obedience is addressed in the Statutes that say:

*Professed brothers and sisters are expected to report yearly, to renew their vows annually, and to contribute financially to the Third Order annually.*

Most of us have trouble with this thing of **obedience**. From childhood, it is something that often grates on us, especially when it involves something we dislike. By nature, I guess, we tend to resist such demands. However, I find another comment from *Forming the Life of a Franciscan* very helpful in this regard.

*Our rule of obedience is not something forced on us from an outside agency: it is something we have deliberately chosen for ourselves.*

If you are one of those who has not been keeping up with that part of your vow of obedience, now would be a good time to examine your promises and bring your account with the Order up-to-date.

### **Bursar for Brazil**

Mara Dutra  
Rua Salomao Vergeira da Cruz 1226  
Piratininga 24350-120  
Niteroi-RJ-Brazil  
franciscanojulio@gmail.com

### **Bursar for USA**

Tom Johnson  
214 Leafwood Way  
Folsom, CA 95630  
tjohnsonret@gmail.com

### **Bursar for Canada**

Gordon Arthur  
211-221 Seventh Street  
New Westminster, Canada  
BC V3M 3K2  
Gordon@ecumenist.org

### **Bursar for Trinidad and Tobago**

Jacqueline Richards  
29 Opal Gardens  
Diamond Vale, Diego Martin  
Trinidad & Tobago  
Phyllrich@yahoo.com

### **Bursar for Jamaica**

Brenda Stewart,  
1 Calcraft Ave.,  
Kingston, 8, Jamaica  
bmae12@yahoo.com

### **Bursar for Guyana**

Clarence Narain  
23 Prospect  
East Bank Demerara, Guyana  
narainclarence@yahoo.com

## Long Island Fellowship (cont.)

of our meetings. So a cry seemed to go up to heaven, “What should we be doing NOW, Lord?”

God’s answer has only been revealed step-by-step, and each step was somewhat painful along the path.

The first step for our fellowship was to learn to “Stand on our own two feet, and not simply rely on the fact that the friary was so accessible.” So we began meeting at a church that has a tertiary priest, and we have several! After a year of that initial step, we are now meeting at various churches intending to expand to cover more and more of Long Island.

This brings us to the second step: being itinerant, a concept we allegedly embrace as Franciscans (since we are not Benedictines who pledge stability). The verification that this was truly the Spirit’s leading came recently when Chapter also decided to make themselves more accessible to a wider body of tertiaries by becoming itinerant in their annual meeting. In both cases, this embrace of itinerancy meant moving out from the “Nest” (aka LPF).

The final step in our recent evolution has to do with returning to our roots and identifying with those roots. In the time of Francis, his Third Order followers were known as the “Order of Penitents,” and our Fellowship now believes that THIS is what we are supposed to emphasize in our day and age, the penitential nature of the followers of Francis.

### **Tee Shirts To Spark Conversation**

After much consideration, in conjunction with the desire to fully embrace our Franciscan roots, we came up with a logo that can be used by any TSSF member, anywhere, in any province. (Most Franciscan items thus far have had specific locations, dates, or themes on them.) This logo is also designed to invite people to “Inquire” what it means.

As you can see in the figure below, our logo has TSSF connecting us to our Society of St. Francis membership, and the words “Franciscan Penitents” to our roots. This combination of elements will hopefully initiate conversation with those we encounter.

The shirts will have a white logo and be some shade of brown depending on what is available at the time we place the order. Right now they are chocolate which is similar to the SSF & CSF habits. Depending upon the response we receive, we may make other items available as well. Some items not available in brown will be made in black—after all this was the color of the first Franciscan habits!

In the fall we are planning on having quality parkas made. Your interest will determine how far we go with this project!

Cost: Per Shirt Including Shipping:  
\$18.00 [Please Add \$2.00 More For 2XL & 3 XL] Payment: Personal Check Or Money Order Only [No International Orders At This Time]



Payable To: Be Made Out To CASH [Please Put TSSF Tee Shirt In The Memo Area] [Mail: To Linda Armbruster/3 Linwood Place/ Massapequa Park/NY/11762-1912](mailto:Mail: To Linda Armbruster/3 Linwood Place/ Massapequa Park/NY/11762-1912) [Remember To INCLUDE Your Size] For inquiries beyond your orders, address them to Linda: [<tssfapparel@gmail.com>](mailto:tssfapparel@gmail.com)

## Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

*Joyce Wilding, JPIC Chapter Animator*

Many international, regional, and local justice concerns ask that more individuals and groups promote integrity of all creation. Every tertiary needs a way to expand spiritual formation alone, within fellowship meetings and/or in local parishes. Praying, studying, and working for peace, justice, and integrity of creation enhance spiritual formation.

Any and all TSSF members of the Americas are invited to join the group now working on JPIC issues. Currently there are regional JPIC leaders in NW, NE, SW, SE of United States, in the Caribbean, Canada and Guyana.

Coming soon to the TSSF web pages will be a link to JPIC resources. These resources can help each tertiary pray, study and work for Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC) alone or with fellowship and/or parish friends. There are resources that can be used year round - from Advent to All Souls Day.

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days, March 2014

*Dianne Aid*

In 2011 when immigrant rights advocates were encouraged to come to Washington D.C to participate in a massive march on the National Mall, 200,000 people from across the United States came. The heart of the immigration presence for Christian Communities like TSSF was Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD). For three days we gathered in workshops, plenary sessions, state networks, and denominational groupings to organize for action. With a unified voice we were well-equipped to visit congressional representatives and senators.

The strongest representation from the Episcopal Church is a loyal contingent of TSSF members. We attend every year now and work with nearly 1000 Christians from mainline denominations and organizations such as Church World Service, Sojourners and our own Franciscan Action Network. Themes for the Ecumenical Advocacy Days are based on the current legislative issues, e.g. gender violence, the Farm Bill/food justice and, most recently, gun control.



*JPIC Members and Others at EAD: (L-R) Sr. Sandra Lyons, OSF; Patrick Carolan, Executive Director of Franciscan Action Network, Francesca Wigle, Dianne Aid, Carolyn Townes, Linda King Watkins, Verleah Kosloske*

Ecumenical Advocacy Days is a time for a meeting of those of us serving as commissioners for The Franciscan Action Network. Several of our TSSF Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) members plan to meet at EAD.

The Episcopal Office of Government Relations is in Washington D.C., and we use the opportunity of being in Washington D.C to meet with staff of that Office and to bring our social justice/legislative concerns to them and find ways we can work together.

I find that the most powerful aspect of Ecumenical Advocacy Days is networking with other Franciscans and with people from other denominations working on similar issues, the exchange of ideas, and to be an Episcopal/TSSF presence advocating for public policy, which affects the poor and marginalized communities of our World. Isn't it true after all that it is here on the margins where Francis danced and we are called to be?

## My Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2014

*Linda King Watkins*

The best part of Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2014 is simply being part of such a large gathering. When over a thousand people gather for a common purpose, you can feel the energy of the Holy Spirit down to your bones. It never fails to energize me.

I enjoy making connections with people who are passionate about expressing God's love through wide varieties of peace, justice, and environmental ministries. It is a special joy to be with so many Franciscans from so many denominations. We came together for a common purpose with joy and conviction and that nurtured my own Franciscan identity.

The focus of this year's Advocacy Days was gun violence, a timely issue with which we all wrestle. The main speakers spoke of their personal experiences and that gave clarity and conviction to the issue. I was encouraged to learn of relatively small, localized programs that are making a real difference in communities especially affected by gun violence. Change can and does happen without great expense or elaborate systems!

My favorite presentation was given by the Rev. Dr. Michael James Oleksa, an Orthodox bishop, who spoke of how a very small group of some of the poorest, most disenfranchised people in our country were able to stand up to large corporate interests. When a proposed gold mine threatened to destroy the Alaskan waters on which these salmon fishers depended for their livelihood, the bishop helped them claim the great gifts of their Orthodox faith. Using the ritual of the annual blessing of the waters, they made a powerful statement that echoed throughout the region, and the proposed mine was eventually abandoned.

I have been to Advocacy Days before, and have participated in the congressional visits. Each time I do it I learn something valuable and become more at ease with doing it.

I thought of St. Francis who lived in an age of violence just as every age seems to be. At one time even he wanted to be part of that and become a warrior. And yet he was led to fight not with weapons but with his words and actions, standing up to the principalities and powers of his time.

**Third Order of the Society  
of St. Francis  
American Province Inc.**  
c/o Anita Catron Miner  
PO BOX 17016  
Salt Lake City UT 84117

---

Non Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
SLC, UT  
Permit 3280

---

**Address Services Requested**

**Send in your contributions for the Advent 2014 issue by October 1**

## **Inside this Issue**

- Love Never Dies: Case de Soles, 1
- A Review: *The Sacred Gaze* by Susan Pitchford, 2
- RIP: Mary Alice White (Professed 53 Years), 4
- Recently Professed John Cooper, 4
- Connecting the Third Order Worldwide Financially, The Central Fund, 4
- Franciscan Aid, 5
- (Photo) Canadian House of Bishops Invited All Canadian Christian Communities to Come Together In March For the First Time—TSSF Was Well Represented, 5
- From the Bursar: , 6
- The Recent Evolution of Our Long Island Fellowship and Tee Shirts To Spark Conversation, 5
- Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC), 7
- Ecumenical Advocacy Days, March 2014, 7
- My Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2014, 7

***NEXT PROVINCIAL CONVOCATION 2017. 100-year Anniversary!***