Chapter 3: Brother Paul and the Third Order Committee 1966-73

The Transition from OSF to SSF and the Third Order's Participation in the Change

(from Peta Dunstan, *This Poor Sort: History of the European Province of the Society of St. Francis*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd 1997: pp. 219-24)

The Order of St Francis (OSF) grew steadily under Joseph's guidance, moving to Little Portion on Long Island, near New York, in 1928. The spirituality became increasingly monastic and the small community looked to the Conventual tradition within Franciscanism as their model, whilst the sisters, founded in parallel with OSF, had evolved into an enclosed Community of Poor Clares by the 1930s. Joseph fostered a loyal and supportive Third Order and a band of associates, whose generosity helped the community to survive spiritually and financially, and who were kept informed by the monthly dispatch of ***The Little Chronicle.*** By 1938 there were five priests and six lay brothers professed in the Order, with one novice and seven postulants. [Ed. *At the same time there were 75 members of the Third Order.]*

Joseph was a conservative and traditional superior, maintaining a rigorous and formal way of life, although he was himself regularly absent from the monastery on outside engagements. He was also a knowledgeable liturgical scholar and spent many years editing the *Anglican Breviary and Missal* for the Episcopal Church, another task that took him away from Little Portion. Consequently, he was very dependent on his Father Vicar (or assistant superior), Stephen, who was in charge of both Little Portion and the novices, and who was his only obvious successor as leader of the community. By the 1950s, however, Stephen was becoming increasingly frustrated by the Father Founder's reluctance to adapt the community's ways to the aspirations of a new generation. Stephen, by then, had been Father Vicar for over twenty years and had been in the position of carrying out Joseph's somewhat inflexible vision of community life, whilst finding himself more and more out of sympathy with it, especially as there were few professions and the community itself was aging and being reduced by deaths. Stephen felt his own authority was undermined by Joseph's failure to support many of his decisions and initiatives. With no other Franciscan community the Episcopal Church, Stephen began to urge that OSF make links with SSF across the Atlantic, in the hope that fresh contacts might stimulus change in the mind of Fr. Joseph....

Unexpectedly, Fr. Joseph found help elsewhere in the person of Fr. Paul Kenworthy. Paul had been simply professed in OSF in 1937, but poor health had led to his withdrawal a year later. He had entered again as a novice in 1949, but once more had withdrawn. Nevertheless, he had kept in contact with the community, as OSF had a branch house in Orlando, Florida, where he was a Canon of the Cathedral and responsible for counseling work. Seeing Joseph, now seventy and in poor health, struggling to maintain a shrinking group of friars, he felt moved to come to his aid. Paul therefore agreed to try his vocation once more. The dire situation within OSF with regard to leadership led to him (quite irregularly) being life professed in January 1961 only a matter of months after his return. Joseph subsequently appointed him Novice Master and in 1962 Father Vicar. As a trained counselor, he had many skills to offer and began to build up the community. The circumstances this return gave him a position of advantage with respect to Fr. Joseph that Stephen had never had. Besides, the Father Founder's age and health prevented him from interfering as much, especially as he now lived mainly in Florida or in Arizona to escape the colder New York climate [Ed. *See Marie Webner's earlier description of Fr. Joseph stay at the Tuller School in Tucson*].

Within a year, Paul had assembled a novitiate of eight. Nevertheless, he knew his help was only a temporary solution to OSF's difficulties. He was concerned about what would happen if his own health gave way, since he had never been robust; and his situation was an isolated one because he had no other senior brother with whom to share the burden. Paul discussed the idea of merger with SSF brothers who visited Little Portion, but he knew ultimately that it was Father Minister David's objections he had to counter. By 1967, he could do this. One reason was OSF's growth in numbers: the first two life professions in OSF since Paul's return took place in 1966 and 1967, and there were more brothers in simple vows and the novitiate than there were life professed. This showed clearly that OSF was not a "dying" order. Any union now could not be seen as a "take-over". Secondly, the three-yearly elections the Minister occurred in 1967, and Joseph (now nearing seventy-eight) finally indicated he did not expect to be re-elected. He retired to Tucson, deciding to remain aloof from the changes he must have known were now inevitable. In his place, Paul was elected Minister in 1967.

Paul's election was, in part, a mandate to explore a merger with SSF. One of the two recently life professed, Luke, remembered much of the impetus for union coming from the Anglican Congress in Toronto. It seemed counterproductive to have two separate Franciscan bodies at a time when the churches which made up the Anglican Communion were drawing closer together. By an opportune coincidence, Br. Adam SSF visited Little Portion at Easter 1967 on his way back to England after a visit to his family in Canada. He and Luke (also a Canadian) spoke a possible union, and Adam pointed out that SSF was currently revising its Constitution to create 'provinces', so if OSF wished to be united with SSF, this was an appropriate juncture. Adam also realized that David was visiting New York, so he telephoned him and hastily arranged to fetch the SSF Minister for an unscheduled visit to Little Portion. It was a significant meeting as David, seeing the enthusiasm of the young growing community, changed his mind. He would now put all his energies into working for unity.

This was achieved more swiftly than anyone had anticipated. The SSF chapter discussed the possibility in June 1967 and sent Michael represent them at a special OSF chapter in August, carrying an invitation for the brothers at Little Portion to

become the America Province of SSF. He proved a reassuring envoy. The American chapter agreed unanimously to union, accepting the SSF Rule. The SSF chapter completed the process by a formal assent in October. The American brothers changed into brown habits from grey on the first Sunday in Lent 1968, and Br. Stephen returned after his long years in exclaustration. Where names were duplicated in the two communities, brothers changed them or added a second to avoid confusion. There an exchange of brothers between the US and Britain, Luke accompanying Michael back to England in September 1967, followed by John Baptist and then Dominic George. Adam and Robert Hugh went from England to the USA. Most significant was David's decision take up residence at Little Portion. He had been made Minister General by the chapter in January 1967 and decided to make Little Portion his base, leaving his Minister Provincial role in Britain in the hands of Michael, who was appointed Deputy Minister. It was a measure of David's new-found enthusiasm for all things American, and his awareness that a worldwide Society could not be seen to have all authority emanating from England.

The speed of the union was the result of several factors. Partly, the general climate of ecumenism and optimism of the 1960s made such a merger an obvious step. If different denominations were building bridges after years of hostility, the idea of two Franciscan communities within the same communion coming together seemed relatively straightforward. From the perspective of SSF in Britain, as the Society had already decided to create a provincial structure, to unite with an American Province was not a departure from, but an extension of, decisions reached previously. In 1959, an American province would have seen a radical departure from the then constitutional arrangements, whereas by 1967 the emergence of the New Guinea and Australian foundations made a provincial structure the practical solution to existing problems.

There were also factors in OSF that made such a swift union possible. Although the community was now growing, the number of Life Professed was still small. The decision therefore was not a matter for fifty or sixty brothers but for **ten**. Agreement was much easier to achieve. Paul was feeling stressed and wearied by the years of effectively saving OSF from demise and saw unity as a way of alleviating this burden.

In contrast, the American supporters of OSF were far from enthusiastic. Some OSF brothers were treated to much criticism by members of the American Third Order. The followers of Fr. Joseph saw his distance from the unity process as a reason to be hostile to it. The Poor Clares of Reparation also threatened disaffiliation from OSF, but David's rapport with Mother Mary Catherine finally persuaded her to abandon such a course in 1968. For a time the situation was difficult. David wrote in November 1967 of how younger American friars had been verbally attacked at a Healing Mission by a tertiary for 'their desertion' of the American Church, of the Clares and of the Third Order, an experience that shook them badly.

This disaffection was owing also to the fact that some supporters perceived union with SSF as the cause of other unwelcome changes. It was true that the American friars could make changes quickly, with the excuse of coming into line with SSF, but these innovations were the product of wider movements in the Church and, in any case, they had long wished to make them. A case in point was liturgical reform. To Fr. Joseph, the new liturgies approved by Rome might be good for Roman Catholics but 'will not necessarily answer Anglican spiritual needs. The transformation of Little Portion's chapels during 1967-8 horrified his supporters. Joseph's retirement and the involvement with SSF were seen therefore by some tertiaries as the catalyst for all the developments in the Church that they abhorred. For the American friars, the union thus provided a supportive context amidst the criticism of OSF associates. ***Indeed, had unity not been achieved so swiftly, the strength of the tertiary opposition, once mobilized, might have prevented the union.***

What TSF Had To Give Up in the Merger

This is Peta Dunstan's interpretation of the TSF opposition to union with SSF, in a book on the history of the 1st Order in the European Province. Moreover her book is heavily dependent on the 1st Order European Chapter minutes.

Ms Dunstan failed to note important traditional elements that TSF had to give up to become TSSF: the habit, religous names given at profession, a sense of a motherhouse at Little Portion Friary, and finally the Crendenda signed by each at profession.

Moreover, up to the union with the European Province and SSF, TSF had members resident in England. In fact, in 1935, 6% of the professed members of OSF resided in England. In 1967 about 35 TSF members lived in England. This was the obverse of the ten 1st Order OSF brothers whose very small numbers were reversed with the larger number in England.

In the amalgamation, with so much given up by the tertiaries, two unique items were retained:

- the requirement of each tertiary to read a Daily Office, and
- the sacrament of penance (e.g. confession) was normative.

In 2013, there are still some additional distinct differences in the Province of the Americas in such things as

- Formation in the Americas requires monthly reporting for two and a half years not quarterly reporting as in the other provinces;
- the requirement of the Province of the Americas to require ALL professed members to be in parishes in communion with the Sea of Canterbury has led to the creation of an Order of Ecumenical Franciscan, the Order of Lutheran Franciscans, and the Order of Old Catholic Franciscans.

Nurturing a New Third Order in this Province

Just as the Minister General of the American Congregation, Father Joseph, paved the way to create an organization for TSF in 1926 with his Pastoral Letter (reprinted in Chapter 1), so too Br. Paul, the new Minister General of the American Congregation, paved the way for union with the European Province of TSSF with the following 1968 address to the Third Order Standing Committee. This Committee had been appointed by Br. Paul and included: Dr. G. Alvah Hoffman, the "President" of the Third Order Standing Committee; his wife Anna was the Secretary of the Order. The other officers included: Chaplain General, Br. Paul, Vice President, the Rev. Father Fergus M. Fulford and Treasurer, Mona Hull (both of whom were tertiaries). John M. Scott was listed as Assistant Chaplain General and Peter Funk is the Novice Master. (Alvah and Anna Hoffman along with Peter Funk can be seen in this 1967 picture).

Edward Warner's TSF profession just prior to union with TSSF (1967). L to R: Peter Funk, Leslie Hewett, Anna Hoffman, Edward Warner, Alvah Hoffma with camera

Address to the Third Order Committee (1968)

Br. Paul, SSF

Benen Fahey in his *Writings of St. Francis* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1964) says that there are four ancient versions of the Third Order Rule. These differ considerably though they undoubtedly contain the substance of the original Rule. But there is no one ancient Rule of the Third Order to which we may appeal. Fahey also says that to the basic Rule there were, from the very first, "Additions" which varied from place to place within the Third Order.

At various times in the past fifty years, our own Third Order Rule has been revised and re-written. It has, I think, faithfully maintained the original spirit of St. Francis but has needed updating with the changing times.

A new revision has been contemplated for sometime, but the matter became urgent when the Order of St. Francis became the American Province of the Society of St. Francis. It seems natural and wise for our Third Orders to unite now too, if that is possible.

The American Province of the SSF has adopted the Manuals, the Rule and Habit of the Society of St. Francis. We are not attempting to adopt the English Kalendar since our Church has its own Lesser Feasts and Fasts, though we will, of course, unite in keeping Franciscan holy days. The Primitive Rule as it is printed in the Third Order Manual is identical with that in the First Order Manual. The Testament is the same in both Manuals. "The Principles" are the same in both books with very little change (three *Aims* of the Third Order become three *Conditions of Life* in the First Order). The Constitution and the Rule of Life differ considerably from the First Order, but this is to be expected. This means that both First and Third Order will be using very similar Manuals.

I would like now to mention several matters we need to consider if we are to adopt the English Manual and seek union with their Third Order. In any case I think these matters important to our discussion.

- About Vows—It is quite clear in the English Manual (pg. 31) that the Vows made are permanent, life-long Vows. They are to be renewed yearly like the Baptismal Vows in the Revised Easter Vigil Rite. (Incidentally many Religious Communities never take life-long Vows but only temporary vows—Sisters of St. Joseph; Christian Brothers, etc..)
- About Names—Over a year ago, the Roman Friars Minor permitted all friars to resume their Baptismal Names if they so desired. Now all their Novices must keep their Baptismal Names. The tendency to keep the Baptismal Name is widepread in Roman Communities today because there is increasingly an emphasis on one's Baptism as the entrance into the Christian Life, our incorporation into the Body of Christ. There can be no greater event this side of heaven. It is the desire to emphasize the Sacrament of Baptism that Baptismal names are to be treasured and kept. The First Order now is encouraging Novices to keep their Baptismal Names unless there is good reason to change (repetitive, outlandish, etc.).
- About Habits—Just as we at Little Portion have had no end of confusion over the names of Tertiaries so we have had great difficulty over the Third Order *Habit,* and much hurt feelings. The regulation clearly states that Habits are only to be worn at Fellowship meetings, at Little Portion, and, if desired, for burial. I believe it has only been in the last ten years that any permission to wear the Habit at other times has been granted. Yet requests come in, and when they are refused there is resentment because it is known other Tertiaries wear them. I suggest we have no Habits at all but if we do they should be owned by the Fellowship and only worn at Fellowship meetings. But what shall we do about the dispensations already granted?

  The English Third Order has no provision for the use of Names, nor for Habits. Indeed as you well know from daily papers, nuns, sisters and male Religious in the Roman Church and in ours are revising, remodeling, and updating their Habits. And there is a real movement afoot for male Religious to wear their Habits only in Chapel. Even clerical garb for priests is undergoing examination and change. It has been said that the Habit advertises the Third Order, but I think it attracts many who are

more interested in the Habit than they are in the disciplined life of the Order. The dedicated Christian who could be drawn to the Life is more often put off by the parade of costumes. **

- About the Office—There are at least eight ways I know of that Tertiaries have been saying Office. They have never all said the same Office. I hope now all members of the Third Order will say the full Office of Morning and Evening Prayer (at least through the "Third Collect") though some will have to be allowed to shorten the Offices.
- About Reports—Our present report forms encourage pride on the one hand and scrupulosity on the other. They are more like an IBM card than anything else and give no idea of the spiritual growth and development of the Tertiary. If you want to count numbers of failures, they are easy to "grade" but for most Tertiaries they are unsatisfactory at best, and at worst they give a completely distorted picture of spiritual health. The English Report form is not ideal, but it is a great improvement on our own. Though it will increase the amount of time-consuming work at Little Portion, I think it, or a modification of it, should be adopted by our Third Order.
- About Oblates—There is no provision in the English Third Order for Oblates. There are, however, Third Order Regulars who live at the various friaries. These are men who for one reason or another are unable to become friars in the First Order. They wear the tunic of the First Order with a leather belt and live the life of the friars so far as they are able. At the meeting about it, I proposed that we have a Third Order Regular under Vows but living in the world. They would need to come to Little Portion for their training and return when they had vacations to live the Conventual life. The rest of the time they would live in the world, work at their various occupations as committed Christians bearing the Good News of our Redemption to that part of God's world to which He called them. They would of necessity be more, much more, than Oblates. And when they retired they could return to Little Portion to live out the rest of their lives in His service in Community. These men would have to be most carefully selected and trained, and many applicants would have to be refused for one reason or another. But they would have a home here and a center for their life even while they were away on the Lord's business. With this in mind, I propose that the present Oblates continue as they are, but that we make it a standing practice to allow Oblature under only the most rigid circumstances.
- About the Novitiate—I feel that the Novitiate needs to be much longer, that better training and more oversight should be given them, that it should be required that they be vouched for by some member of the Third Order in good standing, and that someone in authority should interview them personally at least once before they take their Vows.
- The Principles—Finally, brethren, I would call your attention to the Principles in the English Third Order Manual. I have nothing to add to the Three Aims, nor to the Three Notes of the Order, but I do want to speak of the Three Ways of Service.

  D. J. Thorman in an article called "A Crisis in Spirituality Today" *(The National Catholic Reporter*, 28 Feb. 1968) says that one type of spirituality is the saying of many prayers. You have all experienced the debilitating effect of rapidly scanning the Office, racing through prayers absent-mindedly and feeling as if you had accomplished something when you closed the book with a sigh. "Religious Practice" is a phony term; life itself must be a religious practice. "Practice" no longer has importance. What counts now is attitude, approach, sensitivity; in a word Christian Character. We must be open to the presence of Christ in each situation and respond to it by openness to others and their needs. We must commit self to an involvement with others in social action in the pagan community in which we live. Christian character is not easily caught in a set of rules and phrases. As R. O. Johanan said in *America* (Jan. 21, 1967) "moral goodness is primarily a perfection of persons, not of acts;…actions are good only in relation to the goodness of persons…his goodness of persons is a matter of habitual dispositions that have to be worked at to be acquired. Only good habits make a good man."

  "The modern pagans who notice us do not see in us the striking characteristics which caught and held the pagans of ancient Rome. They see only that we are not very different from themselves, and they are correct....Christianity has ceased to be dangerous; it involves no risk, no sacrifice, and it causes hardly a flurry in the affairs of the world....Consequently it is understandable why non-Catholics should not be interested in investigating the mystery of our Faith, for they see no evidence transmit the effects of his love. We are not obviously anxious to communicate his love...nor would we dream of startling them by the cross of Christ which we bear about in our bodies." (Michenneau, *Revolution in the City Parish*)

Martin Thornton (*The Rock and the River*) makes a clear distinction between *lex*, i.e. the Law of God; and *regula* or Rule or Rule of Life which is the "disciplined response to God's love which for us takes the form and shape of the Third Order Rule of Life." Prayer, Study and Work are the Three Ways of Service. The source fountainhead of all our strength and inspiration is prayer, fed by God's Word in Sacrament and Scripture. Then only can we go forth into the world in peace rejoicing in the power of his Spirit to love and serve the Lord with gladness and singleness of heart. But the only way we can be "both fully committed to Jesus Christ, fully dedicated to God, and at the same time wholeheartedly immersed in the secular affairs and problems of the world" is by the Regula which will create for us that habitual recollection which is the hallmark of Christian Maturity, a deep and constant awareness which is to have within us the Mind of Christ, this is to pray without ceasing. Habitual recollection depends on total commitment as expressed by Regula Sacrament, Office, and personal encounter with Christian prayer and meditation are the bases of our Regula but these must lead into the world to bear the fruits of contemplation to others.

Therefore my last recommendation is that every Tertiary be required to be involved in God's world, as witness of his love not primarily as a Tertiary, but as a dedicated Christian concerned and involved with the People of God.

Br. Simeon, SSF (mimeo "SSF Tomorrow," 1966) says, "This is my world too. I am not on a safety zone called Church or Community.

The road to the prodigal's far country cuts right through our property. There is no kingdom to be built; we only have to enter it. There is no ascent to heaven, only a climbing down to a stable where a child is born." The stable is God's world, which Incarnate God comes to redeem, and we must find God in His world and help others find the unsearchable riches of Christ.

**There might have been very practical reasons for getting rid of habits. Fr. Paul reportedly was told of an intoxicated tertiary in habit who rode a bus filled with church people. Another tertiary woman in habit ate with friends in a restaurant and had a highball before dinner. She was identified as a "Poor Clare" and caused such upset that the dioscean bishop phoned Br. Paul about the matter.

With this transition, a TSF world of habits and ceremony ended. Here are some pictures of this lost world—the "veiling" (profession) of Anna Hoffman on March 27, 1966.

Fr. Stephen is the brother priest in all the pictures. Right: Alvah Hoffman holds 3rd Order Shield (see cover of 1962 Manual), Peter Funk (back left), Fergus Fulford (3rd from lt), Ed Warner (4th from left in the back row), Leslie Hewett (5th from left in the back row), Anna Hoffman (front row right).

Anna Hoffman is partially hidden, but still veiled in the back at the concluding tea that day.

NCISCAN FESTIVAL: June 22nd, 1968 — Mrs. Anna Hoffman, General Secretary of the Third Orde
Is the Power of Intercession at the Sung Eucharist

Anna Hoffman at the 1968 Annual Franciscan Festival after the Union of TSF and TSSF—She no longer wears a veil or habit.

Anna Hoffman's May 1969 report as General Secretary

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

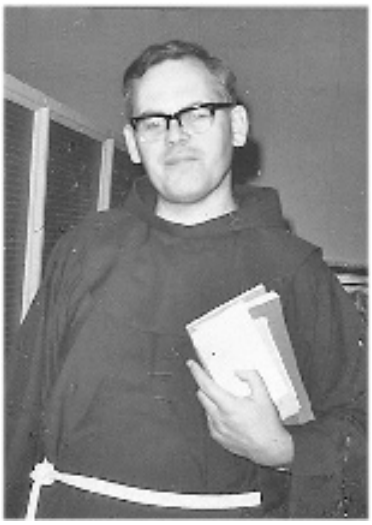
Our first year as a Corporation has been a most enlightening one. As Secretary General and Novice Mistress during this time it has brought closeness with our Tertiaries scattered throughout this large country. Little has been known about the activities in which our Tertiaries participate. In our own Fellowship we have two Tertiaries that are active all of the time. One does beautiful embroidery and has made many sets or vestments for some of our Missions; the other sees that all who belong to the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament receive their little Manuals of Intercessions four times a year.

There are lone Tertiaries who help with children and give their time to day nurseries, drive the infirm and sit with the lonely. There are those who have adopted children and opened their homes to the needy, and homeless. Many do secretarial and other works for their Churches. Fill in as organists, and their time at our many camps during the summer months.

Our Florida Tertiaries have organized their own Fellowship under the direction of Fr. David Kennedy. This was done in February of this year. Our Chicago Fel1owship under the direction or Fr. Caskell admitted three Novices at the May meeting. One of our lone Tertiaries drove 400 hundred miles to be present at that meeting. Our Tertiaries on the West Coast are all active in some sort of charitable work. [Ed.*A letter from her husband in March of this year notes that there are active Fellowships in Washington DC, Chicago, Florida, and California. There was also a fellowship or "Custodium" in Denver.*] A great many of our lone Tertiaries belong to Prayer and Bible Study groups in other Churches than their own. Being Novice Mistress has been a most enjoyable and interesting task. It has brought a closeness that otherwise I would never had known. A family, Franciscan family, can be and is a most interesting family.

From Br. Robert Hugh

(Franciscan Times Fall 2012)



Br. Paul was the newly elected Minister of OSF. Fr. Joseph, the OSF founder, had by then been Minister. On Fr. Hugh's death, Br. Paul himself assumed the role of Chaplain to the Third Order, and it was Paul's vision for the Third Order that initiated and made possible the major changes in the Third Order's understanding of its own identity and vocation as a self-governing religious order in its own right, with its own minister and administration, its own chaplain and provision of pastoral care, and its own formation team It took a full decade to achieve all this. When Br. Luke became Minister Provincial SSF in 1970 he asked me to succeed Br. Paul as Third Order Chaplain, and I served as Chaplain for four years (1970-74). I took it as my goal to work myself out of a job, and thus I largely spent my time visiting tertiary fellowships and individuals to share and discuss this new vision. (Our tertiaries numbered about 200, and so I was able to visit personally with all but about five, I believe.) Br. Mark Francis succeeded me, and he was the last Friar Chaplain to the Third Order.

Today we take it for granted that the Third Order provides all its own leadership, and but, when I began as TSSF Chaplain, all inquiries, applications, and requests for profession, came through the Chaplain's office. Peter Funk's great series of formation letters were well under way and every few months I had a lovely visit with Peter and Mary at Lambertville (New Jersey) where we looked at his latest offerings. If a newsletter were to go out, it was because the I as Chaplain wrote it, cut the stencil, and turned the crank on the Gestetner duplicating machine, and mailed it.

"Touched by God: Reflections on a Franciscan Quest"

Peter Funk (1st Men's Formation Director, Writer of TSSF 1st Formation Letters)

In one way or another, we are touched by God; through associations with people, through our readings, seeing, hearing, interior listening, and by our feelings. Often I reflect in astonishment that, through God's graciousness, I am where I am, from being an agnostic, perhaps even a deist. As a combat Marine in World War II in the South Pacific, I came home troubled and melancholy. In the

war I lost not only a brother whom I loved, but also many friends.

Settled in civilian life, Mary and I believed in the importance of setting an example for our children. Consequently, I went to church and served in various capacities. God touched me. An important event for me happened when I met Paul Moore, the future Bishop of New York and future Bishop Protector of the Society of St. Francis. A group of us from our church went to the torn-apart inner city of Jersey City to help refurbish the young priest's rectory and church. Paul had been a combat marine. We had something important in common.

Through Paul, I met Fr. Joseph, an Anglican Franciscan and founder of the American Order of Greyfriars. My first session with Fr. Joseph intrigued me. I knew only a bit about St. Francis and was totally unaware of a Franciscan Order in the Episcopal Church. The headquarters, Little Portion Friary and the convent of the Poor Clares, were located on twenty acres donated by Br. Stephen's family in Mount Sinai, Long Island.

Through Paul I also met a young priest, Kim Myers. At one point he and Paul courageously stepped between two violent gangs, preventing a bloody battle. I wrote an article about this for *Faith Today*. Later Kim became Bishop of California and Regional Protector of the Society of St. Francis.

Innumerable people, either in depth or fleetingly, as well as my studies became the various touches of God. In the 1950s I founded and published *Faith Today* magazine. A pioneering effort, it became one of the first truly ecumenical publications and the only religious magazine sold at major newsstands. We had superb international writers. Due to lack of financing, I stopped *Faith Today*. With seven children to support, I took a job as a sales manager of a mutual fund, while writing novels in whatever time was left over.

During this time I experienced a growing yearning to "know God." My weekly church activities did not fulfill me in whatever I sensed I lacked. An interior odyssey developed into a search for the heart of God–a desire that's difficult to express for it comes from a source deeper than words. It is an instinctive longing to merge your life with God so totally that you will be made "one body with Christ, that he may dwell in us and we in him." So often such words slip past us, and we really do not understand their possibilities. I didn't know that I was in search of the Society of St. Francis. In 1961 I mulled over a possible story that might be written around Little Portion. I called Fr. Joseph and arranged a weekend visit. Following a business luncheon in New York—my luncheon companion thought my adventure sounded weird—I drove to Long Island.

As I drove, somehow…somehow I sensed a sharpening awareness that this weekend would have a profound, life-changing effect. In what way? I didn't know. I worried. Felt a chill. Then it seemed as if a strange magnetic force began misdirecting me. Inexplicably I made wrong turns. Became lost. Finally arrived in Port Jefferson, a few minutes drive from Little Portion. Expected at the monastery by 5:30, I decided they wouldn't miss me, and so I ate supper in town. I recall driving into the circular driveway. Lengthening evening shadows mystically encircled the white building and the railed bell tower with the tall cross. The time was a little after seven. Parking the car, I sighed. Climbing the steps to the front door, I pulled at the bell.

The door opened. A slender brother in a gray habit greeted me. "I'm Vladimir. I'm the Guest Master. We waited for you for supper." No sense of reproof lay in his words, only a kind of sadness and wondering. Franciscan courtesy highlighted my discourtesy. How thoughtless of me! Consumed by my own anxiety, I'd given no thought to their schedule and my obligation to be on time. I made profuse apologies.

"Father Joseph would like to talk to you. He's injured his leg and so he stays in his office where he listens to the services." Vladimir led the way. Impressions: A sturdy figure lying in bed. White hair and thick white eyebrows. Strongly handsome face with prominent finely shaped nose. Brown eyes search me, not severely but wanting to know me. I found humor and kindliness reflected in them.

Father Joseph was a scholar of the Anglican Church and may have influenced the revision of the Prayer Book we use today. Singlehandedly he created the *Anglican Breviary* and *The People's Missal,* both based on similar Roman Catholic texts. It was an enormous and magnificent undertaking. As Father Joseph explained, the Prayer Book Offices cannot be celebrated if one stuck to the *1929 Book of Common Prayer* in the sense of doing no more that what is ordered. "In other words, the Prayer Book Rite must be treated as an apocapated (shortened) liturgy, for that is precisely what it is." The *Breviary* and the *Missal* fulfilled this need.

He dismissed my apologies for my rudeness with a gracious wave of his hand. We reviewed our first meeting, and he questioned what I had in mind. After talking a while, he suggested that Vladimir show me to my room. At nine o'clock I'd attend Compline. Vladimir would be with me. At the time I didn't know that office, as it's not in the *1929 Book of Common Prayer.* That evening, Br. Vladimir accompanied me to the Visitor's Gallery. Below us, the brothers faced one another, their quiet voices filling the chapel. I felt a sense of peace. When the office ended, the room was darkened abruptly, and the brothers pulled the hoods of their habits over their heads. "Put out the light," Vladimir whispered urgently. Since this was my first time, I had no idea of the customary practice, and, in my zeal, I nearly yanked the cord from the ceiling. The "Great Silence" began.

My room was a narrow cell. A bed with a cross over it, desk, bureau, and chair comprised the furnishings. That night I dreamt I'd died and could see myself in the coffin. Suddenly I sprang out of it. It was such a wondrous dream of new birth, and I knew that all would be well, even the huge debt I'd incurred with *Faith Today.*

The following day I met many of the brothers Mary and I learned to treasure as friends. Those who were there at the time included: Stephen, Leo, Dunstan, Mark Francis, Luke, Lawrence, and Paul. I also came to know the redoubtable Reverend Mother Mary Catherine of the Poor Clares.

I used the library, asked questions and cherished the periods of silence throughout the day and during meals. We celebrated the traditional seven offices of Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones combined with Vespers, and finally Compline. Generally silence

was kept until about 10 a. m. (Today at the friary the routine is different and simplified. For example, silence is kept after Compline until breakfast is completed, and four offices from the prayer book are offered.)

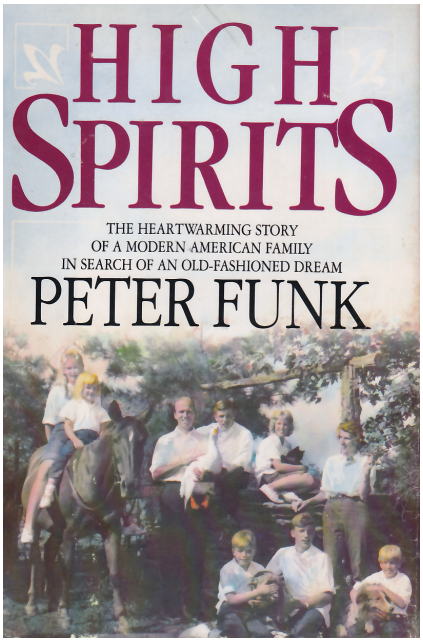
Emerging from the overarching quiet of the monastery into my loving, rollicking, noisy family of seven children was like plunging into the wild maelstrom of the New York subway at commuting time. I felt immediately guilty knowing how much Mary would have enjoyed my experience. This would come later. I kept in touch, learned about the Third Order. Without joining, I experimented with its Rule-of-Life. During this period I came under heavy stress. With the demanding job as a mutual fund sales manager I traveled half of my time around the country as well as trying to be a full-time writer, getting to bed late and up at 4 a.m. plus running a kind of farm. I felt dissatisfied in my work for I wanted more time to write. Even though I began to be successful, I didn't feel confident enough to go full time. Writing is a hazardous way for most people to earn a living, especially when supporting a large family.

The apparently safe approach became the hazardous one. In 1965 I was diagnosed with terminal intestinal cancer, following which I'd acquired a violent case of hepatitis C from a transfusion. God had to give me a hard push to get me back on my path of life. The mutual fund company summarily fired me when it learned of my illness. Mary said "Good…! Now you can get to your writing."

I became a postulant in the Third Order, reporting to Fr. Stephen who was in charge of the Third Order, and I was professed in 1967. At that time New Jersey had a fellowship with about seven or eight of us including Ed Warner who now lives in Georgia and Claudia Gammon who is still in New Jersey. Later we met with John Scott's lively group in Philadelphia.

As hard as it is to believe now, in those days we Tertiaries took religious names. Ed Warner, for example, was Fr. Polycarp John. I was Peter Bernard: Peter for the disciple and Bernard for Bernard of Clairvaux whom I admired. Underneath our clothing we all wore small scapulars and, when we put them on each morning, we recited Francis's prayer, "Here O Lord in this church…"

At our New Jersey meetings we wore a black cassock, a large gray scapula over the cassock and a gray yarmulka. However, as some people began "playing games" at being religious, these unnecessary outer symbols were quite correctly dumped. In 1968 the American Grayfriars merged with the world-wide Anglican Society of St. Francis with its roots in India. We became the American Province. Now whether priest, deacon or lay brother, all were called Brother or Sister. To help restructure our province, a group of First Order brothers and Third Order members gathered. The invaluable John Scott and others represented the Tertiaries. [*Ed. this is the International Third Order Chapter that met at Hillfield Friary in England May 25-7, 1973. It is described later in this Chapter.]* In contrast to the Roman Church, the Third Order would eventually grow to have its own Minister Provincial and Novice Directors (later Formation Directors) rather than be under the aegis of the First Order. [*Ed. See Dee Dobson's chapter for further comment on the SFO/OFS development modeled on our Formation program.]*



Peter and Mary Funk with Their Family, Cover of His 1983 Book

At that time Br. Paul, the first Minister Provincial, suggested I become the Novice Director. As Director I wrote 30 formation letters outlining the different elements of the Franciscan life of a tertiary. These letters would be given to the postulants and novices each month during the 30 months of regular reporting to a counselor. [*Ed. They have all been gathered and are available on the TSSF website in Historical Documents*.]

About this time, the inimitable Br. Robert Hugh, Novice Director of the First Order, happily brust into Mary's and my life. Either, he visited us on our farm, or I would travel to Little Portion. He was my constant and always loving guide. For us he exemplified the Franciscan way of life. Eventually overwhelmed by the many formation reports I received, the Order decided to add counselors. Marie Webner became the first one. She was an indefatigably valuable help, having many good ideas. Gradually others were added until we had about ten of us.

The Order Grew.

Many people helped in different ways. What would we have done without Helen Webb, who not only played the piano at our Chapter and other meetings, but also acted as Secretary to the Third Order. In addition she typed and proofed my letters, offering suggestions. Dee Dobson played an essential role in shaping our Order's destiny.

Sometimes the friary would send us young First Order brothers not yet professed who needed some motherly love, of which Mary has an abundance. We remember one 18 year-old who spent the weekend in bed reading comics. We had delightful visits with Joel and Jeremy and worried about them when they left the Order. They seemed so vulnerable. Stephen visited us and I put him to work helping to cultivate our Christmas tree farm. I nicknamed him Mighty Magoo, and he'd burst out in stuttering, happy laughter when I'd call out to him: "Hey, Mighty Magoo, are you feeding enough manure to those young trees?"

I remember so well the English Brother Geoffrey and his radiant smile and sound advice. As the Minister General he visited us one weekend with Br. Philip, his secretary, and Robert Hugh when we discussed Third Order matters. He suggested that a person cannot travel when burdened down with things. Mary and I felt overburdened then and we still do. Geoffrey's helpful booklet, *The Way of St*

Peter Teaching a TSF Formation Class

Francis, is still available and given to each new postulant as part of *The Basics*. Yes, the Society of St. Francis has changed. But the change is outward only. Its inner essence remains the same. The Society of St. Francis has done much to help shape Mary's (who also was professed) and my life as we continue to search for God within and without.

("Touched by God: Reflections on a Franciscan Quest" by Peter Funk, Spring 1999, *Franciscan Times*)

Forty Years Later A Commentary on Peter Funks Formation Letters

Susan Pitchford (Franciscan Times, Advent 2013)--Susan Pitchford and her books are featured in Chapter 16 of this book.

I suppose most of us in the Third Order are here because at some point we were charmed, or challenged, or changed, by Francis of Assisi. We recognized something of the Divine in him—his passion, his commitment, his joy—and we wanted to bring some of that spirit into our own lives. Unlike Elisha, I don't have the chutzpah to ask for a "double portion" of my mentor's spirit, though I do hope that if I hang around Francis and Franciscans long enough, some of it will rub off on me. But moving from "charmed" to "changed" is a process, and a challenging one at that. Without a rigorous process of formation, we'd be stuck forever splashing around the birdbath. And I've never seen a birdbath with a deep end.

The formation process is critical, and the "Formation Letters" have been a critical part of that process since the first version was written by Peter Funk, who was professed in 1967 and wrote the Formation Letters between 1968 and 1970.

There's so much that could be said about the twenty-two letters that make up the original document, but I'd like to focus on three things that stand out to me: As I've already suggested, the letters are *wise*, but they're also *passionate*, and they're *challenging*. For each of these characteristics I can only give a couple examples.

Wisdom

The wisdom in Peter's letters is apparent from the very beginning. *Letter1*, "How to Write a Rule," anticipates the spiritual newbie's tendency to legalism, and cautions against scrupulosity. "You are not to fuss excessively," he says, sounding like an exceptionally wise great aunt. Lapses are normal, and when they occur, they are "only faults, not sins. Don't get bogged down by them." Peter points out the paradox of spiritual discipline: living under a rule of life is liberating, because it "helps to bring you into God's presence more consistently." It's about deepening one's spiritual awareness, not setting up a list of obligations, and it's in that attentive abiding in God that we find freedom.

One place where we find some of Peter's wisest counsel is *Letter 13*, "The Dry Period," in which he explains the sources and meanings of spiritual aridity. He acknowledges that spiritual dry spells can come for all kinds of reasons, but emphasizes that they are not necessarily a bad sign: "The dry periods that come from God have a purpose, and if we can understand that they are part of our overall spiritual growth and not simply a hiatus, we can use them creatively." Thus he manages to say in thirty-four words what took me two hundred pages in *God in the Dark*. Don't rely on your feelings, he says; feelings can be deceptive. Dry periods are largely about learning to trust in God when you *can't* feel his presence. We do that by holding fast to the rule, and letting it carry us over the dry parts. Having summarized the teaching of John of the Cross in a couple of paragraphs, Peter concludes that the goal is "understanding the darkness as being light. It is to give up a lesser faith that we may acquire a greater one." How I wish I could have read that letter fifteen years ago.

Passion

Probably the most striking thing to me about these original Letters is how they communicate Peter Funk's deep passion for God. Thank God for that; how terrible it would be to be drawn to the Third Order by Francis' passion, only to be subjected to formation materials that were cold and distant, spiritually frozen over. Peter himself observes in *Letter 5* ("Four Pillars") that Francis' free choice of poverty and hardship only makes sense when we see that "Francis was a man truly in love." A great love redefines sacrifices as natural and joyful, but for many of us, the love of a spiritual giant like Francis can be more intimidating than inspiring. Peter has wisdom for us here, too: Start by loving other people. And *pray* for a deep, wide, consuming love for God. If we follow this advice, we'll have the two Great Commandments covered. Besides, this is such a great place for prayer to begin. If I had to pick one prayer out of the innumerable requests people make of God as "Most Likely To Be Granted," the prayer for a greater love would be my choice every time.

It's in the Letters on prayer that Peter's own passionate love for God is most evident. Listen to his advice on how to avoid worrying about whether you're "doing it right":

> *[T]oo many people have thought it depended on technique, that one had to be proficient in some kind of method. How wrong they are. Prayer is not a matter of technique … Prayer is an exchange of love.*

When I read that, I did a little mental fist-pump and thought, *Yes*. It's not about getting stuff, even spiritual stuff; it's about allow-

ing God in, allowing God close. Again and again Peter invites us to intimacy with God, and shows that intimacy involves a glorious, almost shocking mutuality. Even our confession is an exchange of love: "[W]e respond to His forgiving love with our penitential love" (*Letter 11*, "Forgive Us Our Sins"). This exchange reaches its pinnacle in the Eucharist: "At the Communion we give ourselves to Christ as he gives himself to us, so that we may go forth in union with him." Here's another paradox: In the Eucharist the soul communes intimately with God, and yet "[t]he Eucharist ought never to be thought of as a completely individual act." We receive the Body of Christ *as* the Body of Christ, and not as little isolated cells.

Challenge

Christians have sometimes tried to evangelize by pretending that following Christ is easy and fun, downplaying that bit about carrying the cross. These Letters do not make that mistake. There's an entire Letter on "Fasting," which was so tough to read I had to put it down and make myself a snack. He acknowledges that Francis found pledging himself to a community to be a mixed blessing, and we likely will too:

> *Community is a risk … We cannot escape community. We can, however, go through life slithering and sliding in and out of different communities, avoiding responsibility and avoiding the commitment of total dedication.*

These are not the words of someone trying to make it look easy. But throughout these letters, there's a steady tension between challenge and support. You can see this in Peter's advice on how to "pray without ceasing": he makes a case for the Jesus Prayer, and then acknowledges that it's "easy to begin, and easy to forget." He advises people to begin slowly and realistically, and to be patient with themselves, returning to it anew when they forget. "Keep trying. It's worth every ounce of effort."

Peter also takes on a subject I wrestled with in *Following Francis*: "But I'm not poor … How then can I call myself a follower of St. Francis?" (*Letter 4*, "Poverty"). He admits that family obligations can prevent a person from renouncing their possessions. But whereas I reached that point and called it a day, Peter challenges us to ask ourselves what we'd do if no one were dependent on us; would we be willing to give it all away then? At this point, I'm ready for another snack. Or possibly a drink.

I can't resist one more example of how Peter challenges us. In the Letter on aridity, he quotes Thomas Merton: "The sacrifices that are not chosen are often of greater value than those we select for ourselves." Oh, how willingly I'd carry the cross if only I could design it myself. I'd like a nice light one, maybe Styrofoam, with plenty of padding where it would rest on my shoulder. Whereas the cross I've actually been given is, you could say, a righteous pain in the backside. But the commitment Francis modeled for us takes the cross of God's choosing, not our own. I'm like the spouse who says, "No, I won't get a job and help with the bills. But look, I made you a pie!" Peter is too realistic to downplay the cost of following Christ. But he, too, is a man in love. And because of that, he knows that whatever the price, it will be well worth it.

Organizational Meeting to Launch the American Province of TSSF,

April 25, 1968 at Little Portion Friary.

Those attending included: C David Burt (Mass), Rev. Fergus Fulford (NJ), Alvah and Anna Hoffman (NJ), Mona Hull (Mass), Rev. Hendrik Koning (PA), Rev. Robert Samuelson (TX), Rev. John Scott (PA), Rev. Edward Warner (Kansas City, MO), Catherine Welton (Montana), Rev. Robert Woodfield (CA), Rev. David Kennedy (Miami, FL), Bishop Charles Gaskell (Wisonsin), Justin Van Lopnik (Denver, CO), Rev. Gusweiller (NY). Among other action, Chapter voted for the Hoffmans to continue to serve on the Corporation. (along with Fulford, and Hull). This Corporation group replaced the Board of Directors that had been appointed by Father Joseph in 1962. Chapter wrote to the English tertiaries to note that they had accepted their Rule with Amendments to their Constitution as of 10/6/1967.

First Chapter Meeting April 25, 1968
bottom row: Br. David, Mona Hull, John Scott, Hendrik Koning. back row: Anna Hoffman, Edward Warner, Alvah Hoffman, Father Paul, C. David Burt, Catherine Welton, Robert Woodfield, David Kennedy, and Robert W. Samuelson

At the 1968 meeting, Br. Paul explained that all aspirants must write to the Chaplain General, Br. Paul, for the introductory literature; submit three copies of their Rule for approval and only then will it be sent onto the Novice Master or Novice Mistress. Moreover the Chaplain General would be the person who would approve all novicing and professions. When the Professed rewrite their Rules as a preliminary to renewing their vows, copies are to be sent to the Chaplain General for comment and editing.

Also at this meeting, former 1st Order brother, the Rev. Robert Goode (a.k.a. "Gooch") was made an "itinerant tertiary" whose job was to visit the isolated tertiaries in the middle and southwest of the country. He explained that "some of these tertiaries had never had any direct contact with another tertiary." The importance of his work could be seen from the fact that one eighth of the budget was dedicated to this work—a little less than was gifted to the 1st Order.

May 1971

At a meeting of the Pastoral Officers, the earlier officers were supplemented by the two Asst. Novice Mistresses, Marie Webner and Anna B. Hoffman, and two Asst. Novice Masters, Fr. Robert Goode and Fr. David Burt. Dr. G. A. Hoffman resigned as President because of health reasons [*Ed. He died five years later.*], and in August, his wife Anna resigned as General Secretary of the Province..

At the November 8, 1972 meeting, most of the roles and leadership remained in place but a discussion of the "draft Principles and Constitution" occurred which indicated that the worldwide TSSF organization was working on a universal Principles and Constitution from which the American Province would draw its own.

An International Third Order Chapter was called by the Minister-General to meet at Hillfield Friary in England for May 25-7, 1973 to consider the revised drafts of the Principle, and a Constitution. (John Scott, Mr. Peter Funk, and Mrs. Marie Hayes were nominated as delegates by the Standing Committee; John Scott was elected to go; and Chapter approved his election in May 1973.) In order to prepare for the International Chapter, a number of key individuals were asked to write position papers on various subjects:

C. David Burt (Concord, Massachusetts)—How may we best understand the Third Order today as indeed as an Order? What are those things which constitute an Order? What is the nature of our Profession and Vow? In what sense is the Third Order a Community?

Judith Robinson (San Francisco, California)—What is contemporary Franciscan spirituality? What do the traditional terms like Poverty/Chastity/Obedience or Humility/Love/Joy mean for Tertiaries today?

John Scot (Philadelphia, Pennsylvannia)—What should be the public stance of the Third Order today in its witness and outreach to an alien world that is increasingly secular and post-Christian?

Position Paper I. From C. David Burt, Concord, Massachusetts, January 11, 1973

To my Brothers and Sisters in the Society of St. Francis:

I have been asked to write this paper addressing the question, How may we best understand the Third Order today as indeed an order In other words, what are those things which constitute order? Closely related to this question are the two questions: "In what sense is the Third Order a Community?" and "What is the nature of our profession and vow?"

In attempting to deal with these questions, I feel strongly led to look for the answers in the life of St. Francis himself, and in the lifestyle of the early Franciscans. I believe that it is there that we shall find the credentials of Franciscanism that will guide us in understanding our present emphases and priorities as we attempt to live the Franciscan Gospel style of life today. After all, it is indeed the enchantment with the radical Gospel life of Francis that has attracted most of us to the Society of St. Francis, for we see clearly that he was probably the man who came closest in his life to living the life of Christ, and in Francis we are able to see a new Christ.

Br. David often says that the worst thing that ever happened to Brother Francis was canonization, being made a saint by the Church; the saints we can put on the shelf, we know where they are, and we can think of them as something other than human. Canonization makes us comfortable with them, and we don't feel we have to be like them. The fact of the matter is that Francis was a human being just like you and me. He was called to a radical following of Jesus Christ and so are we; he was Christ-like, and so should we be. We are called to be new Christs, each and every one of us, and nothing less than that.

C. David Burt (Professed 1966) Ordained Priest by Rt. Rev. Anson Phelps Stokes, D.D., Bishop of Massachusetts, May 24, 1968

The question, "Is the Third Order indeed an Order?" is not a new question for us. Historically speaking, it is a perennial question, reflecting a certain ambiguous position of the Third Order, in the Church and in Society. It was and is a religious Order, and yet it isn't and never has been quite like Orders of monks or nuns or friars, who live under conditions of absolute personal poverty, celibacy, and strict obedience. The Tertiary does not live in a convent or monastery and is not under the traditional structure of the "religious community". Hence the natural criticism has arisen that tertiaries are enjoying the best of both worlds, secular and religious, without total commitment to either.

The reason for this ambiguity lies in the origins of the Franciscan movement, and in the very free spirit of Brother Francis. It all began with Francis radically living the Gospel life. Then some people joined him. Francis didn't set out to found an Order, and you can remember that he was sadly impatient with the legalistic rules and regulations that later were to become the structure of the movement he started. He formed a Community, not an Order; an Order was a juridical concept that was imposed on that community by the Church. Without making any judgment about whether or not this was good to have happen, I simply ask that we see it as a fact, and start from there. When the juridical concept of Order became superimposed on the Franciscan movement, it naturally had to cover the various lifestyles that were already emerging, e.g. friars, nuns, and men and women living in the world. Francis was not about to exclude the latter; so if there had to be an Order for the friars and nuns, there had to be an Order for the others as well. Hence, once we were all one Franciscan Community, but then we were "sorted out", as it were, by the Church. If you look at the early documents of the Third Order, the Rule of 1221, for example, you can see that it was indeed an Order. It enjoyed legal status; there was a rule of life; and there were constitutions binding on all members. That rule is very legalistic, however, and far from what we would call the spirit of St. Francis, which may be only to say that to become overly concerned with the question of whether or not the Third Order is really an Order, and to become scrupulous in drawing up documents defining the life

and so forth, is to engage oneself in distractions, and to avoid the central message of Franciscanism, which is the living of the Gospel lifestyle in the spirit of St. Francis.

At least in part, the question: "Are we an Order?" needs to be posed, because of the resentment expressed about the Third Order by those outside it. Historically, Tertiaries enjoyed some of the privileges of religious, without really being so, technically, in the minds of the people. For example, they claimed exemption from military service and from making oaths, and resentment of this was quite natural. The history of the Third Order of O.S.F. up to the time of union with S.S.F. is a case in point. We had many of the externals of being religious, e.g. religious names and a habit, but we weren't really a religious community in the eyes of most people, which fact occasioned a lot of misunderstanding and resentment. While misunderstanding may cause much of this, Tertiaries have not been above criticism either. The situation seemed to feed a need that some people have to acquire credentials, and the discipline about the use of the habit and religious names was hard to maintain. Many people were just "playing at being religious", and the Third Order got a bad reputation because of it.

Since the union of the S.S.F. and the O.S.F., the names and the habit have been dropped. But for many, the problem still remains. We are still very hung-up on whether or not we are truly an Order. If we say we are Franciscans, we are almost embarrassed to add that we are only Tertiaries. We are concerned to feel that the credentials of tertiaries are on a par with those of the friars and the sisters, and somehow "better" than those of the associates, or associates of other religious communities. If this is what we are doing, we are sorely distracted, my brothers and sisters. We are no better off than the tertiaries who in the middle ages zealously tried to maintain privilege afforded usually only to "religious". The whole concept of privilege is in conflict with the spirit of Franciscan Poverty, and getting hung-up on whether or not we are an Order, is to become engaged in a massive identity problem. [*Ed. However, Father Joseph does describe the "spiritual priviledges" of the Third Order in both the 1923 and 1929 manuals.*]

Of course the Third Order is an Order; it has a structure expressed in its rule and constitution that enables it to fall under that definition, and that is all that really needs to be said about it.

But that fact is unimportant compared to the fact that it is a Christian community. In the Eastern Church, the concept of a religious Order is basically unknown. There are monks and nuns, but they don't think of themselves as belonging to this or that Order. They are just monks or nuns living in the communities of their monasteries. We might ask in the West, "How is this possible? Don't they have a rule or a distinctive habit?" If you asked an Eastern monk about his rule, he would probably say the Rule of St. Basil; but to think that the Rule of St. Basil has, in the Eastern Church, the place that Western rules have, is to be mistaken. The important thing in the East is the Tradition–the monastic tradition, which is a living thing inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit. The Rule of St. Basil merely stands in that tradition and is a part of it. There is a great variety of expression of the religious life in the Eastern Church, without the need for distinctive Orders. Perhaps this should be the model for the understanding of ourselves in the Society of St. Francis. We are all living in the Franciscan Tradition, and it is in so far as we are living in that spirit that we are truly Franciscans. As a community we can have a great variety of expression of the religious life; this is one of the virtues of having a Third Order; but we are a community in the spirit of Saint Francis.

What constitutes a true religious community? Often we make the mistake of answering this question with the word "Order", but I don't think that we should. The Desert Fathers were a religious community, but they didn't live together nor did they have a set of constitutions binding them into an order; and yet in so far as they were all living in the spirit of the tradition started by Anthony of Egypt and St. Pachomius, they were a community. The essential mark of that community was prayer; they didn't converse with each other, but they conversed with God; and this united them in a very beautiful community. After all, the basic and primary community we belong to is the Kingdom of Heaven made up of the unity of the communion of saints and angels: and the Church living in time and space God has graciously provided that it may transcend time and space, even, and be united through prayer in His Holy Spirit.

The Poor Clare's Fellowship of Prayer is a community, even though its members seldom if ever see each other, but its life as a community may outshine the Third Order in the eyes of God because the source of its unity is unconfused by other issues. The Franciscan life in the Episcopal Church began with a group of people praying; first there was the community and then there was the Order. All of us Franciscans should never forget that we are bound principally into the community of the Kingdom, through our baptism in Christ, and that this is the most important thing. Remember, Brother Francis didn't let his followers call themselves "Brother" and "Sister" because they were members of some elitist group; they were brothers and sisters of each other, so they would become better brothers and sisters to the whole of God's created order.

The Franciscan community that we are a part of is not restricted to three Orders, either; we are a part of the community of all people, past and present, who are united in the spirit of St. Francis. As brothers and sisters in The Society of Saint Francis, we are indeed a community; and we are, too, members of three Orders; but this fact lies quite low on the rungs of the ladder of importance. Sometimes we become so caught up with the importance of our commitment as a Tertiary, as a Friar, or as a Poor Clare, that we forget that this is only used by God to help us to be more committed to His total community.

Now, having said that we shouldn't become distracted by the questions about Order and Community, I feel that I should address the question: "What, then, should we be concerned with? What should we look to, as we define our present emphases and priorities for the living of the Franciscan Gospel style today?"

If we go about it by trying to draw up documents defining our position, we are only engaging in "blessed distractions"; we are missing the point of renewal. Clearly, Franciscanism is a form of God's renewal in our lives and in the Church. Through this, He is calling us to deeper commitment to Him. What is important is to get caught up with the Spirit of what it is all about. I have heard it said that we have to have a new set of "Principles" defining our position as a Society, and as an Order, so that people coming to us may know what

we stand for. Any set of Principles we could possibly draw up, will fall short of defining what the Society stands for, because you can't define something adequately which is spiritual. Give the person coming to inquire, a copy of *The New Testament* and any good Life of Saint Francis. Let him read that, and then let him come and talk with us about what it all means. Chances are, he may come with a deeper commitment to Christ in the spirit of St. Francis than we ourselves already have. The tradition of what Franciscanism stands for is a living spirit in men, and to define it on paper is to kill it.

St. Francis represented a style of observing the rule of life that he found in the evangelical counsels. You see the Gospel comes first. This style of St. Francis was to become a tradition. The preeminent note of this style is radical poverty; you can't escape that when you encounter Brother Francis. I know that one of the other Papers being prepared for the Chapter in San Francisco this spring deals with Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, so I won't go into that, except to say that if we want to know what is essential about the spirit of St. Francis and of Franciscanism, it is quite simply this: radical poverty in the Gospel lifestyle, and this is what we should concern ourselves about. If in any way we are avoiding that, we are not living the life in the tradition and spirit of Saint Francis: we are Franciscan in name only.

The practical conclusions that I see from all of this are the following: (1) We should see ourselves all as being in the same community: The Society of Saint Francis. (2) As much as we can, the three Orders should work together. Whatever we can do together, we should do; whatever we can't, should be mutually supported in prayer. As Tertiaries, we should see ourselves as called into community with the friars and nuns to offer the talents we have in a common effort that is preparing for the Kingdom of Heaven, and nothing less. (3) I would hope that as we experience renewal in our lives as a Society, we would be able to break away from the juridical preeminence of the First Order, and act more as a total community, sharing in the making of decisions and policies effecting the whole society; but I think we Tertiaries have to grow in commitment a lot before that will be possible. (4) If we can maintain the atmosphere of the first Franciscans, who were very free and unencumbered by legalistic superstructure, and if we can reflect that as much as possible in our community together as three Orders, we might well become the powerful force of renewal in the life of the Church that Francis himself was in his own day. (5) And finally, if we can understand that the only thing that distinguishes us as Franciscans in an Order, from the many people in the world who are led to God by the Poverello of Assisi, who are just as much Franciscan as we are, is the fact that we feel called to respond to God, by committing ourselves by means of our profession and vow to this life in an Order—then we may avoid the sin of pride that Franciscans are particularly vulnerable to. If we are called to commit ourselves as members of the Franciscan community, by means of profession in one of the three Orders, we are really no better off than anybody else. It is simply the response that we have to make because this is what we believe God is calling us to do. Our profession or vow is primarily a commitment to follow the Gospels in the spirit of Saint Francis, and only secondarily a commitment to after your name, or P.C. Rep. or T.S .F. or what have you.

Someone once said to a certain novice in the Society of St. Francis, "Don't be proud of the fact that you are a Friar; it's just that God doesn't trust the likes of you any other way." I suspect that this is the way it is with most of us. I'm quite sure that it is the way it is with me.

Position Paper II. Judith Robinson San Francisco, California Advent 1972

This paper is my own very private, very personal response to the voice of Francis of Assisi. I would never presume to try to convince anyone else to feel as I do. Every child of God must relate to Him in a different way, and I am going to try to tell about and share what I feel is my Franciscan vocation in terms of our vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and humility and joy. I am not a theologian and I'm sure I am leaving out much that is important and putting in much that is irrelevant. I can only talk about where I am now and that small piece of the vision of God that I see.

Poverty, the vow of gratitude, means two things to me. One is renunciation and moderate use of material things, and the second is detachment from material things, poverty of spirit. They are bound up together.

For one who lives in the world and has an income and dependents, struggling toward the ideal of poverty means sharing all that I and my family have with anyone who is in need. The idea is to put myself and all I possess at the disposal of anyone who can use what I have. My family: five children, husband, and dog, have chosen to do this by living in a poor inner city neighborhood, the Haight-Ashbury. We mean to share in the problems and rewards of our neighbors, and to share our resources with them. My husband teaches at a city high school, and not only shares his abilities with the kids he teaches, but shares in the frustrations caused by lack of supplies, materials, having to make field trips at 7:30 in the morning to the computer center because there is no money for a terminal at the

Redwood City Chapter 1973: C. David Burt (1), Warren V. Tanghe (2), Judith Robinson (3) and Br. Robert Hugh (4). C. David Burt organized the original Boston Fellowship and wrote one of the original position papers. Warren V, Tanghe was the prime mover in creating the original TSSF Provincial statutes. Both left the Order subsequently as well as the Episcopal Church. In the following years Judith and her family would be invited along with the brothers to initiate a 3rd Order and 1st Order in Trinidad and Tobago.

school. We are sharing the effects of the poverty around us, although we are not poor ourselves. Our three adopted children are from minority races, and we are sharing their heritage as they share ours. We hope to go to live in community so that we can give more of our lives. God has given us so much that we just simply can't give enough of our lives back to him. It turns out that the more I can give, the more I get back, and have to, in turn, give more. To do as Mother Teresa says, something beautiful for God. What a great way to think about life.

The idea about moderate use of things seems to me to be expressed by taking what you need and giving the rest away. Dorothy Day says the coat hanging in the closet belongs to a poor man. The Franciscan attitude toward money and material possessions, according to Brother Robert, is when you have them, rejoice and share; and when you don't, rejoice. We learn from our children about not caring about material things. They are very happy with ragged jeans and second-hand shirts, and I find I am laying my material trip on them. Our children seem to be much more detached from material things than we are.

Poverty of spirit to me means detachment, which means, God first. The command about leaving father, mother, etc. is just putting God before everything. Anything can be a hang-up and get in between me and God—religion, praying, people, causes. Any good thing can go bad if it comes between God and me. Detachment doesn't mean non-involvement with people or things. It makes greater involvement possible. Francis said not owning anything means that everything is ours to enjoy.

This is true of material things and also of people. I am far richer being able to enjoy beauty wherever I find it without having to possess it. And the results of being able to let go of things for me is a much greater enjoyment of life and people. A song says "freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose." And poverty means voluntarily letting go of things so I can be free to meet the world, without having to worry about my possessions. I feel most free when I'm hitchhiking with only a pack and sleeping bag. I hope to grow to that feeling in the midst of children, house, dog and truck.

Chastity, the vow of love. Certainly for me, chastity doesn't mean not having anything to do with the opposite sex. As expressed in the Principles very beautifully, it has to do with not using people for your own ends. Loving with your hands open. More specifically for me, chastity is a discipline freely taken on, limiting my relationships with others in a very small way so that I can love more people more deeply. Our friends have been having discussions about open marriage and open-ended relationships; and the Principles call us to be lovers of mankind. That means loving people with all of myself: spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It means being involved, and not putting a limit on any relationship. And risk and hurt and pain. It means seeing my children as God's children, given to me to care for, love, and let go, to grow in their own direction. To let them work out their ways of serving Him in their own way, not laying any of my trips on them. The same is true of my friends. Chastity means entering into every relationship with no expectations and no requirements. I feel I am asked to love without trusting in the continuation or growth of the friendship. I must not ask that my feelings be spared. I must not ask even to be treated honestly or gently. I must not ask for any commitment or promise. I must not expect or hope or wish for my love to be returned. I must just love, not wishing for a next time or hanging on to the past. And this open-handed love frees me to be fully present in every moment, to enter fully into a love relationship with everyone I meet.

I see two things that can happen to tempt people away from this call for total love. First is a false sort of detachment that claims to be able to love better without being involved. The fear of being hurt and exposed leads to holding oneself apart from others. Sometimes I can put on a mask of loving care and stay aloof behind it, and sometimes I just openly claim to be detached as the thing to do. It is a way to control others, saying I can do good for people, and take care of them, run their lives without risking myself. And it's not fair, because I can't advise anyone to do something unless I am willing to share in the results.

The other distortion is a way of controlling people by loving them, and saying, in effect, you can't hurt me because I love you, so you are obliged to treat me kindly and love me back. But it is still a way of controlling, and that is using people for my ends.

Chastity involves channeling energy into a particular form. For me it makes it possible to have a deeper and closer relationship because there is no need to think about working out any sexual involvement. I find a wonderful freedom in enjoying friendships with both men and women, and the rewards of loving in this open-ended way are so great that it seems the more I can love, the more I get back, and the more I need to love more. It is in giving that we receive.

Obedience, the vow of freedom. I have much trouble with this, being obedient, as every authority figure in my life can attest to. I just cannot obey like the corpse Francis talked about. The thought of giving up my will to another seems sick to me. Perhaps this is one of those mysteries of faith that will become clear to me later. On the other hand, the idea of serving God and submitting my will to His is something else. I have always found great sense, wisdom and comfort in the prayer: *O God the author of peace and lover of concord—whose service is perfect freedom*. Somehow God's will and mine always seem to match. All my life I have felt pushed and prodded in a certain direction and prepared by hammer blows and fire for the kind of work I always wished for but was completely unsuited for. I am learning to pray—OK God, this is what I want but nevertheless your will not mine. And also to say—God help me have strength to bear the pain, not please take it away. If that is obedience, perhaps I am growing into it. If what it's about is learning, to move with the current rather than fight upstream, it makes good practical sense. At the same time, accepting the flow of the river doesn't mean for me passively going along with the evils of the world as being God's will. I think God intends me to be a fighter and perhaps a prophet and to show His glory by serving the poor and binding up the broken. I think he gave me these five children and is giving me the strength and wisdom to raise them, and that it's all His doing and I begin to realize that I have absolutely no natural aptitude for motherhood. And I think that this indicates that if we bow our heads to the will of God in obedience, He will see to it that we have whatever is necessary to carry it out. I try to say: Glorify Your name, and please use me to glorify it. Make me an instrument of your peace. You know how Francis always talked about being such a great sinner, and we all say pooh pooh, well maybe he knew what he was talking about, and maybe by being obedient to the will of God and embracing that leper, he was given the strength to become what he became.

Humility. As we have all been told so often, humility is not a virtue one can strive for because as soon as you try to be humble, you aren't. I think humility is acting in a humble manner; much as loving is acting in a loving way. Acting in a humble way, for example, is a constant occupation in a family where there are many children; as I remind myself as I'm picking up clothes, scrubbing a floor, cleaning sinks and sweeping up dog hair and popcorn. Dorothy Day has written a beautiful meditation on the kinds of penance a mother does in the normal course of her days. For me this is being humble. I also think humility means being unjustly accused and not minding. Whenever Francis was scolded, he always congratulated the person for seeing him as he really was. It has taken me a long time to unravel that particular riddle because it seemed to have to do with being a pushover and a martyr and enjoying being walked on; but I see now that it is really seeing oneself as one really is: a small, unimportant, rather silly creature. Humility is seeing that I am just a single character in the story God is telling, and he can and will tell it without me, and my only claim to fame is to allow him to use me in it. Being humble means not taking myself very seriously.

Joy. My favorite story about Francis is the one about when and Leo were walking one night, cold, hungry and through a snow storm and he said to Leo, do you know what perfect joy is? When we come to the Friary and knock on the door and the brother comes and says, who are you and what do you want, and we tell him we are brothers, and he says you are thieves and liars and throws us out into the snow and beats us and closes the door on us—then if we pick ourselves up and say, he certainly knows what he is talking about and go off praising God—this then is perfect joy. And I know that for me, perfect joy would be if one friend doesn't write, and one friend doesn't call, and another is too busy to see me, and I can smile and praise God and go off singing—this then is perfect joy. If you think of all the things that are important to you and make you happy and you look forward to, and then you are without them, and perhaps even abused by them—then there is really just you and God, and nothing in between. And that is perfect joy.

Joy is the peace of God, and this is the heaviest trip of Franciscan spirituality. *Hymn 4437, They cast their nets in Galilee*: "Such happy, simple fisherfolk, before they ever knew, the peace of God that filled their hearts brim full, and broke them too. The peace of God, it is no peace but strife closed in the sod; Yet brothers, pray for just one thing, the marvelous peace of God." So many things have been said about this peace, which is not happiness, not ease, no guarantee of wealth or health or even survival. But this peace, this joy is so great that we are told to give it to others, and to say, peace be to your house. We offer each other a sign of this peace in every mass. There are no words to describe this mystery of our faith, no way to explain what is so perfect about this kind of joy.

This joy depends on nothing but God and our relationship with him. God's peace is total freedom. It gives us the strength to give up everything for him. It seems to me that this peace is the only thing worth having in this life, and this is the gift that comes when we can give up everything for God, when we become truly detached and poor in spirit. This is the pearl of great value; this is all we need. And when we realize it, this then is perfect joy.

Position Paper III. John M. Scott, Philadelphia

This essay is concerned to establish that we as Christians, let alone Franciscans, always confront an alien world, although we have not always been able to recognize that, and even recognizing it, there are alternative strategies for how we act. In giving a contemporary understanding of the conditions of life and the marks or characteristics of the Society of St. Francis, yet another commentary is added to the world-wide effort of our Franciscan community to make clear, first to ourselves, and secondly to the world, where we are coming from, and what our goals are.

1. How the World Is Alien

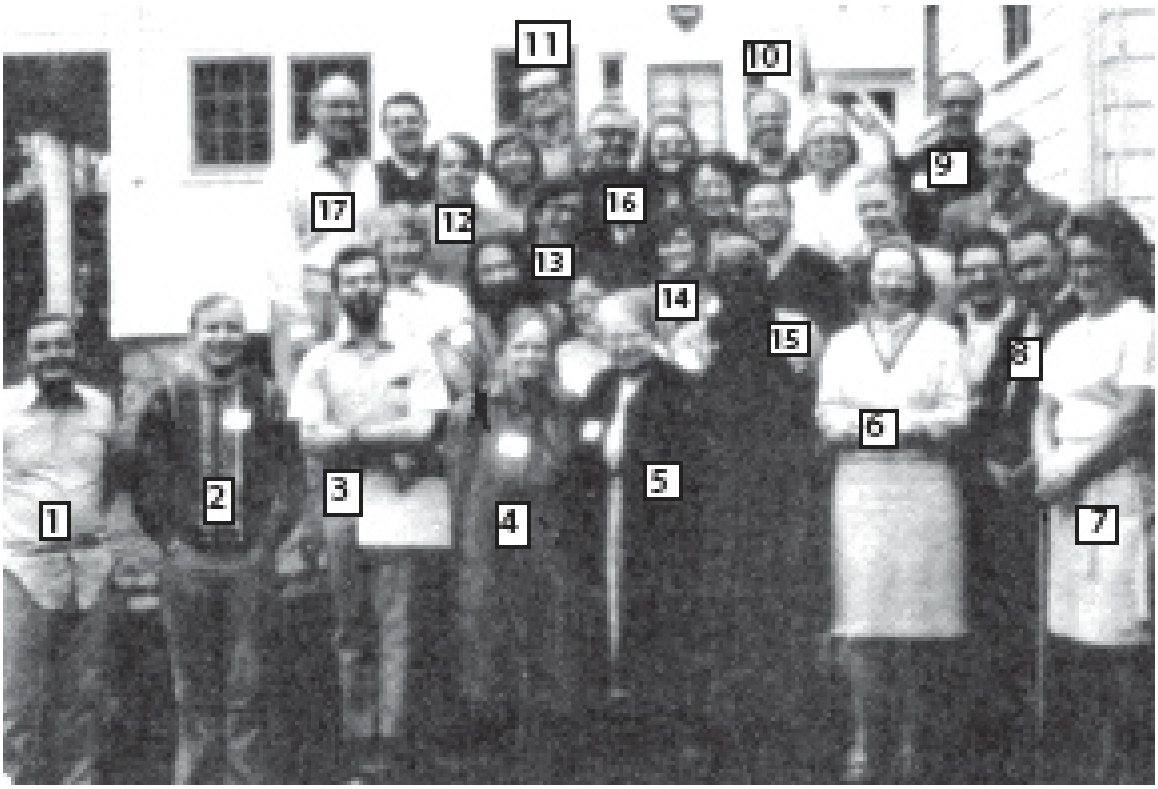
Some writers say that we are living in a post-Christian world. It is characteristic of that world that it is no longer the myth of creation, fall, and redemption in Jesus Christ that inspires and informs the mind, the art, and the aspirations of the larger society. Perhaps it has not been so for more than two centuries already. For instance, Kenneth Clark in his book and television series *Civilization* remarks that "Christianity was the force of Western intellectual life for a thousand years" until religion "collapsed" early in the eighteenth century. True, enthusiasm and revivals followed, but by the nineteenth century it was imperialism—economic, cultural and political—that led the way, and Christian missionaries followed.

Post-Christian implies that for most of the middle class and their leaders, Christianity is incorporated into the Victorian enterprise as one of the factors in developing good citizens; but the gods that have succeeded to the primacy wear the clothes of ever increasing technological luxury and wealth, and speak in the shrill voices of national pride and achievement. Being "Number One" in wealth and power is the goal, and it is measured in either or both consumer goods or military hardware with its capability for overkill one hundred times.

Br. Geoffrey, Minister General SSF, David Catron, Dee Dobson, and John Scott

Is, therefore, the Christian clinging only to a memory? The recent "death of God" religious phenomenon and the secular theologies have challenged that memory to its core; but even as they did so, they also challenged the culture of "Number One" wealth and power. At this moment there are signs of transcendent religion reappearing; those signs began in the counter-culture, but are now moving toward a degree of "respectability".

This is a VERY small photo that was hard to make out of TSSF Second Chapter, May 6-8 1971 at Little Portion. It appeared in the Little Chronicle, June 1971. Those who have been identified include in the front row left to right: (1) Robert (Gooch) Goode (2) Terence Mainardi (Friar Novice) (3) Warren Tanghe (4) (5) Anna and Josephine Keer (6) Helen Webb (7) Anna Hoffman (8)Alvah Hoffman (9) Kale King (10) Peter Funk (11) Br. Robert Hugh (12) C. David Burt (13) John Scott (14) Marie Webner (15) David Kennedy (16) Hendrik Koning (17) Robert Woodfield.



The theology most challenging to Biblical memory came from such Jewish sources as Richard Rubenstein: after the slaughter of the innocent at Auschwitz, who can believe in a god of justice who presides over the affairs of men? Its corollary is: had not Israel, the nation, better put its trust in F-l's? Yet, there are Jews who would believe that the existence of Israel at all is evidence that the vine, cut down and almost destroyed in the gas chambers of Europe, will shoot forth new blossoms.

For the Christian, there is a failure of nerve, of hope. Can the Christian, living for so long as a member of the majority in an expanding and powerful western culture, nurtured these last four centuries within a framework of individual responsibility and conscience, and democratic political ideals, but now faced with a world too large and complex to comprehend and manage, with a technological ability whose productivity is overwhelming, still believe in himself? that he is redeemable? that he is responsible for much in the world? Or is he all too ready to say, it is too much for me, and allow "father knows best" to take over?

When the nation votes for Richard Nixon, feeling that he and his ways personify national priorities, the people do so often knowing that those priorities are naked and ugly, but preferring to believe that the emperor is not really naked, but clothed and beautiful! That is the myth, which is strongest, the myth that says Number One is good, really, for all the rest of the nations and people, too, who must fall in line behind the power of the foremost. The individual conscience, long carefully nurtured in Western culture, faced with the myth–despite sin abounding–is seduced to silence by the soothing words of Big Brother. (This is not an attack upon Richard Nixon; it is doubtful that it matters who is President, given the power of the myth of Number One and the sheer complexity of the world's largest industrial nation.)

Such is the alien world. Yet there are those who, professing and calling themselves Christians, fall along a continuum which at one pole, identifies religion with the national myth and attacks those who are critical as the anti-Christ; and at the other pole, identifies the opposite: the national myth leads to death and destruction, and is the anti-Christ over against Him who proclaims and gives life, and that, abundantly! Those near the first pole tend to see religious beliefs and obligations as the structure that upholds the national myth, which identifies the goals of God and country as identical. It is the legacy of Constantine. Nearly every American president, from George Washington on, has tended to make the identification (not necessarily crassly or hypocritically at all, but consciously regarding the American republic as the heir of the promises of God to bring His people to a land of their own). However, history also shows us that the world into which Christianity came, held quite different views. It was the old Roman gods who upheld the Republic, and later, the Empire. The emperors began to claim more and more divinity for themselves, at the same time accusing Christians of subverting the whole enterprise, even bringing about its fall, as Gibbon later theorized.

Are, then, the Christians at the present time, who are near the pole of opposition to political claims, really going to bring down the myth of "Number One"? Is the contrast between belief in the Resurrection of Christ, and the embracing of the values of the Kingdom not of this world, actually going to bring down the nation whose technological abundance and productivity makes death the greatest

output of the Gross National Product?

The situation is confusing; it is hard to "get one's head straight" as the idiom of the day puts it; for those who are near that first pole of the spectrum I have described, the professing Christians who do not see, or refuse to see the nakedness and death of the national culture, are threatened (what else would one expect?) by those who do see that the "emperor has no clothes on", and have the audacity to keep pointing it out, even when some of them are dragged before courts and rulers and put into prison. There is tension, and the threat of schism in every major denomination or communion of the Church. The tension intensifies when the Daniel Berrigans and William Stringfellows affirm the Risen Christ and lay bare the death direction of the nation. It is very threatening indeed because they do it not as Communists, anarchists, nor organizers of political violence, but in response to the Gospel.

The death goals of our society have been unmasked ever since August 6, 1945 (The Feast of the Transfiguration, no less!) when many thousands of people were destroyed in an instant, for no other reason than the fact that we had the power to do it; claims about how many American lives would be saved, notwithstanding, since the war was virtually at an end anyway. Since that time, half or more of our national spending has gone into death-producing gadgetry, and as the decade-long war in Indochina reveals, the daily production of death has not ceased, either there or here at home. To say this is not a partisan political argument; it has gone on under both representatives of the two-party system; it is endemic. It is how our culture looks from a Gospel perspective. The apparent goals of the culture in which we live seem diametrically opposed to the motives of the founders of Christa Seva Sangha. They voluntarily risked their own deaths by embracing the way of living forced upon India's untouchables. "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul…He who loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's, shall keep it unto life everlasting."

1973 seems to be a year in which the contrasts will grow even sharper. At the same time, as the national and materialist myths seem so strong and powerful and Christians are confused and divided, there are signs of new life and the presence of the Holy Spirit, catching up a congregation here, a cell or commune there, youth in the vision of the joyful News proclaimed once again at Taize.

II. Franciscan Style in the Alien World

Christians are at the crossroad where a choice need be made; it may be a painful choice, but it need not call for immediate imprisonment or martyrdom. It does call for the recognition of that possibility, but neither to court it nor to shrink from it. We are to be "wise as serpents" as well as to be "gentle as doves", and to be on the move: strangers and pilgrims we are, and often enough, it is time to "shake off the dust from your feet". The tension about the crossroads is resolved when it is accepted as the context in which we live. Caesar and God are inimical finally; for Christians it is "heavenly citizenship", the Kingdom not of this world that is ultimate. Christian strategy, once recognizing the context, may vary as it certainly has throughout history, some times depending on how near the end of all things appeared to be, in the sense of chronos, historical time. Sometimes martyrdom has even been consciously sought as a way of hastening the consummation; but more often, Christians have sought to nurture and develop a life style that, while consciously opposed ultimately to the "system" of the world, provides an opportunity for proclaiming and witnessing the Good News, an opportunity for repentance and conversion, and to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men". The Christian affirms the Risen life which transcends the powers of this world, and the evidence we keep discovering about the environment of the cosmos in which we live seems to confirm that. Power and might, in the course of evolution and human history, prove inflexible and unadoptable in the long run; and lesser, meeker, and more modest values, flexible toward the future, are the real enabling agents for those who evolve. One thinks of the lowly little mammal who was unnoticed if one were to look at a landscape of dinosaurs. Who paid attention to Christian congregations at first, when the landscape was filled with imperial splendor? The way of Caesar and the way of the Cross are always the choice. No findings of fragments of the Holy Cross, or seeing signs in the sky, or announcements of champions FOR Christ, can ever make those two roads one and the same.

The style or posture of the Cross, the Order of Penitents as Francis termed his brotherhood, is marked by sorrow at the attraction of the false gods of wealth and power. Every child is fascinated with the dinosaur; it takes some searching to even see the tiny shrew whose descendants would inherit the earth. Likewise, the apple looks so good to us men, that we lose the perspective of the One who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Penitence is recognizing that loss. It is essential to flexibility and maturity and joy. It requires a sense of humor that transcends men's pretenses. It knows that always being "Number One" is a fatal illusion. Where there is no penitence, there is also no joy. Where there is no laughter at "Brother Ass" within, there is no fulfillment in the New Man. Where there is no movement through, over, or beyond the fences of race, class, wealth, or nation, there is no celebration at the Lord's Table.

Our friars have initiated a process of restating the traditional values, marks and characteristics of the Franciscan style of Christian living. Humility, love, and joy are the marks we strive for. Poverty, chastity and obedience are the traditional conditions we adopt, to allow those characteristics to develop and become manifest. Tertiaries are involved in the process, too; and all find restatement to be a difficult, albeit exciting, task. There are two reasons for this: first, and perhaps most important, is that those marks and those conditions are so basic to the spiritual person that there really are no substitutes, and synonyms are inadequate. Secondly, they have become fraught with misinterpretations, and are often rejected rightly because of such misinterpretations. Poverty is not squalor or a condition imposed by oppressive political and social order. There are such matters, as part of the fabric of our experience; but poverty means a voluntary act by which the follower of Jesus and His enthusiastic son, Francis of Assisi, take on a simplicity of living, and an embracing of the cosmos that is God-given. "Praised be brother fire, sister earth." Living in harmony with that cosmos (neither stagnating nor surrendering), not seizing and controlling and attempting to possess it or such parts of it as our power permits, for ourselves.

Likewise, chastity cannot be equated with celibacy or abstinence (with a begrudging concession to the married state), nor can obedience be equated with a hierarchical order in which there is a one-way street from the man at the top down through the ranks. One can readily concede that both of these demonstrate order, conditions of life, and the marks of Christian living, both from misinterpretations

and from confusion with the ways of the alien world. Until Constantine, Christians never had any doubt about that, although they may have differed about actively seeking martyrdom, or continuing to spread the Good News within Caesar's borders.

The models that Jesus presents are not hierarchical, but horizontal; where the Master serves, lays down His life for His friends, whose new commandment is that, His disciples "love one another". He tells us that we are forgiven when and if we are forgiving to others; that we should first be mindful of the beam that is in our own eye, rather than the mote in a brother's eye; that the one who is without sin cast the first stone; and that our inward desires and motives have as much to do with the quality of our relationships with others as the actual outward observable behavior. In the kind of community that grows up in Christ, it is mutual respect and love, and neither exploitation nor oppression of others, that are the relationships Christians live by. Such is the meaning of chastity. It embraces the marriage relationship, when the marriage partners voluntarily strive for the mutual respect just described, but in no sense can chastity simply have the negative meaning of refraining from adultery. Chastity embraces single persons who choose that as fitting their style and self-understanding; but, again, it is not a negative sense of abstinence and withdrawal from others. Furthermore, members of religious communities voluntarily take vows that give them wide opportunities of loving service to others, foregoing the exclusivity usually necessary to a married couple. Sexuality includes the whole of a person, male or female, and attention to specific acts of sexual intercourse, or the lack of such, should not be the primary focus of attention. Far more important is the adoption of the style and value of interpersonal relationships Jesus points to, and describes, not only in his teaching but also in his responses to the questions of particular persons, such as the woman at the Well of Samaria, the rich young ruler, the disciples, and the Pharisees. It is Francis embracing the leper, eating and drinking what is set before him, being "Brother Ass" when others need a way out of a corner. It is Francis' love and compassion for the little and the great, providing for tertiaries as well as friars, making room for Clare and silence, as well as the organization men who soon came to him, despite his own peripatetic ways.

The model of Obedience is likewise an internal one. It is respect for oneself; it is loving oneself because God has loved you enough to lay down His life for you. It is the recognition of God's place in an ever-changing cosmos of which one is a part; yet, simultaneously acting upon it. It is the recognition of one's limitations, our human finiteness, and of our responsibilities because we cannot help interacting with the cosmos. It is governance that we learn to practice, not domination and conquest. It is the voluntary decision to dialogue with God, that is freely made. Obedience is freedom from the demands of Caesar, Find freedom for the style of Jesus' kingdom, the "kingdom not of this world".

Obedience does not free one of responsibility ("yours is not to reason why; yours is to do and die"), but just the opposite. It is the taking of responsibility for oneself and one's interrelationships with one's brothers so that there is a mutual governance and neither anarchy nor totalitarianism in human affairs. Obedience is growing into the acceptance of responsibility within oneself and among men, not resignation of it to external powers.

If these be the conditions (poverty, chastity, and obedience) that lead to Peace, Love, joy: the fruits of the cultivation of the spirit, then there is an inevitable confrontation with Caesar in the alien world. "Do not bring us to the test, but deliver us from evil." We are surely going to be tested often by the demands of 'Caesar, but each testing may not be THE test: the one of life or death, of martyrdom or the triumph of Satan and evil in us, or the triumph of the Risen Lord. Do not bring us to that, even though it is never escaped, inasmuch as we all come to the point of death. "For death our sister praised be from whom no man alive can flee. Woe to the unprepared! But blest be they who do thy will and follow thy commandments still." The confrontation with Caesar, Or Satan, or Mammon, is certain and death is certain. (Incidentally, taxes may be the ground of the confrontation. One of my correspondents on the spiritual life, reports making a visit to Matthew Kelty, a priest who was long Thomas Merton's secretary; and after hearing her explanation of her spiritual quest, simply asked her, "Are you prepared not to pay taxes?")

Jesus' famous answer has often been given a simplistic interpretation by the friends of Caesar. But if it is heard more carefully, it is no neat formula for the good citizen, by which he can happily compartmentalize his duties to God and country, and think that they are harmonious! —some of the collects of the Book of Common Prayer notwithstanding. After all, however magnificent it is as the foundation of public liturgy, the Prayerbook was the product of a political establishment. Early Christians appear to have understood the inevitability of the confrontation; but they differed among themselves on the matter of strategy. The commonly accepted explanation (based, of course, on the Scriptures themselves) of the Book of Acts, is that the author believes it is possible for the Christian to get along in the Empire, and even take good advantage of its laws; the author is concerned to respect its "law and order", at least, until the showdown. Later, however, the cult of the martyrs encouraged some to seek direct confrontation and to praise the lions who tear them to pieces and grind them in their teeth! Which strategy is right?

There is no single strategy. Surely if the Good News is to be shared, and new communities in Christ to evolve, then time will be needed, and one is not compelled to run headlong into confrontation with Caesar; but, and it is a critical but, one must be prepared for the confrontation which, some day, can neither be avoided nor put off. In fact, it might have to be invited, but discerning the day or the hour is not our preoccupation. The Spirit comes as a thief in the night, and in that day, you shall know what you shall speak, for the Spirit will give you utterance. For three centuries, Christians and pagans alike in the Roman Empire knew how the game was played: would the Christians burn incense to Caesar as a recognition of his divine claims, or not? and everyone knew that they would not. Yet for only five relatively short, and not even generalized periods of time, did the imperial powers play their last trump card. For the Christian there was little question that the alien world was manifest in the Imperial City, and it was opposed to the way of the Cross that leads to the Good News of the Resurrection.

However, Constantine introduced an ambiguity over which Christians and the Churches in their councils and authority structures have stumbled ever since. Today the symbolic confrontation may not be over burning incense to Caesar's image; it may be over military

service or at the point of paying taxes. It may be over war (although for a Franciscan who prays, "Let me be the instrument of thy peace, O Lord" there should be little problem about rejecting war). It may be over the oppression of man (or woman!) by another, be that in a racist, profiteering, or totalitarian form. It may be over the environment, and how we live within it and share it; it may be over the very minds and consciences of humanity which allow the freedom to put off Caesar and the Old Man, and to put on Christ and the New Man, be he the Christian believer or the man of the Spirit in another tradition. Whatever we freely choose in obedience to Him who humbled himself even There is no single strategy. Surely if the Good News is to be shared, and new communities in Christ to evolve, then time will be needed, and one is not compelled to run headlong into confrontation with Caesar; but, and it is a critical but, one must be prepared for the confrontation which, some day, can neither be avoided nor put off. In fact, it might have to be invited, but discerning the day or the hour is not our preoccupation. The Spirit comes as a thief in the night, and in that day, you shall know what you shall speak, for the Spirit will give you utterance. For three centuries, Christians and pagans alike in the Roman Empire knew how the game was played: would the Christians burn incense to Caesar as a recognition of his divine claims, or not? and everyone knew that they would not. Yet for only five relatively short, and not even generalized periods of time, did the imperial powers play their last trump card. For the Christian there was little question that the alien world was manifest in the Imperial City, and it was opposed to the way of the Cross that leads to the Good News of the Resurrection.

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Inasmuch as the climate in which most Americans and other heirs of western culture like ourselves grew up, was the ways of the nineteenth century, the age of empire, manifest destiny, and the subduing of the earth—Franciscans are called upon to understand the alien nature of the world ("the world knew Him not", in fact, "hated Him" as I John puts it), but not to cringe or hide in fear; but to love and embrace those whom the world rejects; to laugh and sing (the symbols of transcendence), to seek peace within the environment of the cosmos—peace among men, and between men and nature, to celebrate the cosmos, the gift of God in which we dialogue with Him and our brothers and take part in the evolution that leads to His Banquet Table, the endless Sabbath that fulfills our being: not the post-Christian world, but pre-Christ's coming again!

Chapter 1973—A Turning Point (210 in the Order)

Br. Robert Hugh was reappointed as Third Order Chaplain, and he observed that the Office of Chaplain was becoming—more like the current understanding of the Office—more pastoral and less administrative (Minutes of the 3rd Order Chapter, May 1973). Thus an officer was needed to handle the administrative aspects what previous 1st Order Brothers had done as Chaplain. Thus Chapter decided to define such an administrative role by the title of Guardian, and Chapter elected John Scott to be this new official termed a Guardian. Thus far, however, Provincial Statues defining offices, terms, roles, etc. had yet to be created, and Chapter asked Warren Tanghe, a member of chapter, to draft such a document for review and approval.

Letters to His Friends by Brother Paul SSF

As he was dying, Brother Paul wrote a number of inspiring letters to friends. In 1980, the SSF published a small booklet which collected many of these letters. This is one of them.

March 1978

This September I will be 74 years old. It has been a very happy life. It has been very fulfilling and rewarding. God has indeed been very good to me. I have enjoyed the sights and the sounds, the friends and the work.

But the last few years I have begun to realize that this journey is a pilgrimage, and I long for journey's end. When I was a boy away at school, it seemed the Christmas holidays would never come so I could join old friends and my loving family. And, oh the excitement and joy of the trip back home!

It seems to me that death is like going home for Christmas. God is our all-wise and ever-loving Father, and, to die, is to return home to his love. He is love. His love is a free unearnable gift and given for all time. It is true, of course, that he is also Judge,—but he is Judge and my Wise and Loving Father. I can trust his judgment as I trust his love. And this I know: he loves me!

In January I had an emergency prostate operation. It was cancerous and the cancer has spread apparently to my whole bone structure and to one kidney. Where else it may be I do not know and, frankly, I do not care.

I am delighted because I can see not-too-far-ahead that journey's end for which I have waited. My bags are all packed and Christmas is coming! Whatever time of year God calls me, I will be going home for Christmas. It will be a Merry Christmas. Rejoice with me–and pray! I love you.

Affectionately, Paul, ssf

Br. Paul died December 27, 1979.

Province of the Americas at Hillfield Conference, 1973—1st International TSSF Conference: John Scott (circled at left back in both pictures), Br. Robert Hugh (circled center in left photo, back at left), Br. Geoffrey, Minister General, SSF (center in right photo)

G. Alvah Hoffman first "President" of the Third Order Committee died in 1976. Anna H. Hoffman first Secretary of the Committee died in 1981.
They are both buried in the Third Order section of the cemetary at Little Portion.