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# FRANCISCANS CANADA

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Volume 1, Issue 4

Christmas, 2000

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## People with Francis!

*Who We Are in Canada*

### SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS

(ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA)

*A column for membership updates, events and activities of interest.*

#### **PLEASE USE ME!!!**

This is a reminder that we would like to know what kinds of activities and events are happening in your area. Also, please send your short essays (300-500 words) about who you are and what you are doing in your local Franciscan Ministry so we can get to know each other better. Also, please send any prayers, reflections or useful resources you have found for spiritual development. Finally, please alert us of any justice issues we can address by phone or mail. Please send all your info to Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell.

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<http://www.societystfrancis.org>

## People who Work!

*Roses for Francis*

*by Muriel Adey*

When I was doing Clinical Pastoral Education our supervisor asked us to think about roses - the many kinds of roses, the needs of each kind, where it grew best, and so on. We were asked to see ourselves as a particular kind of rose. One person, who had told us previously that his favourite part of parish ministry was being invited into the best room and being served tea in the best china, no matter how humble the home. He saw himself as a tea-rose in a formal rosebed. Another, who had already told us that she had a keen sense of smell saw herself as a variety of rose notable for its perfume. And so on - each person's choice seeming very obvious to those who knew that person even a little bit.

Myself? I saw myself as a yellow rose flowering all alone at the bottom of the garden by the compost heap where it has been relegated. If it could have spoken it would have admitted to feeling unappreciated, yet also, to feeling that it had a purpose in that it brought some sunshine to a neglected place.

As I began to understand the image my meditation had given me I could see how it revealed, very accurately, the situation I was in and the ministries I was carrying out. I had finished seminary but my diocese had not yet decided that women could be ordained so I was in limbo. Yet I was finding places to minister that were not being covered by the traditional ministries of the Anglican Church. Relegated - yes, and even unappreciated by some - yet, nevertheless flowering and being useful to others.

Further reflection brought more insights. I noticed that the rose flowering by the compost heap was climbing over some branches piled there after the trees had been pruned. The rose needed those branches - it was a climbing rose! No wonder that it had been thrown out of the more formal garden - the seasonal pruning given to hybrid tea roses had not allowed it to reveal its true character and it was failing to thrive. While this insight didn't connect with my situation vis-a-vis the church, it did remind me that I'd long recognized the need for a scaffolding for my life which I had found when I found the Third Order. I've often used this metaphor with counselees searching for meaning and order in their lives by asking them to ask themselves whether they need scaffolding, or a pole, or whether their own skeleton is enough support.

Some years later, in a quite different context with different people, I was presented with the same task, that of imagining myself as a rose. Immediately I was again that yellow rose at the bottom of the garden by the compost heap. This time, however, the garden had changed - it now extended to where the rose was, and the pruned branches were now arranged into a lovely rustic arbour over which the rose had climbed and thrived, providing a glorious sight in the garden, shielding the

*(continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1)

compost heap from view. A lovely shrub lined walk now connected that area to the main garden, inviting one to walk to the bottom and see the rose and the other flowers now planted there. I was struck by the fact that I had not changed my nature, but the surroundings had changed to include me in the garden. By this time I was ordained and working as a hospital chaplain who was also in charge of the small parish in which the hospital stood. Obviously, I now felt included, and appreciated too - all by remaining true to who I was and trusting that God had called me to be where I was.

To the present, and my reason for writing this now. For the past three years it has been my privilege to be an elected member of the Third Order Chapter - the only elected member from west of the Great Lakes as someone commented, and also the only Canadian to have ever been on Chapter. (I was Formation Director for women from 1974 - 81, then elected in 1998 for three years.) I was invited to be Celebrant at one of the Eucharists during Chapter - a humbling experience, an Awe-ful one, in the Chapel at Little Portion. Since Chapter had been talking about the variety of people God calls to explore the Third Order way, and how that very variety causes our structures to adapt and change, and since one subject comes up year after year in this regard, that of trying to discern whether a person is cut out to become a professed member of the Third Order SSF, or whether a person would thrive better in another context, I drew on the Theme of the Roses as I had experienced it myself, this time applying it to membership in TSSF, and in a Fellowship.

Supposing a person seems not to fit in with the members of the Fellowship, or with the Principles of the Order, - what can the Fellowship, or the Counsellor do? The gardener in the meditation first rejected the rose, but when she or he discovered the rose growing better than before, though in another place, cultivated that place and gradually extended the garden to include it, thereby improving the garden greatly. Using one's imagination I'm sure there are other scenarios, which one can picture. As I continued to reflect I thought of transplanting the rose back into the formal garden and building a trellis for it, thus increasing the variety there. However, I have to admit that this alternative doesn't appeal to me as much as the one of extending the garden to include it! Of course, we always have to appeal to the examples of Francis and Jesus when the need for discernment arises.

Finally, any professed member can stand for election to Chapter with other professed members proposing and seconding them. The nominating committee does its best to ensure that all areas are represented. For example, though I was the only one elected west of the Great Lakes, there were ex officio people from the Western US. I feel sure that if another Canadian stood for election that that person would have a good chance of being elected!

I invite people to look carefully at the Minutes of Chapter when they come out in the New Year.



## PEOPLE FOR JUSTICE

### CANADIANS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**ISSUE:** USEFULNESS OF FEDERAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT!

**ACTION:** MANY FEDERAL MINISTERS, AS WELL AS ONE'S LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ARE QUITE RECEPTIVE TO LETTERS WITH COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS. IN THE WAKE OF OUR RECENT FEDERAL ELECTION, IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE THAT WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY SIMPLY WRITING LETTERS TO OUR MPs, AND TO THE PRIME MINISTER, TO SHARE OUR IDEAS AND CONCERNS. IT IS SIMPLE TO FIND THE RIDING OFFICE OF YOUR MP IN THE PHONE BOOK OR YOU CAN WRITE TO THEM ON PARLIAMENT HILL AT HOUSE OF COMMONS, OTTAWA, ONTARIO K1A 0A6 OR EMAIL THEM AT [DOE.J@PARL.GC.CA](mailto:DOE.J@PARL.GC.CA). YOU CAN ALSO WRITE TO THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OR EMAIL HIM AT [PM@PM.GC.CA](mailto:PM@PM.GC.CA). BE SURE TO PUT "M.P." AFTER THE PERSON'S NAME ON THE ENVELOPE SO THAT YOUR POSTAGE IS FREE. FOR MORE INTERNET INFO SEE [WWW.GC.CA](http://WWW.GC.CA).

## *People of the Spirit!*

### *Christmas Wish for a Life of Love*

Life is short and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So be swift to love and make haste to be kind. May the blessing of God, creator and giver of life, the Son, life of God incarnate, and the Spirit, bearer and power of new life be with us all, now and forever. AMEN!

For "The Principles of the TSSF for Daily Reading" and other basic **TSSF Publications** write to Dee Dobson, 4001 S.W. 5 Terrace, Miami, FL 33134-2040 for a list and prices.

**Third Order Library:** Books/videos/tapes on loan by mail. Contact the librarian, Rosie McFerran, 1518 Tulane Drive, Davis, CA, USA 95616 Phone: 530-756-3487 or find the library through the website: <http://www.tssf.org>

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