

## Chapter 5: Kale King, TSSF Guardian 1980-81

*Living the Gospel Now Conference  
at Hillfield Friary, 1981. Left to  
right: Dee Dobson; Br. Robert  
Hugh; Kale King; Archbishop  
Robert Runcie*



In 1980, Kale King, Dee Dobson, Helen Webb, Deane Kennedy, and Marie Webner were each nominated for Guardian of the Order—King won with Dobson and Webb coming in very close, unlike John Scott’s former landslide elections. For Chapter: Dee Dobson and Marie Webner continued with Keith Ackerman, Dorothy Nakatsuji, Jane Ellen Traugott, Lee Malloy, and George Metcalf. Peter Funk withdrew from all nominations.

### Biography

*(This is part of a series of essays entitled “My Franciscan Journey” done by members of the Land of Sky Fellowship in 1993)*

While in seminary—though having met no members of a religious community—I was being drawn to find an Order with which I could associate in some fashion. I was looking for “Anglican” and “American,” but I was also attracted to the kind of itinerancy one finds in the life of Francis of Assisi. The stability of a monastery life was not really interesting. At the time the Order of the Poor Brethren of St. Francis, the Greyfriars, was very much rooted in monastic life at the Monastery of Little Portion, Long Island. I had inquired about some kind of association, but there was nothing attractive.

Just as my class was leaving seminary an underclassman told me about an English order, the Society of St. Francis. In time I found their address, wrote to the then—Minister, Brother Charles. He replied that since there were no SSF friars in North America, there was no possibility for an SSF Third Order. A couple of years later I discovered that there was an SSF friar in Canada, due north of where I was serving. In writing to him I was sent a copy of the *Third Order Manual* (see page 54), and I wrote my first rule at St. Francis-tide 1956. He suggested that the rule be “tried for a year and reported on from time to time.” However, by the time I sent off my first report, I discovered that he had already left the Society, and so I was “high and dry.”

Three years later I wrote for the *American Third Order Manual* (see page 13). It required assent to “Our Credenda as a treaty of peace and basis of the spiritual life.” (see pages 8 and 10) While I had no difficulty with most of it, several points put me off despite that they were to be taken as “pious opinions” rather than *de fide*. I did not follow through with the Third Order but, instead, became a Priest Associate. In early 1966, Brother Stephen OSF visited Idaho and assured me that the Credenda was no longer adhered to, and so I applied to be admitted as a postulant of the Third Order. The English Society was not completely out of the picture because I had met Brother Michael, SSF, when he led a week-long mission at St. Stephen and the Incarnation, Washington, D.C., in 1964. But, for the time being I had to be satisfied with this American Franciscanism. I was made novice by Brother Michael Thomas OSF, a member of the same class as Brother Mark Francis, and I was given the name in religion Boniface by Brother Paul, OSF, who directed the tertiaries. A year later Brother Paul succeeded Father Joseph OSF, the father founder, and my first formation director, and the American and English Franciscan bodies merged to create a Franciscan body for the entire Anglican Communion.

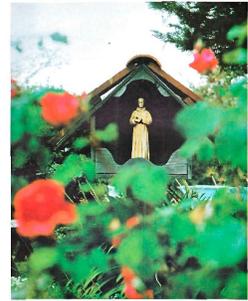
The merger of the First Order brothers led to the merger of the Third Order and its first gathering at Little Portion. At Brother Paul’s invitation, I attended the 1970 chapter-in-the-making and was somehow appointed or elected to the body and was a member for the next ten years. I was even elected Guardian in 1979, but a year-and-a-half later I resigned as the result of unrecognized stress and tension that grew out of serving the Church in Montana. However, I was fortunate, as Guardian, to attend the second Interprovincial Chapter, at Hillfield Friary in 1981, and the GOSPEL NOW Conference called by Brother Geoffrey SSF. I had also attended the 1976 Interprovincial Chapter at Bishop’s Ranch, California, and met representatives from the African, New Zealand, Australian, and English provinces. All the association over the years with the many American friars, and, later, the English friars, thoroughly convinced me that this was a religious body I truly needed and wanted to associate with. The GOSPEL NOW Conference affirmed that even more as we met with representatives of the First and Third Orders from around the world and considered how we might make the Gospel operative in our lives NOW.

I am richer in my spiritual life for having known personally Brothers Stephen, and Paul, Robert Hugh, David and Geoffrey and, to some extent, Brother Michael and, by correspondence, Father Joseph. I am richer for having shared the life of the Third Order with Peter Funk, my first formation director, John Scott and Dee Dobson, Guardians, Ken Cox and Alden Whitney, Formation Directors for Men, Robert “Gooch” Goode and Masud Syedullah, Provincial Chaplains, and a host of others on Chapter and throughout the Order. I am richer, for having become acquainted with the English Society’s foundations in Brother Douglas and Brother Algy, and the American Order’s in Father Joseph, and shared something of their vision for Franciscanism in the Anglican Communion.



*Probably at Chapter, Little Portion. From L to R:  
Marie Webner, Br. Stephen, Dee Dobson, Kale King,  
Muriel Adey*

*As Provincial Secretary from 1971-78, Helen Webb edited the Franciscan Times from 1971 Issue 1 to January 1978 Issue 23. Her version of the Times was primarily filled with items of provincial-wide importance, the articles were long and substantial, the printing was a kind of quick-copy effort, and there were few if any pictures or illustrations. In 1978 Peg Shull began editing the Franciscan Times and continued to the Epiphany-tide issue in 1981. The Epiphany-tide issue pictured opposite was probably the handsomest issue ever produced of the Franciscan Times. It had color photographs, long feature articles, was typeset by a printer...and its single issue went 30% over the whole year's budget.*



Vol. I, no. i.

Epiphany 1981

## Resignation as Minister Provincial, August 1981

*Kale King*

Please come to the next meeting of the Third Order Provincial Chapter, in Seattle, 9 -10 November 1981, and be prepared to elect a Guardian to complete the two years that remain of the present Guardian's term, in accordance with the Provincial Statutes, II D 6. It was pride that let me accept the nomination and that led me to think that I had the time, the equipment, and the assistance needed to carry out the functions of the office. I wanted to believe so much that I was being obedient. Some of you for some time have been aware that I have not been fulfilling the expectations of the office. You were all too gracious in not speaking up. Those of you who have been praying that somehow it would all get straightened out for the good of the Order can now turn your attention to the election that lies ahead. The time has come to face reality.

I do hereby submit my resignation as Guardian of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis, American Province, effective at the conclusion of the 1981 meeting of Chapter in Seattle.

I shall concentrate these last three months in bringing about the successful gathering of Chapter and Convocation and the 800th anniversary observance of Francis' birth. Only those actions that must be made before Chapter will be taken, deferring all others until the new Guardian can assume the leadership.

My deepest thanks to those of you who have given me encouragement and a great deal of support. I must admit that Brother Geoffrey is correct in questioning the holding of this office by one who is an isolated tertiary. At least this tertiary, who has been isolated from the beginning of postulancy, sees how being a part of a fellowship would have made the office easier to fill.

The Chaplain should also plan to appoint another Area Chaplain for Idaho and Montana and the Novice Director should plan to transfer those reporting to me to another Counselor and remove my name from available Counselors. After eleven years I am tired. Chapter meetings and the one Convocation I could attend have been the only Franciscan fellowship I have had; my wife has had none except by telephone and letter. The annual gatherings will be missed, but it is time to go back to the ranks.

### Response From John Scott August 30, 1981

Your letter of resignation arrived a few days ago. I will admit that I was feeling some concern that no special mailing had come for the Seattle meeting, but I was very glad that you did get to the Interprovincial meeting in England, and I was looking forward to hearing more about it. In the back of my mind I have expected to get to Seattle, and perhaps it is more important to make definite plans. Certainly no one is indispensable, but isolation and distances are problems for the individual as well as the Order.

What concerns me the most at the moment is you yourself. Guilt can be such a drag and enemy. Please do not feel that you have let anyone down. It is always a two-way street in the matter of support. I know that I felt like I had left you to grab the helm midway between chapter meetings and by the time I got to the Ranch last year realized that the transfer had been too abrupt and at the wrong moment in the sequence, and I felt guilty. Thank God the Lord can see it all and find ways to make up for our boners. But it is not only the matter of your feeling the necessity to step down. It is again you—and Amory—not feeling that the only option is to accept the isolation. As a matter of fact, you haven't entirely—Muriel and Lionel were with you for the big eruption last year, isn't that right? On the other hand, I know full well the feeling of being tired, and needing to let go of something, and nothing contributes to tiredness more than the frustration of not being able to deal with whatever situation the way it seems to demand....

### Response From Chaplain Robert Goode (Gooch) August 31, 1981

Sorry to receive your letter, but glad if you feel relieved of something unpleasant. It takes a lot of courage to write something of that sort—though I think you have always vastly underestimated yourself.

You've always been a good peacemaker and have kept our meetings down to earth and full of humor.

We all do understand and don't think any less of you....

What are your thoughts about a successor? How about Dee [Dobson]?

### Handwritten note from Kale

*That we have managed to get to this point in the Chapter meeting and Convocation is the result of Dee's patient prodding, and Helen Webb's relentless loving correspondence and telephoning, though at last she may have conceded defeat. All who have prayed so hard and so long were the power, I'm sure, to help me over some hurdles I could not face.*

*But that is now largely behind us. We have a new Guardian who has carried a heavy load as bursar; she "knows the ropes." To Dee I can only say "You have my support, my prayers, and my encouragement, and my thanks."*

## Response from Br. Geoffrey, Minister General, SSF

September 8, 1981

Thank you so much for your letter announcing your retirement as the Third Order Guardian. It was such a joy to be with you at the Conference at Hilfield, and I do thank you for the enormous contribution you made. Being Guardian, as you have discovered, is a big and demanding job these days and, as you say, you have not had the time, equipment and assistance necessary to carry it out. Also, quite apart from that, I believe that in such a widely scattered province as America, the Third Order needs to have its main officers within fairly easy reach of one another because of the necessity of frequent communication. It is not easy to carry out the function of Guardian when this is not so, and I hope, personally, that when the new officers are elected at the Chapter this will be taken into consideration.

I do very much hope that you will not fade out altogether. You have much loving wisdom and concern, which we all need. While it is perhaps right for you not to be Guardian, I do very much hope that you will continue in some pastoral capacity as possibly novice counselor, etc. So much of novice counseling has to be done by letters due to the distances and therefore you may feel you could not do this, so please do continue to offer that at which you are best—the pastoral care of souls. I understand your tiredness but maybe after a break you will feel refreshed and able to take on this further ministry.

## Seattle Provincial Convocation/Chapter November 9-10, 1981 (St. Thomas Center)



*Br. Alan Barnabas (Province of Australia), Keynote Speaker*



*Novice Directors: Ken Cox (Men) and Glen-Ann Jicha (Women)*



*Br. Robert Hugh and Amory King*

*The Gospel Now* was the convocation theme. Br. Robert Hugh and Sr. Cecilla both spoke in addition to the keynote speaker.

*Left to right: Robert (Gooch) Goode, Marie Webner, John Scott, Bill Smith, Dorothy Nakatsuji*

## Response From Lynn Bowdish, September 18, 1981

...I wish you had not come to this decision. I have been and would continue to be very happy and content with you as Guardian. You are one to whom I can turn to and respect. I have appreciated your gentleness and loving approval. What the Order needs are these qualities—not an efficient and officious machine.

I have not been aware of any unhappiness on the part of any tertiary. I do not agree with Br. Geoffrey in questioning any tertiary's ability to be convenor, Guardian, or whatever. One does not choose to be isolated when it is a matter of miles as with you. I can accept that and support you. Only when some tertiaries—in the midst of others—turn their backs on their brothers and sisters—do I get impatient.

I feel a lot of pain in your letter. I wish that were not a reality. You continue to have my love and support—and prayers. I would hope that you would reconsider your decision to resign as Guardian. It is right that you cannot do all that you were doing. Even Jesus Christ would have difficulty with this institutional structure and all the paper work we create for ourselves. No one can be everything to so many. If you were to just give up Area Chaplain and Novice Counseling—and just be Guardian—is that a possibility? In a sense, it's not your failure—it's ours. We have not given you the support you or any other person needs. Being in a fellowship is not a cure-all. It brings with it as many curses as it does blessings. That should not be a determining factor.

Know that I and so many others love you. Do not let guilt pervade your life. Remember that Jesus thought he was a failure on Good Friday.

*Kale King and Gloria Goller (local arrangements)*



*Back to front: Robert (Gooch) Goode, Dee Dobson, Glen-Ann Jicha, Dorothy Nakatsuji*



## John Dorman, Missionary Priest of Upper Mazaruni and Upper Cuyuni Region in Guyana

### My Choice For National Heroes

Keith R. Williams (*Guyana Gazette*, May 31, 2006)

*The criteria for heroes set...are virtually unreachable in Guyana...But never fear, I have two more names for you and, although I am not sure of their mortal status, they will always be heroes in my book.*

*(1) The Reverend John Dorman, MS, an Anglican priest who dedicated his life in Christian service to those who got the least attention from officialdom. He crossed waterfalls, blistering savannahs, and negotiated obstacle-strewn and virtually impassable mountain paths in order to serve the peoples of the Upper Mazaruni and Upper Cuyuni Region. And he did so always with a permanent smile on his face and a jovial: "Well, hello, how are you?" to all he encountered in passing.*

John Dorman was a United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) English missionary priest in the interior of Guyana for 38 years (1957-95). He was professed in the Third Order while Kale King was Provincial Guardian (November 18, 1980), and Dorman died on July 18, 1998. The Rev. John F. Twisleton (Chichester Diocesan Mission & Renewal Adviser, formerly Principal of the Alan Knight Training Centre and Council member of Guyana Diocesan Association) reviewed the biography of Dorman, *Old-Style Missionary: The Ministry of John Dorman, Priest in Guyana* (Derek Goodrich, Taverner Publications 2003—in our Online library). Twisleton's review is a very good summary of Dorman's heroic work:

The word 'missionary' is an uncomfortable word in a world so aware of the variety of cultures and religions. We doubt the unique claims of religion. We question whether human well being is advanced by religion. We are particularly uncomfortable with the British colonial legacy and its associated commendation of Christianity.

Derek Goodrich and John Dorman are part of the rich legacy of service the Church of England has provided for the Diocese of Guyana. In *Old-Style Missionary* the former salutes the latter in a well produced book depicting a life of missionary service set within Guyana's indigenous Amerindian community. The 124 pages with 30 illustrations and fascinating stories of life in Guyana's hinterland are valuable simply for being a rare record of the culture of the forest people in a time of tumultuous change. Beyond that, they capture the heart of a missionary whose conviction about Christ led him to build and not tear down, to serve and not to be served. In that sense this book is a powerful counterbalance to the negative overtones of the word 'missionary' in today's world.

John Dorman first went to then British Guiana in 1957 and served there almost continuously up to his death in 1998. Like many expatriates he redeemed his spare time in correspondence. Canon Dorman's letters have made Fr. Goodrich's task all the easier. They have also been a rich source of encouragement, challenge and guidance to many over the years. As my own reflection makes clear at the end of the book, I am one who would never have come to visit Guyana had not a letter arrived one day in his familiar, closely woven script. Writing in 1986, John asked me to prayerfully consider joining the Company of Mission Priests team in that land to serve the training of Amerindian priests. I could not find an excuse; such was the spiritual force of John Dorman on occasion!

The need for indigenous priests is demonstrated by one of John's tours of the Rupununi region, before we ran the Alan Knight Training Centre, when he baptised more than 100 children, gave Holy Communion to over 1000 and heard nearly 100 Confessions. It was primarily through John's initiative that the Amerindian communities today have almost 20 priests so that the sacraments are now available to all Guyanese, even those in the remotest parts of the rainforest.

*Old-Style Missionary* makes riveting reading. It begins with a shipwreck on the Essequibo in which John nearly loses his life on his way to take a Boxing Day Mass. He swims in the dark to safety on Calf Island where he says a Magnificat in thanksgiving. Writing from his hammock in the vestry at Kurupung, he speaks of the "paint on the walls still scarred by the blood the vampire bats have sampled from my great toes." Derek Goodrich describes how John was driven from the Mission one night by a pack of jaguars and on another occasion was arrested by the Venezuelan frontier guards on the pretext of teaching without authority on their soil, a trumped up charge fortunately soon withdrawn.

The missionary priest spends himself in much itinerant ministry: "Towards evening he would reach a Mission for Evensong, Confessions, Confirmation class, then sleep in a hammock, with Mass in the early morning. The work was endlessly varied in pattern and human need. It is concerned with carrying the simple riches of divine love to the simple poor people who need Him," John writes. "Could there be anything more at one with the work of the Gospel than a little boat full of silent and reverent people returning from their Communion, the priest barefoot in alb and stole sitting in the bow and carrying the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament for some faithful sufferer to whom the Lord travels as on the Sea of Galilee?"

Fr. Goodrich describes John's advocacy for Guyana's Amerindians who are faced with the challenge of integration with Guyanese society as a whole. Mining and logging ventures that damage their livelihood challenge them. The pollution of the rivers by dredging for gold remains a very serious problem. Fr. Dorman writes of how the Amerindians "at every point...live in two worlds, and more and more these two worlds are coming into collision with their own ancient way taking most of the knocks." When I used to visit him in Kamarang he was always deeply concerned about the heavy drinking and the video shops opened

for the mining fraternity and their effect on the indigenous people. The formerly tranquil community had more of the feel of the Wild West with young people being drawn into prostitution.

Between 1975 and 1983 Canon Dorman was involved in a successful international campaign against a major hydroelectric project that would have flooded the Akawaio homelands, including the sacred centre of the Alleluia Church. His refusal to condemn the Alleluia Church, which holds many elements of Christian tradition (but with no bible or Eucharist) contrasted with the negative attitude of other Christian churches. John succeeded in obtaining associate membership of the Guyana Council of Churches for Alleluia and encouraged his priests and people to hold joint membership. His largest church at Jawalla was built especially to accommodate the traditional Alleluia dance, which would accompany or follow the Eucharist on great feast days.

Fr. Allan Buik's funeral homily is quoted: "True to the best traditions of catholic Anglicanism, both in theory and in practice, he stressed the Creation and the Incarnation as well as the Atonement. His cherishing of God's creation and of the tribes among whom he lived earned him high respect from environmentalists and anthropologists as well as from Christians—Alleluia as well as Anglican... His devotion to his Amerindians could be paternalistic... (his) foibles were all facets of his love for the people to whom God had sent him, the people for whom he never stopped caring."

All through *Old-Style Missionary* there is witness to the infectious enthusiasm of its subject who drew out so many vocations to the praise and service of God including my own offering of missionary service. The quiet humility of John Dorman is echoed in the style of Fr. Goodrich which is unobtrusive, presenting material assiduously researched in a way that honours both his subject, their common Lord and their 'dear land of Guyana'

*John Dorman's Guyana*

*Religious accommodation finally became mutual: the Anglicans made a partial rapprochement with the Alleluia Church. Largely owing to the recommendation of a British Anglican priest based permanently in the Upper Mazaruni, Father John Dorman, the Anglican Church held an inquiry on the subject of Alleluia theology (Father Charles Roland TSSF, personal communication). Father Dorman traveled to Amokokupai to discuss the matter with Aibil-ibin, and the Anglicans' central concerns (whether the referent of Alleluia's "Jesus Christ" was in fact the Christian deity and the inclusion of a concept of trinity) were answered to the church's satisfaction in the affirmative. This inquiry was instrumental in the inclusion of the Alleluia religion in the Guyana Council of Churches.*

Susan Staats, "Fighting in a Different Way: Indigenous Resistance through the Alleluia Religion of Guyana," In *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996, p. 172.

The following is a short piece written by Dorman that captures his sense of the presence of God even in the most trying of circumstances.

"A View from the Lock-Up" (*El-Dorado*, magazine of the Guyana Diocesan Association, UK, 1972)

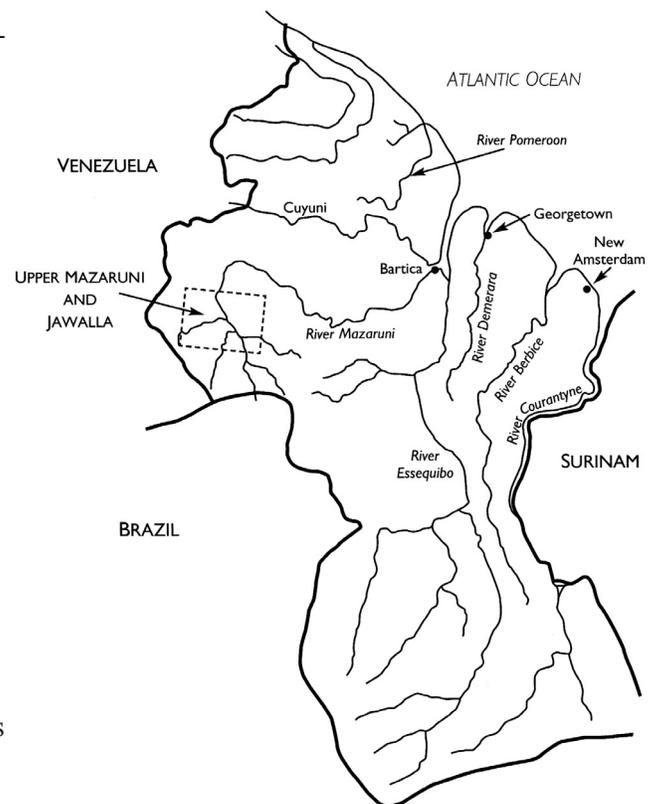
Dear Editor of *El-Dorado*, you gave me the task of writing about the church and work in our newest parish, Kamarang. It is the setting of an adventure of primary evangelism, in what is now our country's loneliest corner. I planned to write a prosaic factual account of the Cuyuni missions.

It would not do. This river is the real road, I think, to El-Dorado: yes, literally and spiritually.

Literally, its rock-strewn torrents pour between untouched gold-bearing hills, fed by sparkling brown-tinged streams where little nuggets and shining dust may still be found in the pools by the fortunate few. When you have travelled by engine-boat at least a week upstream from Bartica, you pass from Guyana into the "Spanish Main," and reach, one day beyond, the Cuyani's largest village, called El-Dorado.

Spiritually too: here they survive, few and almost untouched by the clawing paws of acquisitive "civilization," the calm, wise, gentle Amerindian people, to whom God has given the tropical forest as their teacher. They have learned their lessons there for unnumbered centuries, and theirs is the priceless treasure of a way of life so good that any visitor, not blinded by vanity, would want to walk himself among them to listen and learn its secrets. In tiny villages of

A MAP OF GUYANA SHOWING THE SITUATION OF BARTICA AND JAWALLA



Caribe people, poor as the poorest you dreamt of, yet their humanity glittering with the simple secrets that the great world has lost, the real “Golden Man” stands to meet the Church of God, and learn what more God has to give.

We cannot write that story yet. El-Dorado’s river welcomed the Church only six years ago, but the doors seem to be closing, closing against the world (which will batter its way in). The area becomes yearly more inaccessible and the little riverside villages are scarcely half as populated as they were when we came. Geography, economics, history are ready to say, “There is no El-Dorado—it was a dream.”

Mr. Editor, I arrived here at the river by plane, hoping to write you “the usual article” on the spot. However, the same evening, following a little military mistake (for which most ample regrets have been offered and accepted), I found myself in detention across the frontier, and what follows was written there.

Ambassador in bonds? Scarcely that: just another priest held prisoner on duty, to add to the hundreds or thousands elsewhere tonight in the same position.

Curious how patterns persist from Apostolic times. The circumstances, the pretexts, are often irrelevant to the errand, which is interrupted. But interrupted it is, though, as St Paul found, “the word of God is not bound.” It never is.

The soldier with his gun across his knees, who watches us through the open door tonight, while the noise of the barracks on a Saturday night makes sleep impossible, unknowingly speaks to me as plainly as the soldier to whom the Apostle was chained at Rome. His dull green uniform helps him remember he is only one of an army, serving a cause. One soldier in uniform is the army on guard. At the same time, his uniform helps each and all to blend into the forest setting of their service, so well that, with some simple skill, they can almost vanish from the scene.

I find this an interesting hint to the Church in Guyana, indeed everywhere. The common “uniform” of being disciples, which enables us to recognize each other—isn’t it Christ’s holy sign of the Cross, carried by us all with gladness as well as tears? This “uniform” is somehow the key to the Church’s unnoticed silent power in the world, the hidden yeast at work. Remember Kurutuku down the river, loneliest village I know; I can see Edwin the catechist and Dunstan the school-master asleep in their flimsy homes, among Christ’s beloved poor. Five years they’ve been there, two or three months’ mail-time from their own villages; just a hammock, a table, two stools, some books, the roughest meals over a wood fire, a smile for everyone, and duty done as God offers daily opportunity. They’re in the uniform of the Christian army, yet invisible to the world, unvisited, upraised, unprompted. This is the miracle of camouflage that the Church is using, to be everywhere, actively fighting evil, as an integrated worldwide force, yet invisible to the dictator who would crush it, or the vested interests who might try to harness it for the enslavement of men born to be free. I pray for the Church in Guyana, uniformed with the Cross.

As I look at this soldier again, just a few feet away, his uniform is somehow concentrated in his belt. Without it he would be an untidy, unprepared, uncouth figure. But belted, he is alert, proud, and ready for anything. The shining buckle is his pride, and the strong webbing gives him a real integration of purpose in his soldiering.

What is our belt, our golden girdle? A year ago when I was here in the Cuyuni, I had Winston [Williams] with me, a young Akawaio tribesman who, alone and unaided, persuaded the Guyana Youth Corps to release him from that training, so that he may fulfill the higher claims of God calling him to train for full-time Christian work. He came with me across the high savannahs and through the streaming forest valleys, northwards to a strange area, to serve as an evangelist on the very same island I was arrested on this afternoon. After that long three days’ journey, I had only one night to introduce him to his little flock—“This is my young brother, Winston, who will stay to help you come nearer to God”—and the next day after an early Mass, we waved goodbye, leaving him on the rocky beach with the tall trees behind him, as upright and strong as himself. He is belted with the fact of vocation; the certainty of divine commission; apostleship, if one dare claim that word for each such Christian, as well as for us all. How hopeless it would be if we left that behind.

I look down at the soldier’s boots. They must be costly, for the soft pliant leather is laced tightly half-way to the knee, against the hazards of jungle journeys, and yet they are smart enough, with their daily shine-up for the Presidential Guard on parade. St Paul’s phrase gives the clue—“Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Two months ago a young man I knew well was travelling, as his ancestors had done for centuries, from one side of this broad river to the other, from one country across the international water to the other. It was early morning, just dawn.

A rifle shot rang out, and he fell dead from the canoe into the water, shot through the mouth. Such unexplained

violence in a military zone has a terrible power to scatter an innocent population, whose forebears lived indifferently on one side, farmed on the other and fished between. But Peter, the fine old man who with his own hands built the beautiful church of St Faith, at Awatapati (two years' work for the glory of God) would not remove from the scene of the crime. The priest would be coming soon; the people must be here to worship with him. God would take care of them. Those who believe that Christ sends his Easter gifts of peace to the hearts of men must also pay the price to win peace in their homes, to cement peace among the nations.

I smile at the soldier in the lamplight, as I sit writing on the edge of the bed and the tense face relaxes into an answering smile. I bless him with the sign of the Cross, and after a moment of perplexity he understands and makes the holy sign himself.

It is night, and, though he is on duty, he has left his cap behind, till he needs it for tomorrow's burning sun. I am glad he has put it aside, for it lets me see him as a man, a brother man, his black lustrous hair somehow placing him not as a soldier, but in that category of which God our Father knows each one by name; just as in some Venezuelan village, perhaps overlooking the shining blue Caribbean as it sweeps west to Panama, his mother would not pick him out easily when the soldier boys come home on leave, marching in battalion pride to the little plaza—until they lift their caps to cheer. Then she can see him at once as her son.

I remember how many hundreds I have been allowed to baptize in this river since 1966: perhaps I could identify the adults by name, but the children, who nestled in my arm and smiled as the cool water flowed over their foreheads, I would soon be stumped for their names if they came in through that open door one by one. But the Church would not, because God could never forget, as a mother may, at times, even wish to forget.

There are many "caps" that are put on people in Guyana: racial prejudice, social stigma, economic injustice, divisions of inherited culture, home languages not shared, etc. But in the Church you come bareheaded, and each is seen as one to whom God says, "I have called you by your name, you are Mine."

I have still to think about his gun. This is a horror of which I have no expert knowledge. I could not name its parts, nor even explain their uses. Only I know it is made to kill. It is the symbol of fear, of human disunity. Yet one supposes he is proud of it, because it marks him out in the nation, as one who has been trusted with the arbitrament of life and death. In the last resort, life and death are his business.

Perhaps we may say that Satan gives him this ghastly duty, but that God allows him to bear it; just as Our Lord carried the ghastly Cross, the challenge was what to do with it, and He answered by transforming it into a means of life from death.

In a few years—who knows?—the Church in the Cuyuni may be dead. A village is uprooted by remote decree: a sect sweeps in to an illiterate people and with "high-powered preaching" overwhelms with arguments that they cannot read; a new industry is opened and a thousand years of hunting, fishing and farming go by the board. Whatever may come, we live and would die in the cause of Life: in little groups, men, women and children stand up to be counted for Him who is the real Life, along these lovely river banks and in the little islands among the jagged rocks.

What looks like doom is a challenge to jump up and face the darkness, for there is the true light beyond. It is now past midnight and the dawn will come: for you, Dunstan, Edwin, Winston, Peter, old Hannah with the patient smile, little Veronica with the face of the Madonna, all of you.

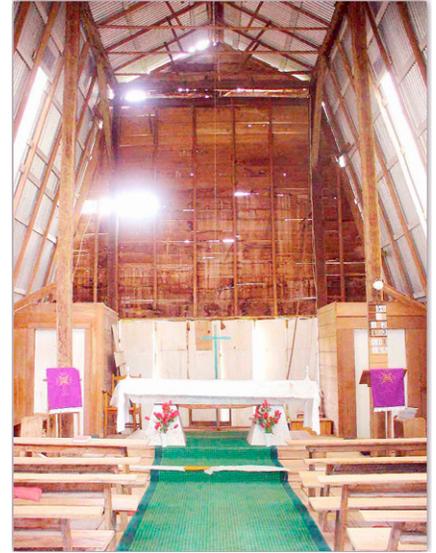
God bless you through the night till then.



*John Dorman at left along with friends at Kamarang*



*St. Francis de Sales Church in Kamarang — construction was completed in 14 working days in July 1969 with the assistance of 30 youth volunteers from Guyana, Bermuda, Georgia, and Maine during an International Student Work Tour. John's ashes are buried in the church's graveyard. (Stabroek News, July 30, 2009)*



*Archbishop Runcie and John Dorman at Alan Knight Training Centre*

## Chapter 6: Dee Dobson, From Guardian to Minister Provincial 1981-90

John Scott's era as Guardian saw plenty of precedents set and Provincial firsts. However, Kale King's resignation as Provincial Minister after only one year created a large, new precedent. Since his resignation occurred between elections, the Statutes empowered Chapter to choose a new Guardian to complete King's term. Dee was unanimously nominated in September, and was chosen by acclamation of Chapter to become the new Guardian.

### Dee's Lack of Vision?

In her very first report to the First Order after she had been Guardian for all of three months (from "Guardian's Report to the First Order, February 1982"), Dee made this curious statement: "I realize that our [First Order] Provincial would like perhaps a two or three page outline of a 'vision,' but I really do not feel that such an outline is feasible. We are all seeking the same goal, to be with our Lord in the way of Francis."

It takes a while to grasp what Dee Dobson achieved or fostered over her nine years as Guardian/Minister Provincial. Much of the heat in the conflicts of the John Scott era (women's ordination and gay ordination) were largely dissipated by the time Dee became Guardian. The union of two disparate Third Order Franciscan communities—separated by an ocean, and requiring a new constitution and statues—was finished. The long position papers on big topics or multinational reports from abroad were, for the moment, no longer being written. The central provincial or interprovincial focus of the *Franciscan Times* or *Newsletter* was eroded initially by budget concerns—the single Epiphany-tide issue during Kale King's term cost more than a whole year of issues. As the *Times* temporarily diminished in importance, an inexpensive monthly newsletter, the *Information Sheet*, began. (The complete run of the *Information Sheet* from November 1980 to June 1998 is scanned, available, and indexed on the TSSF website.) Moreover, the 1980s also saw the flowering of many newsletters written and produced by local fellowships. So in the 1980s, the *Franciscan Times* primarily became a pastiche of articles from these local newsletters rather than large position papers on big topics or multinational reports.

Parallel to all of this was the demise of the the Provincial Convocations. Chapter began to realize that the "Provincial" Convocations drew few outside the immediate area of where it was held. Moreover, Provincial Convocations were expensive to Chapter because they were underwritten by Chapter funding and controled by Chapter. Dee effectively stopped supporting Provincial Convocations after 1982. (The final Provincial Convocation during the John Scott era nearly depleted the Provincial funds. One more would be scheduled for 1982 in Seattle, but none until much after that.)

What replaced these Provincial Convocations were many Regional Convocations. Dee and Chapter found it easier to focus on the local and regional structures because the regional convocations could be led and funded by local groups of tertiaries without the need for control or funding from Chapter. Almost from the moment Dee was elected as Guardian, regional convocations began to occur. In 1981, convocations were held in the Northeast, in the Southwest, and five other regions scheduled joint retreats to mark the 800th anniversary of Franciscanism.

So whether Dee Dobson had a stated "vision" or not, the result of Dee's and Chapter's specific, pragmatic decisions effectively decentralized the focus of the Province to local and regional concerns. Consider, for example, the role of Fellowships in the Province. Originally there was little attention paid to Fellowships. However, the first mention of a Provincial Officer called the Fellowship Coordinator did not occur until the 1975 Provincial budget; only in the 1981 Chapter was a *Fellowship Coordinator* described, and it wasn't until 1983 that a draft of the *Fellowship Conveners Handbook* was presented to Chapter. Even as late as 1983, only 50% of the members of the Province belonged to Fellowships.

One can also track the relative importance of Fellowships by the size of the annual TSSF budget given to the Fellowship Coordinator ("Where your treasure is; there your heart will be.") Initially the financial commitment to Fellowships was relatively small: 7% of that given to the Provincial Chaplain and 50% of that given to the Area Chaplains. However, by the second year of Dee Dobson's first term, 50% of what was given to the Provincial Chaplain and 200% (later 300%) of that given to the Area Chaplains, was budgeted for the needs of the Fellowship Convener.



	Percent of Funds Budgeted for Fellowship Coordinator Compared to that Budgeted for Area Chaplains	Percent of Funds Budgeted for Fellowship Coordinator Compared to that Budgeted for Provincial Chaplain
<b>John Scott Era 1975-80</b>	50%	7%
<b>Dee Dobson Era 1982-90</b>	300%	50%



Dee and John at the New Orleans Provincial Convocation 1997

Yet for Fellowships to grow, they needed a leader, a champion for its interests. This is exactly what Dee Dobson proposed in her first Report to Chapter as Guardian in November 1982:

*As you know, Fellowships have been a concern. Some are hale and hearty and emulate Franciscan love, community and commitment. Others could, for the want of a better term, be called mediocre with sporadic showings of commitment. Still others - I can thankfully say, very few—can only be described as disasters. Marie Webner has graciously consented to be our Fellowship Coordinator. It is expected that she will chair a group to draw up flexible guidelines, guidelines that have been distilled from the input of Fellowships. In the future when funds become available, we hope to have a training session for Convenors. In the interim, Marie and I hope to meet with Convenors at regional convocations.*

## The Rise of the Fellowship Coordinator and Marie Webner

The position of Fellowship Coordinator, now a member of the Standing Committee of the Order, was not listed in the directory for the first six years of John Scott's tenure (1971-76). In looking for information about the characteristic activities of the Fellowships, Provincial Secretary, Helen Webb, had to survey the majority of existing Fellowships to find out what their meetings and activities were all about (*Franciscan Times*, December 1976). That same year, 1976, Marie Webner (26 years in profession) was appointed by Guardian John Scott and confirmed by Chapter to be the "Fellowship Contact Person" (by June 1978 she was using the now familiar title of "Fellowship Coordinator"), and, by the May 1977 issue of the *Franciscan Times*, Marie was writing short articles summarizing Fellowship Best Practices (May 1977, "Fellowship Partnership"; June 1978, "A Report Summarizing Fellowship Annual Reports"). After one term of three years, in January 1979, John Scott and Chapter named a new Fellowship Coordinator, The Rev. Annjane Tanner of the Long Island Fellowship. For the next three years, "reports" from Fellowships seem to be collections of personal information about who was moving, being noviced, having picnics, etc.

With Dee Dobson's election, Marie Webner returned as Fellowship Coordinator in 1982 and remained as Coordinator for the next nine years until she was elected as Provincial Chaplain. In 1983 there were 25 Fellowships in the Province, and four regional convocations each year. When Webner stepped down in 1992, there were 38 Fellowships and either regional convocations. With such a dramatic shift from the John Scott "Provincial" settings for Convocations to the Dee Dobson/Marie Webner "Regional" settings for Convocations, Chapter had to redefine the word "Convocation" in the *Statutes* to indicate both "Provincial" and "Regional" meetings.

In the January 1978 issue of the *Franciscan Times*, "Fellowship newsletters" are first mentioned: *Sursum Corda*, a 16-page newsletter, produced by the Long Island Fellowship, and *The Franciscan Flyer* from the San Francisco area was already up to Vol 2, No. 2. In May 1980, the *Franciscan Times* noted that the Minneapolis Fellowship had produced a bi-monthly newsletter; that the *W. I.* (West Indies) *Franciscan News* was being produced by the Trinidad Fellowship; and a Spanish-language newsletter, *Carta Franciscana*, was being produced in Columbia. In Epiphany-tide 1981, the *Franciscan Times* noted that the Puget Sound Fellowship announced the birth of their fellowship newsletter, and the San Francisco Fellowship announced the publication renewal of their newsletter.

By the time Webner left her position, these six Fellowship newsletters grew to fifteen. Many were rather hastily put together by cutting and scotch-taping typewritten pieces, having the whole thing photocopied, and then sent out by post. Many were just one page front-and-back including such typical items as invitations and announcement of upcoming local and regional events; reports of past meetings or events: ordinations, professions, novicings, and the arrival of new postulants; a few poems and short essays; and some reprinting of other Fellowship newsletter materials and some forwarding of provincial information.

Two newsletters from the mid-1980s, however, stand out from all the rest: the *Seedlings Tidings* produced by the Mustard Seed Fellowship in Upstate New York and *Caritas* produced by the Toronto Fellowship for the Third Order in Eastern Canada. Both were substantial pieces of work with some of the typical fellowship newsletter items augmented by the kind of material that formerly appeared in the *Franciscan Times*—extended, substantial essays drawing from authors province-wide. In just the first issue of *Seedling Tidings*, Marie Webner and Provincial Chaplain, Robert Goode (Gooch), penned pieces about Fellowships specifically for this newsletter (see Gooch's example below). In later issues, articles by Bishop Desmond Tutu, Joanne Maynard (editor of the *Times*), Presiding Bishop Edmund Browning, and Archbishop Runcie were reprinted in this Fellowship newsletter.



## ***Franciscan Times* and the *Information Sheet* Reflect A New Emphasis on Local and Regional Information, and *Pax et Bonum* Debuts**

In 1978 Peg Shull began editing the *Franciscan Times* continuing to the 1981 Epiphany-tide issue. The Epiphany-tide issue was the *Franciscan Times*'s handsomest issue ever, but it was out of sync with the new emphasis of Guardian Dee Dobson and Chapter on keeping costs down and focusing on the local and regional events. Shull's Epiphany-tide 1981 issue went 30% over the whole year's budget with just the one issue. As a result Chapter decided to cease publication of the *Franciscan Times*, and to shift publication of all news to the monthly, quick-copy format of the *Information Sheet* as of December 1981. (The *Information Sheet* had only begun publication in November of 1980. The complete run of the *Information Sheet* is available on the TSSF website, and it is indexed for searching.)

However, the story quickly got complicated because a new editor, Roberta Beisel, was appointed to direct the *Franciscan Times*, and she produced one issue, Easter-tide 1982, that was nicely formatted without the use of color in the Epiphany-tide 1981 issue. Beisel's version of the *Times*, however, still required a printer to produce it. At the 1982 Chapter, Chapter changed its mind once more and now looked for a parallel production of the *Franciscan Times* and the *Information Sheet*; the *Times* as a quarterly with feature stories and the *Information Sheet* as a bimonthly with more breaking-news information.

Joanne Maynard who had recently written a book published by Forward Movement, *The Burning Mushroom: And Other Epiphanies*, was appointed as the new editor, and she produced the *Franciscan Times* for the next eight years until she asked to step down when Dee Dobson completed her three terms in office as Minister Provincial in 1990. Maynard's *Franciscan Times* reflected Dee's and Chapter's new emphasis on Fellowships and Regional Convocations and was primarily a pastiche of short pieces gleaned from Fellowship newsletters, Fellowship annual reports, and reports from Regional Convocations. Like the Fellowship newsletters, this pastiche was photocopied, scotch-taped together, and then the whole thing was photocopied. Discussions of anything larger than Regional Convocations disappeared. There were few, if any, long, substantial articles, which evidently left a desire in the Order for someplace to publish longer articles, poems, reviews, etc.

To fulfill that desire something new was created by Terry Rogers and Arthur Wolsoncroft and endorsed by the 1987 Chapter, *Pax et Bonum*. *Pax et Bonum* was designed to come out twice a year and be composed of "articles by Tertiaries on a variety of issues and from diverse points of view. The overall purpose is to deepen our sense of our Franciscan vocation, stimulate our thinking, and widen our view of the unique gifts and unique lives within our Third Order Community" (Terry Rogers in *Information Sheet* December 1987). Two issues were produced (1988 and 1990), but only the 1990 issue was found in order to be scanned and included in the *Franciscan Times* collection on the TSSF website.

When Robert Durand succeeded Joanne Maynard as editor of the *Franciscan Times* in 1991, he folded in the content focus of *Pax et Bonum* into the *Franciscan Times*. Thus while maintaining the local and regional focus for part of the *Times*, he now began including longer, more substantial pieces of province-wide interest.

## **Robert Goode (Gooch) Lays Down His Mantle as TSSF Chaplain After 14 Years in 1985**

Gooch was either our Assistant Chaplain (when that was all the pastoral leadership that was allowed by the First Order to members of the Third Order) or Provincial Chaplain for 14 years during the very formative years of TSSF of John Scott's era and the first half of Dee Dobson's. He first appeared in the record as a novice in the First Order, but was professed in the Third Order, like the High Priest Melchizedek, on an unknown date. He died during Francistide in 1998. Here are three important pieces he wrote for a fellowship newsletter *Seedlings Tidings*, the *Franciscan Times* and the *Information Sheet*.

### **What a Fellowship is Not**

*Provincial Chaplain Robert Goode*

*(From the fellowship newsletter Seedlings Tidings 1985; reprinted in the Information Sheet 1985)*

There are several things fellowships are not. They are not an advertising cartel to promote St. Francis. In other words, a fellowship should not be composed of everyone in the surrounding ten counties who likes St. Francis.

A fellowship is not primarily a support group. There are, however, many periods in our Franciscan life when the support of a fellowship keeps us going. But a fellowship is not therapy, and a person who is in the formation process particularly should be doing his or her own growing in places other than the fellowship, as well as within the dynamic of the fellowship. It is not always advisable to share your innermost secrets with members of a fellowship. We are not all equally mature. Members come and go; people move. Fellowships, like people, change.

Nor can a fellowship be a substitute for a spiritual director. As Chaplain, I deal over and over again with situations where the novice counselor, a friend in fellowship, a friendship with a friar, becomes a substitute for a spiritual director. It is too easy for a spiritual director to be just a name on a report form. This is where your trust and confidence should lie. This is where crises and problems should be resolved. All too often, I get requests for release from vows which show that the spiritual director hasn't even been asked for an opinion.

People should bring as much or more to a fellowship as they take from it.

More than anything else, a fellowship is a reinforcement of one overriding fact about us. We are committed to this way of life. Good times, bad times; dry times, full times, we are trying to follow our Lord in the way of St. Francis for the rest of our lives. High Church, Low Church, charismatic, Anglo-Catholic, whatever, our unity lies in the common vow. We live in an age when promises are broken

not only frequently but casually, when we are taught to believe we owe everything to ourselves and little to others. It is the vow that separates us from those called to walk in other ways. Yet our vow is only part of our baptismal vow.

Think of the consequences and importance of a vow in terms of the theology of St. John, where a word becomes a living and effective entity, where the Godhead itself is described as The Word. May your word as a Franciscan be an extension of The Word in the life of the Church.

### **Imitation of St. Francis?**

*Provincial Chaplain Robert Goode (from Franciscan Times 1981)*

Very few of us care to literally imitate St. Francis, for a variety of reasons. When we seem to be straying from the Franciscan way, there is sometimes a desire to drag out one of the original rules and reform things. Often, we satisfy ourselves that we are doing the work and witness of Francis when we confront the corrupt, the powerful, and the wealthy on the behalf of this world's poor. We think we manifest his love of creation when we hook up with some organization concerned for the environment. We think humility consists of humiliating and embarrassing those in authority.

Francis was not a socialist or even a social reformer. The evidence seems to suggest that he accepted the feudal theory of his day, but took the political vocabulary of his time and made it a paradigm of the Kingdom of God. His witness was personal and individual. This was its very charm, along with its totality and its intensity. Francis was poor because he thought it was holy, not because he hated the rich. When he confronted the infidel, there was no anger in the confrontation, merely a concern for souls and for the truth. Francis would never have countenanced a triumphalism of any sort, not even of the poor. It is not popular to say so, but he would not have rejoiced in the understandable but unlovely roar of sweet revenge as the Third World finds its way to a place in the sun.

The secret of the popularity of the Franciscan Movement remains the same. It gave the world the hope that each life could make a difference, provided it was turned around and pointed God-ward.

Quite rightly, we probably would not want to have the worldview of St. Francis, nor his emotional or psychological makeup. But I do think it is possible for us to have his motivation. We must never let anger or self-righteousness be part of our humility. Manipulation, however it may discomfort this world's powerful, is not to be hidden under the brown habit's skirts. And if an old order is to pass away because of our response to a Franciscan call, let it be for no other standard than the one that was his when he prayed: "My Lord, My God, My All."

### **On The Role of Confession in the Third Order**

*Provincial Chaplain Robert Goode June 15, 1983 letter to Helen Webb*

...As to your queries about confession, the problem is that we all go back so far it is sometimes hard to remember things. Maybe I can jog your memory a bit. During the tremendous time of change when we abandoned the manual of OSF, you may remember that there were many who were upset at giving up names, habits and the Credenda. In a way, it was an enormous change. We began a whole new set of statutes and changed the report form. During that Chapter and what I believe we called convocation, we agreed on a few things without putting them into elaborate systems of rules in order to avoid the very rigid and legalistic tone of the former manual. You may recall that in a spirit of keeping the basics and partly to conciliate those who were being asked to give up many things, which were precious to them, we agreed that two things were characteristic of the American Province and would be kept. One of them was the recitation of the Daily Office. The other was the fact that confession was a normative practice for us. I remember this well because I was on the committee that changed the report form, and it was clearly understood that the penitence section would be kept and that it referred to the Sacrament of Penance as well as any devotions, such as examination of conscience that a person saw as part of their Franciscan spirituality. ...So, our policy has always been to talk about the sacrament as being a normative part of our life, rather than to talk of it as "required." Do you understand the difference in tone I am talking about?

We are a voluntary association in the Episcopal Church. No one has to belong to the Third Order. We require spiritual directors, and we require recitation of the office, none of which are requirements for the ordinary Episcopalian. I believe at least half of the various associates and companions of the other religious orders not only require the use of the sacrament of penance, but sometimes even attempt to set the frequency. In fact, the Rule of Life of the associates of the Sisters of the Holy Nativity is more rigorous than ours, and incidentally, you might want to know that they do not allow their associates to become tertiaries.

Anyone who is immersed in Franciscan spirituality knows that the Sacrament of Penance and the penitential life in general is as major a theme as poverty and that our other names are "Little Brothers and Sisters of Penance." That is why the friars to this day keep two Lents. Franciscans are the most popular confessors in the world, and there is a whole definitively Franciscan approach to the Sacrament of Penance, as characterized by St. Leonard of Port Maurice. This tradition is very much alive and well today, as evidenced by the fact that while many Roman Catholics have fallen away from the Sacrament, churches run by friars continue to have lines outside the confessional.

With beginners it is natural that there might be questions and some ignorance, but I would suggest you express your puzzlement with someone in this category because a serious objection to the Sacrament of Penance is so incompatible with Franciscan spirituality and tradition as to make someone's grasp of the Franciscan life questionable, if they cannot see this. This is the sort of person who ought to be a candidate for the associates. This is also a time when even Protestant ministers are again hearing confessions, so this kind of reticence on the popular level is very out of touch with what is actually happening.

Now, we do have people in the Episcopal Church who try to make a thoughtful and cogent objection to the Sacrament of Penance. Granted, these are few and far between these days, but the tradition from which they speak is also opposed to vows and blessings and is opposed to the whole idea of the religious life. So, I would find it hard to understand why such a person would want to be a tertiary in the first place. The relationship with a spiritual director is far more intimate and revealing than that with one's confessor, for in it one must lay bare one's besetting sins and the whole pattern and structure of sin in one's spiritual life. So, again I would be puzzled as to why someone would be willing to have a spiritual director but not a confessor.

I think that what you have done as a matter of course is the right way to handle it. Get the person's spiritual director to discuss this with them and show them what a marvelous means of grace it is. I have many times gotten letters from people, perhaps even some you have counseled, who have said that the single greatest blessing of their being a tertiary was that the Order moved them to make use of the Sacrament when they might not otherwise have done so. Occasionally, we do get a newcomer who has not used the Sacrament and who might have been scared off if we had all kinds of material about it in our introductory literature. But the process of being open to all of the things they have to do to become tertiaries makes them especially open to using the Sacrament as just one of many new things that are now coming into their life. Most of the time, however, aspirants are already penitents. So, as I have said above, try to be firm and gentle and talk about the sacrament naturally. People will often grow into things if you give them leadership. We are not trying to whip them into it. Yes, I do expect people to use the Sacrament, but I hope my counselors and formation directors will be tactful, gentle, and firm.

The larger we get, the more diverse we get, and while we have abandoned many of our practices, such as requiring belief in the Immaculate Conception and some of these rightly so, we must be very careful to resist the equally growing pressure to so water down our life that we end up being a bunch of people of good will who happen to like St. Francis.

I can easily see how it might have happened that something like this slipped past you and for reasons that I have already outlined above, I do not pound on it. I do apologize, however, if there are some counselors who do not understand this. However, because of your experience and the length of time you have been on this journey, I trust you to have a feel for the right touch in dealing with this. Does this help answer your questions?

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## Remembrance of Gooch

*Masud I. Syedullah*

*(Franciscan Times Fall 1998)*

I remember Gooch as a person who naturally exhibited qualities of humility and joy. He was my immediate predecessor as Provincial Chaplain for the Third Order. One of the things I remember most about him was the way he responded to me being selected to be the next Chaplain. I was greatly moved when, after Chapter ratified the Provincial Minister's nomination that I be Chaplain, he began right away to plan an induction service. It was marvelous! Not only was the rite constructed well, eloquently expressing the duties and responsibilities of the Chaplain, but also Gooch's joy permeated the event. It was as if he were handing over, not only the symbols of office, but a part of himself as well, as a personal gift. He embodied for me, in those arts, the Franciscan ideal of egalitarian relationships. It was from him that I discovered much of what it means to humbly serve and, when the time comes, to joyfully celebrate and support the gifts and ministry of those who follow—to cheer them on.

## Election of Masud I. Syedullah, TSSF Chaplain 1985-88

*Little Chronicle 1985*

Masud is the first chief pastor to have developed his vocation as a Franciscan entirely as a member of the Third Order. (Gooch had begun his Formation as a First Order Brother.) Masud's election as chaplain is a significant new move in the life of the Third Order towards autonomy and self-development. For the first sixty years of its existence in the Episcopal Church, the Order was run by a friar-priest. But as research into the early Franciscan roots has shown, The Third Order that St. Francis founded was intended to be an autonomous, self-supporting organization.

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## Making Chapter More Internationally Representative

In 1986 Ewan Macpherson, editor of *Caritas* (newsletter for Franciscans in Eastern Canada), member of the Toronto Fellowship, and Area Chaplain, was elected a member of Chapter, but took a parish in the UK and left the Province. In 1989, the next round of Chapter elections, Ewan's successor as Convenor of the Toronto Fellowship, Warren Beal, was elected to Chapter. However, before he took his place on Chapter, he asked to be released from vows. Ruth Duncan of Ontario was appointed to join the Chapter with voice and vote, and, subsequently when another person resigned from Chapter, Ruth was appointed to fill out that member's term, becoming the first Canadian to be part of the elected Chapter. (Muriel Adey, also a Canadian, was an ex-officio member of Chapter when she was Women's Formation Director at the end of John Scott's era.)

Presence on Chapter for members from Trinidad and Tobago happened a bit quicker. In 1982, Jackie Richards was invited to attend Chapter, and, in 1985, she became the "Caribbean Representative" and reported to Chapter on events in the Caribbean and South America. In 1989, Jackie became Assistant Formation Director for the Caribbean, and, in 1992, both Jackie and Gloria Waldron were elected to Chapter from the Caribbean.

## TSSF Formation Moved Contemporary Franciscanism Beyond The Anglican Communion

### (1) Order of Ecumenical Franciscans

*From OEF Website, "How It All Began" 2008*

In 1980, Dale Trana (name later changed to Dale Carmen) petitioned the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis to accept her as a postulant, so that she could learn the spiritual disciplines with guidance. [Ed. *Very much like Father Joseph in 1918-19 went to SSJE for Formation as a future leader of an Order.*] Even though she was not Episcopalian, they accepted Dale into the formation program, which became a river of life-giving water to a parched soul. At this same time, God's mysterious planning brought Ron Nuss-Warren, Charles Maxfield, Dale Carmen, and their families together on a farm in North Dakota. It was there that they discovered common ground in the search for spiritual growth. They longed to be nurtured by a Christian community called to serve Christ in the spirit of Saint Francis. Ron, Charles and Dale were all pastors in the United Church of Christ serving small churches in North Dakota, and they realized the importance Francis gave to accountability in the church. Therefore, they sought obedience and responsibility through proper channels in the United Church of Christ. For the next three years, letters flew between UCC dignitaries, TSSF officers, and an increasingly excited trio of dreamers who sought to form an expression of Franciscan community within the protection and direction of the United Church of Christ.

In August of 1983, Ron Nuss-Warren, Charles Maxfield and Dale Carmen claimed an empty room at Annunciation Priory south of Bismarck, North Dakota, and began to hammer out, sentence by sentence, word by word, a General Rule and Principles for yet another expression of Franciscan community. Their primary building blocks came from Francis' "Rule of 1221" and "Rule of 1223" as expressed in *Source Documents: For the Living Tradition of the Society of St. Francis* (commonly known as the *Book of Roots*) published by the Society of St. Francis, and a summary by Fr. Marion A. Habig, OFM on "The New Rule Approved for the Secular Franciscan Order, by Pope Paul VI in 1978" (from "The New Rule in a Nutshell," p.82).

Over 90% of the words of the "General Rule" and "Principles" of the Order come from these primary documents, and only those words were changed that were necessary to have this new Franciscan Order be inclusive of all Christian denominations. After three long days of work and prayer, a fledgling "Rule" and "Principles" were ready for review by the sisters and brothers in established Franciscan communities. Through the grace of God, Br. Robert Hugh, SSF, Minister Provincial of SSF, was nearby in Minneapolis, Minnesota (only 500 miles away!). Dale Carmen hand-delivered the new "Rule" and "Principles" for his scrutiny. Graciously, Brother Robert Hugh offered to stop in North Dakota on his way to California to discuss possible corrections in the document.

On the plains, scattered clouds on the horizon are reason to hope that God may gather them into a thunderhead laden with rain for parched earth. And so it seemed the will of the Lord when, on November 22, 1983, Ron Nuss-Warren, Charles Maxfield and Dale Carmen met a notary at the bank in Parshall, North Dakota, and signed papers of incorporation (by the State of North Dakota) for the Third Order of St. Francis – United Church of Christ. On that same evening, a "Celebrating Birth" service was held at the Parshall United Church of Christ. The main speakers were Rev. George Metcalf, Chaplain of the Minnesota Fellowship of TSSF, and Rev. Marwood Rettig, Conference Minister of the North Dakota Conference of the United Church of Christ. Witnessing to the spirit of ecumenism, the service was blessed by the Lutheran minister, Assembly of God pastor and Roman Catholic priest – all from Parshall – and the Sisters of the Benedictine Priory at Garrison, North Dakota. Fumiko, a Japanese exchange student, played classical music; the choir offered up "Seek Ye First" and the local priest sang "Prayer of Saint Francis," accompanied by a Vietnamese-born guitarist.

During the service, the Rev. Metcalf read a framed parchment signed by TSSF officers, blessing us with these words:

*We the capitular tertiaries of the American Province of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis greet you as you begin to provide for a Franciscan expression of the Gospel life in your part of the Lord's vineyard. We pledge to you our fellowship, and our concern and those sharings that occur between brothers and sisters. May your walk in the steps of the Little Poor Man of Assisi be one blessed with peace and perseverance.*

The blessing from TSSF was followed by the reading of the Rule and Principles of the new Order. The Rev. Metcalf received the vows of Profession from Dale Carmen, and Dale received the vows of intention to the postulancy from Ron Nuss-Warren and Charles Maxfield. Later, seventy-some worshippers gathered for fellowship in the church basement. A tangible sense of hope and joy permeated the gathering as though they had, indeed, become instruments of God's peace. In some humble way, there was a sense that they had participated in one of God's awesome mysteries.

### (2) Secular Franciscans Order (Roman Catholic)

*From the OEF Website, "A Little History of OEF Roots," January 2012*

[W]hen in 1966 Brother Paul OSF was elected to be the new Minister Provincial, he had a vision for the Third Order that would have it stand free and clear as an Order in its own right, with its own leadership, administration, pastoring and formation, parallel with rather than dependent upon or defined by the life of the Friars and Sisters. When Br. Luke SSF became Minister Provincial in 1970 he supported that vision and over the next eight years, first Br. Robert Hugh and then Br. Mark Francis, had the task of "working themselves out of a job" as Friar Chaplain to the Third Order, visiting Fellowships and individual tertiaries to share this vision. So since the late seventies, the Third Order has directed its own life. Peter Funk and Marie Hayes were the first tertiaries to lead Novice Formation, John Scott to lead Administration, and Kale King to provide Chaplaincy.

A later Director of Formation was Glen Ann Jicha in Chicago. Glen Ann was working in [Ed. *Chicago's*] Loop and started regularly attending the OFM parish St. Peters. Benet Fonck OFM became Glen Ann's spiritual director, and Benet Fonck was the friar who was

responsible for the Third Order groups in the Province of OFM. He became interested in the structure being developed by the TSSF. Shortly thereafter, Benet was taken to Rome by the American Minister General John Vaughn to become the Friar responsible for the Third Order. Benet took with him the TSSF structure and formation letters and over the next few years in conversation with the OFM Caps and the OFM Conv, SFO was born as the modern expression of the secular Third Order. The American TSSF structure largely influenced the SFO structure over the 1970s. It is quite amazing the degree of consultation between Anglican and Roman Catholic Franciscans at this time around Third Order structure.

### Factoids of the Dee Dobson Era

- 1981 — Fifty people attend Province's first regional convocation in the Northeast
- 1982 — TSSF joins with the Roman Catholic SFO in the National Franciscan Communication Conference
- "Convocation" designated to mean not only Chapter-sponsored Provincial meetings but also fellowship-sponsored regional meeting
  - International Roman Catholic Congress (CIOF) held in Rome invites Anglican/Episcopal representatives for the first time to attend: John Scott, Dee Dobson, Anita and David Catron from the American Province and Richard Scott from the European Province.
- 1983 — The majority of the professed are not pledging; 1985 finds that less than 300 out of 700 members pledge
- Ken Cox, Men's Formation Director, dies. Alden Whitney becomes the new Men's Formation Director.
  - Marie Webner begins drafting the first *Fellowship Convenor Handbook*
- 1984 — Dee Dobson re-elected as Guardian
- 1985 — Masud ibn Syedullah elected as first Provincial Chaplain after Robert Goode retires as Chaplain
- Mary Ann Jackman creates the Dancing Francis (*left*) as the TSSF Province of Americas logo
- 1986—To parallel First Order nomenclature, Chapter votes to rename the "Guardian" as "Minister Provincial"
- TSSF is recognized by the House of Bishops as a Christian Community and enters ECUSA's annual *Red Book* for the first time
- 1987—At the conclusion of the Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC)—the highest level of legislative authority in the world-wide Third Order—TSSF elects Bob Pope of the European Province as its first Minister General of the Third Order
- 1988 —Jack Stapleton elected as Provincial Chaplain resigns within one week; Alden Whitney appointed Interim Chaplain
- 1989 —Chapter studies the possibility of moving the 1991 Chapter meeting to the Caribbean (Chapter 1990 proposed taking a future Chapter meeting to Trinidad in 1993; Chapter 1991 voted down the proposal to take Chapter outside the US)
- Marie Webner is elected as Provincial Chaplain; Anita Catron takes over as Fellowship Coordinator
  - Br. Dunstan leaves Trinidad and Tobago, ending the First Order presence on these islands
  - 50% of professed are not reporting annually; and only one third of Area Chaplains are reporting annually
- 1990 —Ruth Duncan, a Canadian, is invited to Chapter with voice and vote
- 50% of members are not pledging



**In the end, by conscious planning or inadvertant pragmatic decisions, Dee Dobson changed the course of the Third Order in the Province of the Americas by making it much more localized, regional, and diffuse in its organization. From methods of communication to types of meetings to empowering and funding a Fellowship Coordinator, what Dee Dobson left after her three terms were over was not the Third Order John Scott had led. Thus the Minister Provincial to be elected next was presented with a much broader map by which to steer the Order—and his or her dilemma was well defined by Marie Webner in the following memo to her fellow Chapter members.**

### “The Future of the Third Order”

Memo by Marie Webner addressed to “My fellow members of Chapter, Third Order, SSF” on March 26, 1985.

*...Does it occur to you that we are in a singularly unattractive adolescent stage of development? We have simply not decided what we want to be or how to go about it (whatever it is). We wobble....Until we decide what we want to be and how to go about it, we obviously are in no position to take risks. In the long run, however, if we take no risks, we will never reach maturity (that is, our full potential).*

*I am convinced that a great deal of our identity crisis has its roots in our inability to find a model. We look for one in the First Order, but the model there is not completely appropriate to our large numbers, our scattered members, and the diversity of our members*

*(especially the diversity in understanding). When we turn to the Roman Church for a model, we find that the hierarchical and priest-dominated authoritarianism there is also inappropriate to the Third Order of St. Francis in the Episcopal Church. Another model might be found in professional nonprofit associations, but the goals of these organizations are far removed from our own imperatives. We have already discarded the Third Order model in England because the friars there are sufficiently numerous to continue to provide direction, specifically in the form of a full-time chaplain.*

*I believe that our first task as Chapter members is to recognize our uniqueness. Yes, our uniqueness. We can learn from the examples provided by the First Order, the Secular Franciscans, and professional organizations, but we will not find any of these models adequate to our own unique situation.*

*The first point, then, is that we need to be creative and open-minded in seeking our identity as it unfolds in the patterns of our administrative action....*

## How Did Dee Ever Become a Tertiary?

*"A Meeting of Franciscans" by Bill Graham, Part 3 of 3, Summer 1998, Franciscan Times*

*Dee:* The offices were the main reason that I didn't join a lot earlier. I was teaching and just couldn't work them in. We're a lot more flexible now. Tertiaries once wore a garment called a scapular and were to keep their membership rather secret. They were not to wear their profession crosses outside. Now, we encourage them to do so.

*Fr. Bill:* Dee, who was your counselor when you were a novice?

*Dee:* I had Peter Funk, and he was excellent. Peter was a freelance writer and still does the monthly "Word Power" section in *Reader's Digest*. He wrote our first set of formation letters.

*Fr. Bill:* I've met Peter several times, and I've quoted from his letters in sermons, retreat meditations, and Cursillo talks. You couldn't have had anyone better. How did you become interested in the Order?

*Dee:* I was looking for something to deepen my spiritual life. Brother Dunstan was a particularly strong influence on me.

*Fr. Bill:* That sounds pretty much the case for me as well. I was influenced by Fr. Scott and Br. Robert Hugh, the First Order Visitor, when I joined. How has the Order changed since you joined?

*Dee:* I mentioned the reorganization of 1972. Br. Robert deserves much of the credit for that happening. Others helping were Fr. John Scott, Helen Webb, Fr. Warren Tange, Fr. Robert Goode, and myself. We were still under the First Order, but were given a lot more control. We had our own guardian. John was our first one and served six years in that capacity. I was guardian for nine years. In 1981, we strengthened our international ties, becoming completely autonomous in 1987.

## Denalta (Dee) Dobson died August 15, 2001 in Miami, Florida

*Julia Bergstrom, Provincial Chaplain, Franciscan Times*

There were expressions of grief at the service, but Dee's family and friends, especially her children, made the open house a joyous occasion. This was the first time I had met her children, and I think they're wonderful. As we know, Dee had many children besides the six biological ones. In fact, several people who were friends of her children in high school flew in because Dee was their mother too. In her honor, her children made her lasagna and key lime pie recipes, enough for 75, for the open house.

At the funeral, Br. Robert Hugh celebrated the Eucharist, and Br. Dunstan preached, using the last chapter of Proverbs. We sang "All creatures of our God and King," "Joyful, joyful we adore thee," and "Lord, make us servants of your peace." The Cantic of the Sun was printed on the back of the program. Her obituary, written by Bill, Jr., talked about her participation in TSSF. We thank you, God, for Dee's life and witness. There is rejoicing in heaven!



*(Left to right) Dee Dobson, Maryann Jackman (creator of the Dancing Francis logo), and Alden Whitney (next Minister Provincial)*

## Chapter 7: Alden Whitney, Minister Provincial (1990-1996) and First Minister General from the Province of the Americas (1993-1999)

### Speedy Rise in the Order

Alden's journey through the Order was the most expeditious of any Minister Provincial (and probably any Minister General):

- 1981, in December, Alden was professed.
- 1982, in November, he was recruited to be the Men's Formation Director upon the death of the incumbent, Ken Cox.
- 1983, Alden was ordained as a deacon.
- 1984, Alden was ordained as a priest.
- 1988, when Jack Stapleton resigned as Chaplain after one week, Alden became Acting Chaplain as well as continuing his work as Formation Director for Men.
- 1990, he was elected Minister Provincial.
- 1993, he was re-elected Minister Provincial and, later that same year, Minister General of the Third Order.

### Ministers General in TSSF

Robert Pope (European Province)	1987-1993
Brian Hamilton (New Zealand Province)	1993-1996
Alden Whitney (Province of the Americas)	1996-1999
Keith Slater (Australian Province)	1999-2005
Dorothy Brooker (New Zealand Province)	2005-2011
Ken Norian (Province of the Americas)	2011-

In his first election in 1990, Kale King, Robert Goode, and Glen-Ann Jicha were also nominated and stood for election. In his re-election in 1993, Douglas Scott of Philadelphia was the only one who stood along with Alden for election.

### The Big Topics Return

The 1980s and the era of Dee Dobson yielded few "big" topics over which TSSF had to wrestle. John Scott's era had women's ordination and gay ordination. Now with the turn of the decade, new "big" topics appeared for TSSF's discernment. This time it was primarily affirmation and respect for gay rights.

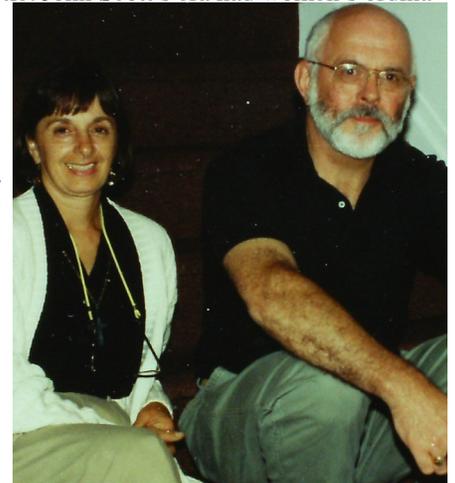
At the 1990 Chapter in which Alden, an openly gay man, was elected Minister Provincial, Chapter passed the following resolution with one abstention:

*Whereas there has been growing concern about the prejudice and discrimination that have existed in the Episcopal/Anglican Church toward lesbians and gay men,*

*Whereas we, as a religious order, have pledged to fight against all ignorance, pride and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality,*

*Therefore, be it resolved that we, the Chapter of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis, American Province, affirm that Christ indwells all persons regardless of sexual orientation; we affirm that we welcome to our services of worship and to all occasions for fellowship all persons; and we affirm that we welcome and encourage full membership in this Order for persons of all sexual orientations.*

*Further, we encourage those of us who would do so, to educate ourselves and others in the Church about the current pressing issue of lesbians and gay men in a society that is frequently hostile to them; and we commit ourselves to action to end ignorance about, prejudice toward, and discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the Episcopal/Anglican Church and in society at large. (Information Sheet October/November 1990)*



Anita Catron Miner and Alden Whitney on the steps at Little Portion

During the following Chapter (1991), Ken Norian spoke for many in saying that he was troubled by the disunity in the Province and in the Episcopal Church and wanted Chapter to create some bridge between those with traditional beliefs in regards to sexuality and those who support same-sex sexuality. Alden as Minister Provincial and Marie Webner as Provincial Chaplain produced the following letter that was then sent out to all members in March 1992:

*Dear Sisters & Brothers of the Third Order,*

*At its annual meeting in October 1991, Chapter was asked by a professed tertiary to affirm a resolution stating that Chapter will surely accommodate differences of opinion concerning moral and theological issues held by various Third Order members in a way that strengthens our fellowship and affirms each member of the Order. All the members of Chapter were in profound agreement with the spirit of the resolution and requested that the Minister Provincial and the Chaplain address the issues in a letter to all tertiaries.*

*The Rule of the Third Order defines our way of life. It not only supplies the aims of our community, but also provides the ways in which we can serve Christ and the world in the manner of Francis of Assisi. It declares that humility, love and joy are the three notes that mark the lives of tertiaries; without them all efforts are in vain. "Where charity and love prevail, there our God is found."*

*When we are admitted by profession to the Order, each of us pledges to serve Jesus Christ for the rest of our lives, seeking to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the spirit of love and unity within the family of God, and to live joyfully a life*

*of simplicity and humble service. Therefore, the life of every tertiary must reflect obedience to the principles we have espoused, and the vows that we have made. In these tenets that make up the Franciscan focus, we affirm that the center of our faith is always Jesus Christ, our Lord & Savior. Our preoccupation with Jesus encourages us to live joyfully a life of love leading to sacrifice, and thus, God's purposes are served.*

*The concerns of Third Order members reflect the concerns of the greater Episcopal Church. We need not rehearse here the details of the issues involving ordination, inclusive language, committed relationships, marriage, and sexuality—to name most of them. In deliberations about the questions, the role of tradition is sometimes measured against the evolution of society (or the dissolution of society, depending on one's point of view). The tried-and-true tripartite approach to solving theological and moral problems by using Scripture, Tradition and Reason seems to have led not to consensus but, instead, to diverse points of view often accompanied by fear and acrimony. In some instances, what one person views as a matter of much needed justice, another sees as a betrayal of moral tradition or of Scriptural theology. Neither "conservatives" nor "liberals" have sole claim to feeling pain, outrage and sadness. There are people of all persuasions who consider leaving the Episcopal Church (and The Society of Saint Francis) in order to maintain integrity of conscience.*

*How can we respond to divisiveness in our Church and Third Order community? How can we accommodate differences of opinion concerning moral and theological issues? Some say that the Church is in the process of defining the boundaries of the faith. Perhaps the danger in focusing on the boundaries is that of turning attention away from the interior of the faith. Shouldn't we focus much more attention on the essence, the interior center of our faith? The peril of failing to accommodate our differences is of losing the faith altogether.*

*We are Franciscans who have promised to follow Christ. As the Rule states: "Love is the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ who wish to dedicate themselves to Him as his servants.... Tertiaries seek to love all those to whom they are bound by ties of family or friendship. Their love for them increases, as their love for Christ grows deeper.... Tertiaries have a special love and affection for members of the Third Order, praying for each other individually and seeking to grow in that love." As Christians, we promise to put love first by seeking and serving Christ in all persons, and by respecting the dignity of all persons.*

*Let each of us commit ourselves again to respecting the views of every brother and sister tertiary. Let each of us love the other so that we are truly "bound into a living whole through [God's] supernatural love.... This unity of those who believe in him will become, as our Lord intended, a special witness to the world of his divine mission."*

*With this letter you will find a copy of "The Rule of the Third Order of The Society of Saint Francis (for daily reading)". It is commended to all tertiaries by all the Ministers Provincial and is being circulated in all five provinces of The Third Order. We pray it will be helpful in your prayer and study, and will promote unity among all tertiaries.*

Within eight months of receipt of this letter 31 people asked for release from their vows or withdrew from Formation. The following year, in 1993, 43 people asked for release from their vows or withdrew from Formation. Such numbers were double the average (1989 to 1998 Withdrawn/Released/Lapsed as listed in the issues of the *Information Sheet*). Possibly in response to such a large number leaving the Order, a survey was carried out by Provincial Chaplain Marie Webner in 1993 and reported to Chapter and published in the *Franciscan Times* Advent 1993 issue.

## **TSSF Questionnaire Results**

*Marie Webner (Franciscan Times Advent 1983)*

The results of questionnaires sent to professed tertiaries of the Society of St. Francis, Third Order, American Province, are as follows. Of approximately 400 members in profession, 182 returned their questionnaires. Two were blank, one because the tertiary was requesting release from vows, and the other because the tertiary was hospitalized and not capable of completing the form.

Each question is listed, with the variety and percentage of responses, and a brief commentary as appropriate.

### **Q 1. Do you feel connected with community?**

Yes	140	(77%)
Maybe	13	(8%)
No	27	(15%)

*Commentary: Letters and comments indicate a variety of ways of feeling connected, but it is heartening that we had so many undiluted positive responses.*

### **Q 2. What is your personal level of satisfaction with Third Order Life? (on a scale of I to 5, with 5 being the highest)**

Level 5	81	(46.9%)
Level 4	55	(31.8)
Level 3	27	(15.6)
Level 2	7	(4.0%)
Level 1	3	(1.7%)

*Commentary: By combining levels 4 and 5, we arrive at 136 tertiaries, or 78.7% of respondents, with a high level of personal satisfaction. At the other end, levels 1 and 2 produce only 10 tertiaries (5.7%) with a low level of personal satisfaction.*

**Q 3. What is your community level of satisfaction with Third Order life? (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest).**

Level 5	49	(28.5%)
Level 4	43	(25.0%)
Level 3	39	(22.7%)
Level 2	21	(12.2%)
Level 1	20	(11.6%)

*Commentary: By combining levels 4 and 5, we arrive at 92 tertiaries, or 53.5% of respondees, with a high level of community satisfaction. At the other end, levels 1 and 2 produce 41 tertiaries (23.8%) with a low level of community satisfaction.*

**Q 4. Would you attend a Provincial gathering?**

Yes	85	(47%)
Maybe	71	(13.5%)
No	24	(39.5%)

*Commentary: Factors mentioned most often as critical to a decision were as follows:*

- 1. Cost of transportation and accommodations.*
- 2. Location (usually mentioned with cost factor).*
- 3. Time (especially for parish priests, school teachers, and others limited in vacation schedules).*
- 4. Program (especially speakers, opportunities for fellowship, goals).*

*Other concerns were availability of private rooms and financial aid, while many "no" answers cited health and family obligations.*

**Q 5. How often would you prefer to report?**

Annually	87	(50%)	Twice yearly	39	(22%)
Three times yearly	2	(1%)	Four times yearly	36	(20%)
Six times yearly	2	(1%)	Less than yearly	14	(8%)

*Commentary: Although half the tertiaries preferred annual reporting, it should be noted that those who preferred more frequent reporting were often vehement in their preferences.*

As one can see from Questions 4 and 5, Chaplain Webner was after information other than just levels of satisfaction with the Third Order. Moreover, one confounding fact of the survey with the numbers reported in the *Information Sheets* as Withdrawn/Released/Lapsed is that such numbers included those in Formation (Withdrawals) whereas Webner's survey only queried the Professed. Moreover, the large numbers who left the Order about this time would not have registered their satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

However, as the Commentaries for Q2 and Q3 point out, those Professed who remained in the Order after the dust-up over gay issues were satisfied with their life in the Order.

Yet there is also another interesting fact that can be drawn from this Survey and which Chaplain Webner wrote about earlier in May 1993. Compare the Personal Satisfaction Level in Q2 with the Community Satisfaction Level in Q3; there's a 25% difference. Could this be that many in the Order at this point were still living in it as a *Pious Guild* rather than as a *Religious Community*?

## **From Pious Guild to Religious Order: Late 1940s and Early 50s to the 1990s**

*Letter of May 1993 from Chaplain Webner to a Tertiary Professed 46 Years*

I recently talked to the South-Central Convocation meeting in Dallas about the history of the Third Order, SSF, from my very personal experience of it. It is not unlike your history except that I had the good fortune to have been in the right places at the right times, so that I knew what was going on and was a part of the changes that took place after 1967. I've been steadily on Chapter from the beginning, and so I can certainly share the blame for whatever went wrong and whatever went right. The retreat I conducted after Easter was in Hawaii, where I renewed friendship ties with Gooch (Fr. Robert Goode), who was the first tertiary to serve as chaplain of the Third Order. Prior to that time we had had friars as chaplains. And, of course, I remember the time when the only response to a report (which was a checklist of omissions) was a penance—for women, from the Poor Clares. Anyway—Gooch commented to other tertiaries present that “Marie has been professed in the Third Order since the time it was a pious guild.” I thought about that remark and decided Gooch was right. When I was professed in 1953, the Third Order was a pious guild. A guild is, by definition, an association of persons with like interests, and, although members of the Third Order rarely were acquainted with one another, we presumably had a rule of

life and an attraction to a Franciscan lifestyle in common. We were required to keep in touch with First or Second Order, but we were not a community. As you well know, all that has changed. When the House of Bishops recognized the Third Order SSF as a Religious Community of the Episcopal Church, it accepted what had been born in the more than 20 years since 1967 (the year of the amalgamation of American and British Franciscan Orders).

So what's good about our having become a community? One of the things I pointed out in my talk in Dallas is that we now have a community network which serves to sound alarms. Part of my experience as a tertiary in 1960 was being in the most extraordinary isolation when my husband was having a breakdown and our marriage was breaking wide open as a result...I knew no other Episcopal clergy, and had no avenue to find support. The bishop who ended up deposing my husband did not strike me as a likely candidate. It is my sincere hope that such a situation will never again occur in the life of a Third Order member. If the Area Chaplain is not a person a member wants to turn to, there are other local members, the Minister Provincial, the Chaplain—or perhaps simply a kindred spirit met and enjoyed at a Third Order convocation. Certainly, I got through my particular hell with a vivid realization of and thanksgiving for the presence of God through it all, but I believe firmly that God normally works through community. Almighty God expects normally to work through members of Christ's Body the Church. I believe we are failing in our vocation as Christians and as Franciscans when we fail to be there for fellow Christians in their need. I believe, in other words, very firmly in the need for community. A pious guild is not a bad thing at all, but to be an organic, dynamic, creative community in touch with the will of God and the need of our brothers and sisters is a far better thing. My particular need was critical and traumatic; I cite it only to make a point. There are other needs, greater and smaller, that a community can and should be supplying one for another. There are other cases where the parish is not the appropriate community, or the informed community. In our very mobile population, the Third Order is often a point of stability in an otherwise formless chaos.

So what's bad about being a community? It's the same thing that's bad about the Church in general. We are corrupted by the sins of the society we live in, and we fail to become what God intends us to be. We fail, in other words. But it's not only sin and failure. With all the best intentions in the world, we simply make mistakes....In line with your definition of obedience ("to listen earnestly"), I would surmise that we failed in that fundamental obedience. We did not listen earnestly to you and to the rest of the local fellowship. In all honesty, I have to say that my recollection is that the formation team (backed up by Chapter) proceeded on the best information available, and I cannot say dogmatically that a mistake was made. But I also feel that members in profession, our brothers and sisters, need to be listened to. They need to feel that we have taken time to listen earnestly. They have every right to be part of the process. Being part of the process may or may not affect the ultimate action, which, after all, cannot be made on the basis of a vote! I do not figure that this is comforting input from me. But, after all, I've been around for donkey's years, and I know we make mistakes. I also know that these decisions are extraordinarily painful and are never lightly made. It's a terrible thing, this business of having to say Yes or No to people who are sure they have a Franciscan vocation. If we say Yes to the wrong people, it will hurt their lives and the community; if we say No to the wrong people, it will do the same. The responsibility is awesome, and decisions are not made without prayer, thought, and consultation.

I hope you will forgive us for making mistakes. Chapter is an elected body, and democratic process confers the right to question. Whoever had the nerve to question in Father Joseph's day? His No was No and his Yes was Yes. If you didn't like his answers, you either shut up or got out. If I had received a message from on high that a friend of mine was "unsuitable for life in the Third Order," I would have considered it a matter of obedience to accept without question.

### **Factoids of the Alden Whitney Era**

1990—With Alden's election, he leaves the Formation Program, and Ann Harris is elected as the first person to head a combined Men's and Women's Formation Program.

1991—Robert Durand and Rik Fitch take over as editors of the *Franciscan Times* and move it beyond physical cut-and-paste into digital Desktop Publishing with an improved and unified layout.

1993—Having just been re-elected for a second term as Minister Provincial, Whitney hosted the Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC)—the highest level of legislative authority in the world-wide Third Order—at Little Portion Friary, and was elected Minister General for a term of three years. (Only currently serving Minister Provincials can be candidates for Minister General. Moreover, at this time, one could serve simultaneously as both Minister Provincial and Minister General. However, this kind of situation is less than optimal, and the Order's Statutes were subsequently rewritten so that upon election as a Minister General, one must resign as a Minister Provincial. Thus only Alden Whitney has ever had a three-year coterminous term as both Minister Provincial and Minister General.)

1995—Chapter decides to hold the first Provincial Convocation in over a decade in New Orleans in 1997 and makes Fellowship Coordinator, Anita Catron, leader of this effort. At this point, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu TSSF has agreed to be the keynote speaker. (He ultimately had to decline because he had just been appointed the Chair of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.)

## The Province Goes Into Debt—1994

It looks from the survey done in 1993 that a majority was happy and supportive of the work of the Third Order in this Province. However, very often it is in pledges and annual reports that one finds out truly how supportive the membership is of the work of the Province and its leaders. In 1994, the Province was looking at a significant financial shortfall. The result was the draft letter to the right presented to Chapter in October 1994.

### Attention: Tertiary Sisters and Brothers: For the first time in many years the Third Order is in debt!

*"I have \$250 in my Third Order checking account. \$1,200 is still owed on the new Devotional Companion, \$250 is owed for international postage for the last two issues of the Times, and approx. \$450 will be needed for the Chapter issue of the Information Sheet. Approx. \$1,800 to \$2,000 is needed to pay existing bills and publish the Information Sheet." - Provincial Secretary's Annual Report 1994*

The Provincial Secretary's expenses are not the only area of the budget in arrears. Unless our income increases by the end of the year, Chapter expects that it will be necessary to put off our 1994 disbursement to Franciscan Aid and our outreach funding or perhaps forego them altogether this year.

Our present financial crisis can and will be solved if everyone of us pitches in.

Chapter appreciates those members who, over the years, have faithfully pledged and maintained their pledges. However, the following are suggestions for all of us to consider in our current endeavor to get out of debt:

- \* Prompt payment of outstanding current pledges.
- \* An additional end-of-the-year donation (especially for those who may not have made a pledge in this current year).
- \* An increase in your annual pledge of 10 to 20 % for 1994.
- \* A donation of \$5.00 to cover the printing and mailing costs for the new Devotional Companion.

Please give this letter your immediate and prayerful consideration. Thank you!

*Each dollar contributed will make a difference!*

## The Membership Responds Positively—1995 Finances

*(from the Minister Provincial Report to Chapter, October 1995)*

1995 has brought an excellent recovery of our financial position. We were able to pay all our debts for 1994, and to enter the 4th quarter of 1995 with a bank balance of over \$16,000. The membership of the Order responded to our appeal for help with great generosity—\$6,000 plus \$1,500 found in Hawaii, project money which had never been spent. Our economic measures regarding travel have helped as well.

## From Alden's Last MP Report to Chapter, October 1996

The last item on my report is this: to say that for me it is indeed "time" to become (along with Dee and others) a former Minister Provincial. This month, I believe, signals the beginning of my 15th year of continuous ministry as an unelected member of Chapter (Formation Director, and for a year Chaplain & Formation Director, and then Minister Provincial). That's enough. The time and all that has gone with these roles have been an immense blessing in my life—and every day has been one with an SSF flavor, most often, a Third Order flavor—sometimes sweet, sometimes bitter or sour—yet always nourishing for me. I'm grateful for the trust you have put in me, and the loving support from you and all the SSF family that made it possible for me to do what I've been able to do.

As I've said to you before, the Society of Saint Francis is my dwelling place in this amazing Episcopal Church, and the Third Order my own room in our more amazing Franciscan home.

## Homily delivered by The Rev. Alden Whitney, retiring Minister General, on 26 September 1999 in St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia at the final Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC) Evening Prayer Service

The text I've chosen for this afternoon is taken from Luke's Gospel, Chapter 24, verse 23:

*...they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he [Jesus] was alive.*

This service of prayer, renewal of vows, and the installation of Keith Francis Slater to be the fourth Minister General of The Third Order comes at the end of a wonderful week of collaboration and fellowship amongst all the Orders of The Society of Saint Francis. I daresay, our being here together is the actualization of a dream, a vision (if you will) received by many of us quite a long time ago.

Dreams and visions and voices from God have been integral in the Franciscan story. Furthermore, we were reminded earlier this week that all humans possess the divine capacity to dream dreams and to actualize them.

Bonaventure tells us that as "Francis left town to meditate out-of-doors....and as he was passing by the Church of San Damiano which was threatening to collapse with age, he felt urged to go in and pray. There, as he knelt in prayer before the painted image of the Crucified, he felt greatly comforted in spirit and his eyes were full of tears as he gazed at the cross. Then all of a sudden he heard a voice coming from the cross, and telling him three times, 'Francis go and repair my house. You see it is falling down.' Francis [says Bonaventure] was terrified at the sound of the voice, but the power of its message penetrated his heart and he went into ecstasy."

We know of course that Francis took the urging literally for some time until Holy Spirit clarified for him the intention of the voice that he had heard.

In a similar vein, Pope Innocent III received messages from God and one of them occurred in a dream whilst he was asleep. There is that image of the Pontiff lying in bed asleep with his head propped on his hand—as if he had dropped off into slumber as he was reading—and he dreams that the Church is falling over, so that it lies tilted and useless. And we know that after that, the Pope legitimized the ways of and the mission of Francis' growing band of Little Brothers. Their Rule and the Principles were affirmed, and the Order grew and became effective in its aim to spread the Gospel. And in spreading the Gospel, Francis and his brothers sought to emulate Jesus by embracing poverty.

We all have dreams which may convey pertinent messages for us. There is one dream I recall which I dreamed twenty-five years ago. In it, I was lying in hospital in bed, having had a serious chest operation. The surgeon stood at my bedside and told me: "I regret to tell you, Dr. Whitney, but we opened your chest and examined your lungs. Unfortunately, it was too late, for we saw that your chest is riddled with lung cancer, so we just closed you up."

The dream had a powerful effect upon me. I woke up at once, aghast at the message of the dream, but grateful that it was indeed a dream. I had been a smoker for 24 years, and was still smoking at least 30 cigarettes a day. But somehow that dream had the power to kill the denial that had kept me smoking. And later that day, as I was driving somewhere in the car, I opened the window and threw an almost whole pack of cigarettes out the window. And that (by the grace of God) marked the first day that I began to think of myself as a non-smoker. And my life was changed. I had smoked my last tobacco.

In Luke's story about "The Walk to Emmaus" there are some women who had told Cleopas and his companion that they had been that morning to the tomb where the body of Jesus had been lain—that the body of Jesus was gone but that they had encountered angels in a vision who delivered to them a message that Jesus was alive. And of course we know how the story goes on from that point.

The Interprovincial Chapter of The Third Order has a story to tell this week. It's a story inspired in part at least by the vision we gleaned from studying a passage from William Countryman's book, *The Good News of Jesus*. This is what it says:

*"The GOOD NEWS offers only one principle for interaction among human beings. That principle is the equal love of self and neighbor. Every action is good insofar as it conforms to it and bad insofar as it doesn't. It is the principle that must guide both our private, and wherever possible, our public lives if we wish to be people who live out of THE GOOD NEWS .... To move toward a world in which the principle of love is taken seriously will still be a long and difficult process, but it should be possible now in ways that it has not been in the past. We have had ample evidence in this century of the terrible wrongs worked by ethnic and racial hatreds, by the contempt of one class for another, or by sexual arrogance. The world will not be safe for any of us until it is safe for us all. However difficult the principle of love, and however demanding and hard at times to define, love is the only moral principle that opens a door to the future. When I truly believe that I am as human as you and you are as human as I, that God loves us indistinguishably, I shall begin building a different kind of world."*

IPTOC has seen a vision of angels who say that Jesus is alive. Tertiaries in all the five provinces have talked about our Third Order as a people knit together in prayer and community, open and ready to include all people.

I daresay we have been flexing and stretching this week, as we explored the themes, and formulated concrete proposals which are meant to encourage provinces as a whole, and fellowships and individuals as the parts thereof. We have celebrated our diversity, and asked each Tertiary to be risky in embracing and effecting in their lives particularly the 7th, 8th and 9th days of our Principles.

I think its worthwhile to rehearse them again. And some of you may hear some slight but important changes in the wording of them.

Day Seven—The Second Aim To spread the spirit of love and harmony. The Order sets out, in the name of Christ, to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all. Tertiaries accept as their second aim the spreading of a spirit of love and harmony among all people. They are pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality because of distinctions of race, gender, sexual orientation, color, class, creed, status, or education.

Day Eight—(The Second Aim cont'd) Tertiaries fight against all such injustice in the name of Christ, in whom there can be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for in him all are one. Their chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus. This can only be achieved in a spirit of chastity which sees others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfillment.

Day Nine—(The Second Aim cont'd) Tertiaries are prepared not only to speak out for social justice and international peace, but to put these principles into practice in their own lives, cheerfully facing any scorn or persecution to which this may lead.

So, we have dreamed dreams this week and seen visions and heard voices and dreamed visions; voices and visions declaring again that Jesus is alive. And in doing so, I think that our vocations have been renewed once again, and that we have been empowered to carry away from this beautiful place the fruits of our work to the more than 30 countries where Tertiaries live. Pray with us, please, that the renewal we have begun here is in fact just a beginning. AMEN

## Marie Webner, Long-time Servant in the Order

Marie was professed in 1953, and the part of her life prior to the late 60s and the merger of OSF and SSF is told by her in Chapter 1. In 1971, at the time when members of the Third Order themselves took over the leadership of the Order, Marie became involved in most everything from the beginning. As she wrote: “We were privileged to be in on all the ‘firsts’ in terms of statutes, formation program, and fellowship guidelines. Much has changed for the better over the years—but oh! it was exhilarating to lay the first bricks in the Third Order structure.”

In 1971 she was appointed Assistant Novice Mistress for Women under Peter Funk's direction. In 1974, she was elected to Chapter, which she served for two terms until 1980. As managing editor of the University of Arizona Press, she used her wordsmithing and publishing experience to work on multiple editions of the *Devotional Companion* beginning in 1981. I joined her efforts for the third edition that came out in 1994.

Although there were people who worked with Fellowships prior to Marie's appointment as Fellowship Coordinator in 1982, it was really Marie's efforts, conjoined with Dee Dobson's focus on the local and regional, that changed the face of the Order in the 80s. Directly arising from her work as Fellowship Coordinator, Chaplain Masud Ibn Syedullah appointed her as his Assistant Chaplain to focus on the work of the Area Chaplains.

In 1989, she was elected Provincial Chaplain. As Fellowship Coordinator and Provincial Chaplain, Marie wrote more articles for the *Franciscan Times* than any other member of the Order. None were just fluff pieces announcing meetings or reporting on Area Conventions; hers were substantive: “Fellowship as Partnership” (1977); “Gift: A Poem On The Death of My Father” (1981); “Community in Fellowship” (1982); “Community Events for Fellowships: Professions and Novice Admissions” (1983); and then her “Chaplain's Journal” that appeared in each issue of the *Franciscan Times* from 1991 to 1994. In 1994 Minister Provincial Alden Whitney proposed her third term re-appointment as Provincial Chaplain, but this re-appointment was not sustained by the vote of Chapter.

### Chapter Does Not Approve Webner's Third Term Appointment

From the *Admonitions of St. Francis: Number 4. Let no one appropriate to himself the role of being over others.*

*“He did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister,” says the Lord. Let those, who are set up over others, glory as much on account of that office of superior, as if they were appointed to the duty of washing the feet of the brothers. And in as much as they are so greatly disturbed on account of the loss of their office of superior than the duty regarding feet, they assemble purses for themselves to the danger of their souls.*

(The footwashing was not the Holy Thursday ritual, but the duty of cleaning the bare feet that had trod roads along with horses and other animals. The reference to the “purse” was to the “purse” in the keeping of Judas from which he was supposed to have stolen.)

*John Brockmann from an interview with a Chapter member present at the time*

Marie Webner had always wanted to be Provincial Chaplain. She had been so much a part of the Province for so long that everyone just assumed that her appointment as Provincial Chaplain would be a great solution to a big problem—Provincial Chaplains are hard to find. Gooch retired after 12 years, and Masud was elected as the next Provincial Chaplain but served for only one term, three years. The next Provincial Chaplain to be appointed was Jack Stapleton, and he had to be replaced within a week by Alden, who only agreed to serve on an interim basis.

When Marie was appointed as Provincial Chaplain to succeed Alden's interim term, for a time it worked beautifully, but then there started to be “problems.” In essence, she began making decisions without consulting with others in the leadership of the Province. For example, when the third edition of the *Devotional Companion* came back from the printer with the pages disarranged, without consultation, she authorized the expenditure of a large amount of money to have them reprinted.

We all arrived at Chapter that year in 1994 with an unspoken consensus that we could not support her as Chaplain for another term in the fashion she had thus exhibited. None of us had talked to each other about it; it was just a consensus we all arrived at separately by observing her actions.

Alden attempted to help her understand and prepare her for what he intuited was going to happen, but she could not receive his message. He tried to get her to withdraw before the vote, but she would not. Through the entire Chapter vote, flocks of crows were flying around Little Portion, cawing and carrying on.

### Webner's Freedom

*From a 1997 letter three years later in the archives from Marie Webner to Anita Catron*

I feel a wonderful freedom to express my opinion these days.

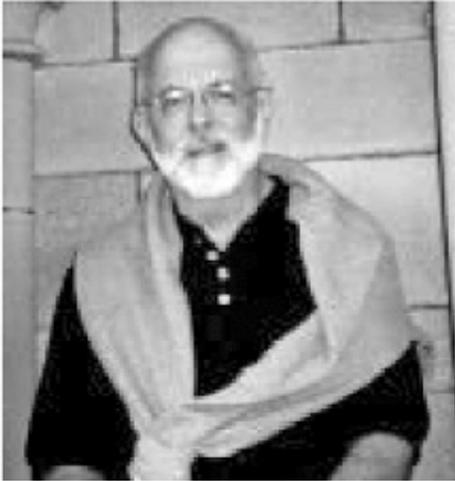
I do not want an office or influence. I want to be free to be the person I want to be, pursuing the interests that I have not been free to pursue while working for money or for TSSF....

I have sent a finished piece of writing off to a publisher. I think it would be a miracle if I did not get rejections before acceptance, but I feel really good about being embarked on this third career of my lifetime.

Joy, peace, and all love to you.

*Marie Webner died in February 2015.*





***The Rev. Alden Whitney, Feb 19, 1934-May 20, 2000.***

*Minister General, Provincial Minister of the American Province, Priest, Doctor, Psychotherapist, Sheep Farmer, Friend, A Beloved Child of God*

by Muriel Adey

I was not privileged to know Brother Alden as well as many of you; he came onto Chapter after I stepped down in '81, and was only present for half a day at the most recent Chapter where once again I was a member.

However, that is not to say that Alden did not greatly influence my life!

In the late 80s and early 90s, I was feeling very ambivalent about continuing to renew my vow and pledge in the North American branch of TSSF. Only my Spiritual Director knew how agonized I was. Out of the blue I got a phone call from Alden to say he would be in Vancouver for a conference - could I hitch a ferry and meet him for lunch? I did. I was able to freely share my conflicted feelings and feel understood; better yet, we found a quiet corner in the nearby Cathedral and Alden accepted my renewal. That was a major

turning point!

Moreover, soon after that, I read in the *Franciscan Times* that the Community Obedience, which is now printed on the inside front cover of the *Principles and Rule*, had been accepted by all the branches of the TO present at IPTOC, including the North American branch, as something to do that would help all the branches feel part of the worldwide TSSF family. As I understand it, this was very dear to Alden's heart and a major contribution bringing all of us on the N. American continent closer to our European, African, Australasian brothers and sisters.

For me personally, my heart rejoiced to read once more the very familiar words of the Community Obedience, which had nurtured my own formation before I crossed to this side of the Atlantic. As a direct result, I felt at home enough, once more, to stand for election to Chapter. Brother Alden saved me from becoming a lapsed tertiary.

by MaryAnn Jackman

He was my brother in every sense of the word and I loved him enormously. If anybody out there has a doubt about how good and wonderful and full of integrity and holiness a gay person can be, here is your gloriously shining example, our former Minister General.

If anybody comes back at me for mentioning the G word this time, you're in for it, believe me. The shameless brazen dyke in me will come after you with a vengeance. I once told Alden over breakfast in an airport hotel in Chicago if everyone who was gay would come out, things would change enormously for the better. I didn't include myself in that number at the time, though the minute I spoke the words, God revealed to me for a fact that I should have. I confessed that to Alden recently. OK, Aldy, I've put my words where my heart is at last. You were out to all the world, in all your hopeful innocence & wonder. Me, too, darling one, after your shining example.

He had great wit and a sense of wonderful fun. We enjoyed each other so much. He said in his note he wished he could see me. I was thinking about flying east for a quick visit & my friend Jo said don't wait too long. I did. (I'm sorry about that, dear Alden.) The last time I saw him was in San Francisco a year or so ago, and we knew when we said a lingering goodbye then, I think, that we wouldn't see each other again. We kept up a lively daily email correspondence until he got so ill. I have missed that terribly. I could tell you so many wonderful Alden stories, but I won't. They are mine and I'm going to jealously hold on to them for a while. At least until the pain is less.

by Cheryl Holmes

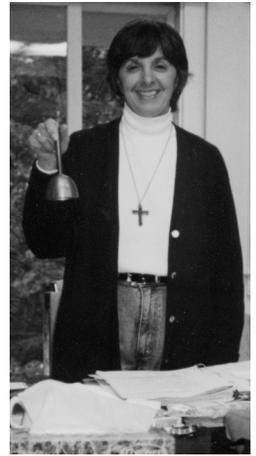
Yes, devastating news. Such a dear person. I have warm memories of Alden in several instances. One I will always smile about is the day Sue Heinsohn and I arrived at the registration table at the Provincial Convocation held in New Orleans. We were breathless and SO excited to be there. Alden, with that wonderful sense of humor, and fun-loving brother that he was, came up to us and said, "Well, I see you two haven't taken your medication!" It was the perfect thing to say! You see, Alden knew that Sue & I are dear friends as well as being Franciscan sisters and that we are always excited and thrilled to be with those like us.

Later on during the Convocation, I attended the small group discussion Alden led with the subject being homosexuality (can't remember the exact title.) After Alden's presentation, there was some discussion. Terrified, but not daunted by the number of people (our Bishop Protector, Jerry Lamb, being among them), I spoke up about an experience I had in trying to defend the position of gays in the military for about 30 minutes. I was hoping to get information or the name of a book that would give me better ammunition for the next time. The other person to whom I was directing the defense happened to be my employer, an attorney. A day or so later, Alden hunted me down and gave me a little book entitled *Letters from the Closet*. I will treasure it because the gift said so much about Alden and his spirit. We will miss him so much.

## Chapter 8: Anita Catron, Minister Provincial Era 1996-2002



Anita  
Catron  
Calling  
Chapter  
to Order  
at Little  
Portion  
Friary



New Orleans  
Provincial  
Convocation  
June 1997

The Provincial Convocation of 1997 in New Orleans was the biggest undertaking of the Province of the Americas in over a decade...and probably the biggest coordinated work undertaken by

TSSF upto this point. It was put on in an area of the country where there was little or no local support—thus everything had to be done from a distance. The keynote speaker, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, TSSF pulled out of the Convocation towards the last minute. Yet from beginning to end, Anita Catron led the work to make the Convocation happen...and she did it humbly and with aplomb. Moreover it was such a success that henceforth this Province has sought to hold Provincial Convocations every five years. (It could even claim a surplus over expenses of \$1330.)

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by John Brockmann, *Franciscan Times* Fall 1997

What impressed me about the New Orleans Provincial Convocation was:

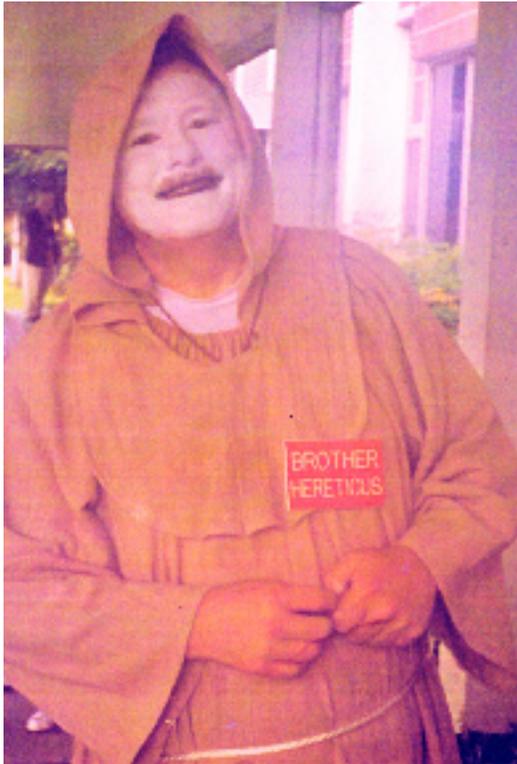
- the many, many colors of our Order as demonstrated in accents and stories, liturgies of varied hue and sound
- the wide and wonderful use of talents from those who were musicians, puppeteers, dancers, writers, and mimes
- the range of ages, from dancing children to a beautiful 70-year-old priest from the New Mexican mesa
- the constant scanning to see how each could be of aid to others in creating sacred spaces for our liturgies, to wheelchair pushers, to those who were leaders through the deepest dark of the French Quarter at night, and
- a wonderful embrace of serendipity: “Let’s go to the zoo”; “Let’s feed the birds with the leftover chunks of the communion bread”; “Let’s add in each day’s Prayers of the People the names of those with 40-, 30-, 20-, and 10-year anniversaries in the Order”; “Let’s invent some space each day for Centering Prayer.”

One of our members from Tennessee (John Tolbert) dressed up in whiteface and brown robe as Brother Hereticus and gifted people with hand-forged iron nails. Here’s Lucy Blount McCain’s reaction to Br. Hereticus as published in the Fall 1997 *Franciscan Times*:

Precious Sisters and Brothers,

My mind drifts back to the first whole day of our New Orleans Convocation. We all were gathering to board the buses to go to our beginning Holy Communion service at the Cathedral. As I walked to the bus, there he stood, the man robed in brown. His back was turned. I just thought to myself, that’s a little odd. I don’t recognize that shade of brown belonging to any of our brothers and sisters. Then he turned and I saw for the first time his grease-painted face. It was startlingly white. There seemed to be a gladness, a sadness about this clown who called himself Brother Hereticus. As I came closer, I recognized our own John Tolbert from the Southeastern Convocation. I felt a little awkward and a little “distancing” cropping up in me. Was he being serious or sacrilegious? I thought of the centuries of brothers and sisters in brown marching by. What would they think? I didn’t mind making a fool of myself, why in just a few days I’d be doing so at the talent show [Ed. See related article and photo about Lucy Blount and Lambkins J. Flock], but was this an “approved” activity? I wasn’t quite sure. All I knew is that it made me a little uneasy. Chicken that I am, I just stood and watched and didn’t get too close, except when one of John’s big hugs would catch me off guard.

I remember him silently sitting near the front of the Cathedral on the right-hand side. I remember him silently standing in line



at lunch and then sitting silently at one of the dining tables. I remember him sitting silently at one of our later services. I remember him silently standing in the downstairs hallway giving out a gift. I couldn't avoid him. He's my brother and friend. His hand grasped mine and left the present. I looked down. It was a large, primitive iron nail. I looked up and met John's happy/sad eyes and said, "Thank You!"

John—alias Brother Hereticus—our Franciscan clown, was willing to be a "Fool for Christ" tangibly, literally. His presence was a profound blessing. He cut very close to the edge. It made my heart cry out, "Hey Lucy, how far are you willing to go out on a limb for your Lord, for Francis, for your brothers and sisters in Christ?"

I remember one day gazing into the mirror in our dorm room after brushing my teeth and noticing a big white streak through the side of my hair.

My first reaction was "Oh, dear! I'm aging right before my very eyes." Then I smiled and then I burst out laughing. Hereticus had left his mark on me! Some of his grease paint had rubbed off at the passing of the peace. I carefully wiped it off and went on to the rest of the day's activities.

Later I laughingly mentioned it to John. I once again thanked him for the nail. It was a weighty present, and I asked if he might give me twelve to take home to our Fellowship. It seemed the perfect gift to take back to Alabama's "God's Joyful Fools." He did, and it was. They received them two days ago when we met at the Advent Cathedral in Birmingham for a meeting, lunch, and Holy Communion where I was professed and then there was a reception. Family, friends, Franciscans were gathered. It was a day I'll never forget, never forget.

Funny, as I sit writing to you here on the floor in a hotel bathroom so as not to awaken my sister or mother (we're on a mother-daughters trip to Canada) my mind drifts back and seems to skip from the image of John the Clown to being Professed and then back to John the Clown and then to being Professed. The two scenarios seem to be weaving themselves together and becoming one. Maybe it's because it's pre-dawn, and I just need some coffee. All I know is that I can't wait to see the photographs taken while I was making my vows. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if there was an invisible clown present carrying some nails in his hand, ready to distribute them to each person.

Thank you, John. Your happy/sad eyes reminded me of another "Clown of Christ." It is my prayer that I may become as you have become—willing to come close to the edge, to go out on a limb, to do a little hilarious humility dance as our Brother Francis did and all for the love of Jesus.



And now it's time to rise off this cold tile floor and tiptoe back to bed. But first I'm going to take a glance into the mirror, for there might be a little while grease paint still stuck to my hair. If not, I do know it has surely stuck to my soul. It was stuck on by a bear hug and a nail gently placed in my hands.

Other events at the 1997 Convocation included Br. Jon Bankert's presentation of a play with sacred puppetry in the style of Japanese Noh theater, *An Experience of Saint Francis in India* written by Arthur Little. Sisters Pamela Clare and Jean of the Community of St. Francis gave a presentation on Creation Spirituality based on Matthew Fox's *Original Blessing*. There was also a jazz Eucharist led by Ken and Janet Watts from Florida, and Lucy Blount kept us all captivated with her stories illustrated by a lamb puppet and a whole barnyard of critters hidden away in her hat.

Responses to the first provincial convocation in fifteen years. (From *Franciscan Times*, Fall 1997)

- Now I know this community is real and there. I had not felt it and was so isolated.
- Just knowing how we are all connected with one another—to know that we are of one heart if not always one mind. The wonderful spirit-filled and varied worship was great!
- I wanted to meet living, breathing people in the TSSF to help me decide whether or not to pursue Postulancy. My expectations were more than fulfilled.
- Meeting all those people I have been praying for and who have been praying for me.
- My vocation was supported by the presence of so many "old timers" and so many "new folks." I know that the T.O. is very healthy across the Province.
- I was called back into a renewed commitment after a period of being somewhat lackadaisical.
- The variety of worship and music was greater than I have ever experienced.

- The overall atmosphere of prayer and worship and the rhythm of liturgies and music throughout each day were an obvious central focus, and this set the tone for the Spirit of love and inclusiveness which I encountered here.
- Very impressed by the many gifts and talents of the members.
- The liturgies did become a seamless garment! Wise and wonderful sermons while being funny, full of tears, and hugs, but deeper and more mature than some meetings have been.
- Being among this multicultural and multi-ethnic group. Loved having Romans, Ecumenical Franciscans, and a variety of other related brothers and sisters.
- To learn how others integrate their vocations as Franciscans with secular interests—I found most had positive attitudes.

1997 Steering Committee: Dee Dobson, Joan Verret, Carol Tookey, John Brockmann, Gloria Waldron, Julia Bergstrom, Anita Catron, Bob Kramish Secretary, and David Burgdorf



## Provincial Convocation 2002

by John Brockmann

Just before her final term ended, Anita pulled together another team to design and create a second Provincial Convocation in Santa Barbara, California. I had recently read Susan Farnham's books on discernment in community (*Listening Hearts*), and persuaded Chapter to invite Susan as the keynote speaker.



The convocation was surrounded by a eucalyptus grove at the La Casa de Maria retreat center with trails up into the Santa Ynez Mountains rising up behind the retreat center. Some trails led to a lovely pool at the foot of a waterfall where one could relax and cool down from hikes. I was on the planning committee of the Convocation, and the host for the talent show. For most of us the most amazing part of the Convocation was the prayer service and blessing presided over by Masud who was accompanied by Iman Bashir from Baltimore, and Rabbi Carlos Huerta from West Point Military Academy. (You can see much more of this convocation by viewing the streaming video on the website, *Resources for Tertiaries*.)

## Responses Far and Wide to Santa Barbara Convocation 2002 From the British

Five tertiaries, **Michael Daws** (the official representative of the European Province), **Margaret** and **Richard Scott, Maria** and **John Fox**, were privileged to attend the Convocation of the American Province in Santa Barbara. Such an event occurs every five years; Maria and John had been to the previous Convocation in New Orleans in 1997, and were so enthused by it that they repeated their participation in 2002. All five tertiaries found the six days in Santa Barbara an unforgettable and moving experience, which is quite difficult to describe because it depended almost entirely on the warmth and capability of the American tertiaries involved. There were around 150 people attending, and everyone who travelled by plane was met personally at the

airport and delivered to the Casa de Maria Retreat Centre just outside Santa Barbara! The Centre was set in seven acres of beautiful parkland, complete with swimming pool, tennis courts, etc. and adjoined estates of celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey and Michael Douglas. The theme of the Convocation was "Discernment: Seeking the Mind of God in our Franciscan Life" and the six days were packed full of opportunities to worship, be still, be vigorous or be entertained. As it is not possible to describe the full scope of the Convocation in any detail, we have selected just a few personal impressions of some activities that we felt to be worth mentioning.

- **Worship and prayer** surrounded all that we did. There were Morning and Evening Prayer, a Eucharist and Compline on most days, using a specially prepared and bound Worship Booklet. The spirit of the worship and the joyfulness of the singing was almost beyond belief, bringing us to tears on a number of occasions. There was sufficient time for reflection and meditation each day, guided in the Chapel or privately either in a multi-faith Meditation Chapel, through Centering Prayer, use of a labyrinth, a Peace Garden or the beautiful grounds.
- **Discerning our Franciscan Life** was the main theme at the Convocation. We were guided by Suzanne Farnham, author of *Listening Hearts*, in how to discern ways forward in difficult situations, both through individual and group approaches. On the individual front we were asked to choose a method of exploring what was in our hearts, through arranging a pattern of natural objects on a tray, writing a Letter to God or developing a short story, hymn or prayer. Small groups were formed to practice a special technique for discerning issues that were lying under the surface within a group. The process was quite revealing, especially the requirement that while listening to others, we were bidden to refrain from interruption but also from formulating our own response. Rather we were asked to allow each other's contribution to be respected, by waiting in silence for the Holy Spirit to inform our responses before speaking; unfortunately there was insufficient time to appreciate the full implications.
- **Peace and Justice Issues** were prominently discussed during the Convocation. There was a special workshop on the topic, held twice, and a group formed during lunches to continue the dialogue. There was great strength of feeling on these issues, and a special e-mail for "SSF Peace with Justice" has been set up, to which any tertiary may subscribe.
- **The Interfaith Initiative** was for us all the highlight of the Convocation. An assistant TSSF Chaplain, Rev. Masud Syedullah, had arranged for two friends, Imam Moshamad Bashar, Johns Hopkins University Chaplain from the Baltimore Islamic Centre, and Rabbi Carlos Huerta, Jewish Chaplain at the West Point Military Academy, to engage in an interfaith dialogue. This was followed by an incredibly moving service and ceremony in the Chapel, during which the Anglican, Muslim and Jewish clergy intoned their own scriptures; the service commenced with the sounding of the Shofar on a ram's horn by the rabbi. At a critical point in the service each of us formed in a line to receive the laying-on of hands from the three clergy, in turn. They prayed over us individually, and finally we surrounded the three and laid our hands on them. We were charged to be "reconcilers"; it is difficult to imagine a more inspirational experience in this faith-based, strife-torn world.
- **Finally, the Fun and Warmth** that permeated all that went on was genuinely astonishing. Our universal reaction was "What very nice people these American tertiaries are" and it was like being immersed in a luxuriously warm bath. Michael commented: "A major impact on me was how much I felt in the presence of Francis with a place of much simplicity and celebration of sun, of earth, of water, of people, yet within a world of so much complexity and therefore contradiction. I felt that this was a world that Francis would have recognised and suffered with." There were people present from the Caribbean (three of the seven professed during the week were ladies from Tobago), Guyana, Canada and all over the United States. There were many First Order Brothers and Sisters, representatives from OFM and SFO; there were tertiaries' friends and relatives interested in TSSF as well. The organisation and administration were superb, the food too extravagant for words, and we all caught our flights home!



*Logo of Convocation: A Community of Meercats Surrounding a Tau Cross*

We would like to thank Anita Catron, Minister Provincial, and her team for the wonderful time that we spent with them in Santa Barbara. As well as benefiting from our attendance, there has been much to learn in terms of organising such an event, and the involvement has stimulated a number of ideas about our own forthcoming General Chapter in 2005 or thereabouts.

## From "Good News For The Idaho Guard" (July 2002)—Our Father?

*Chaplain (COL) Larry Harrelson, STARC Chaplain*

The last week of June I attended an international convocation of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis, of which I am a professed member. I was touched beyond expectation by grace. I share some of what happened. It gave me hope for our world, and perhaps it will encourage you as well.

One day we had an interfaith dialogue between a Jewish rabbi, a Muslim imam, and a Christian clergyman. The Christian minister, an Episcopal priest, pastors in New York and works part-time with cadets at West Point. He met the imam (who lives and teaches in the U.S.) at the Taize international prayer community in France. The Jewish rabbi is an active-duty chaplain at West Point.



*Our 85th Anniversary of Founding Cake*

The most powerful piece for me was the actual interfaith worship service following the dialogue, which was held in the chapel at the Catholic retreat center where we were meeting. The modified Taize worship service was called to worship by the rabbi's shofar (ram's horn) and the Muslim call to prayer by the imam. Sacred readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Koran, and the New Testament were done in Hebrew, Arabic, and English respectively. The three faiths were respected, yet nothing was watered down or diminished. Respect for diversity and unity was present.



*The essence of shared spirituality at Santa Barbara: Rabbi Carlos Huerta, Jewish Chaplain and Professor of Higher Mathematics at The United States Military Academy, West Point, NY; Anita Catron; Imam Mohamad Bashir Arafat, Founder & Director of Civilizations Exchange and Cooperation Foundation, Baltimore, MD Muslim Chaplain, Johns Hopkins University; The Rev. Masud; Brother Robert Hugh in foreground right; and Keith Slater, Minister General and Bishop-to-be front row back.*

All were invited forward to receive the laying-on-of hands—a practice common to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and simultaneous prayers by the rabbi, imam, and priest, prayers done in the languages and traditions

of the three faiths. Most of the 150 convocation participants, including myself, received this spiritual blessing. We were in no hurry, for God's work was being done by us children of Abraham. Dialogue is important. More important is praying together, with mutual respect.

I am proud to be in the U.S. military and to know that we long have been interfaith in the Chaplain Corps, as we promote the free exercise of religion for all—an expression of our great country. The cards and handbooks we carry as chaplains in the pockets of our BDUs [battle dress uniforms] speak to our calling. At the casualty collection points, we prayerfully make our rounds of those not expected to live. If a chaplain of the dying person's faith group is not present, any chaplain uses the appropriate prayers for that person—be they Catholic prayers, Protestant prayers, Jewish prayers, or Muslim prayers.

Surely, our attitude can be that of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying, "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9).

## From Suzanne Harrison on the Internet Discussion Group

Wow. I am still processing it all. It was a bit overwhelming at times for me, as I've never been around that many Franciscans at once. I had the privilege of driving Br. Dunstan down from San Francisco, and then HE drove ME back again when I was feeling under the weather.

### High Points

The interfaith dialogues and service—especially the laying on of hands and spontaneous dance at the end, while we poor musicians tried to keep up with the music of the Spirit. Finally meeting my first postulant/novice counselor, Pat Shelton. What a wonderful lady she is! Plus, I have so many more faces to recall when I pray for the names. Sr. Rose's sense of humor, Fred Ball's fractured Bible stories (just try to find the thirty-tooth chapter of the Book of Revolutions!), and Br. Robert Hugh's stories about his aunt. The talent show. I'm no ham, really I'm not, it just looks that way. Look at John Brockmann, now HE's a ham. Laughter, joy, contemplation, prayer. Being surrounded by my Franciscan family's love and warmth after my "field trip" to the emergency room - at St. Francis Medical Center. The prayers are working, I will be fine!

## Heroes of the Order:

### Ralph Shower Honored by Diocese for His Ministries

*(Franciscan Times, Winter 1998)*

Lay leaders from around the Riverside Diocese were honored for their ministries by Bishop Frederick Borsch on December 6th, 1998 at the Diocesan Convention, and among them was our own Ralph Shower. His Diocesan citation read as follows:

A ministry of "accompaniment," "a ministry of presence" is how Ralph Shower categorizes his five plus years of HIV / AIDS prevention work with homeless persons in their isolated communities under downtown freeway overpasses and along the Los Angeles River. In weekly outreaches, Shower offers condoms, brochures, and counsel...along with food, clothing, and blankets to persons who are at great risk of exposure to HIV. Many use heroin, crack, alcohol, and other substances. Some subsist as panhandlers, pimps, or as male, female, transgender, or transsexual sex workers. As a brother of Jesus and as a member of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis, Shower extends God's embrace to those who are perhaps the most marginalized in our society.



*Ralph Shower*

## TSSF, SSF, CSF Preaching Trips to Mexico: 1999 and 2000



*Br. Tom, Bishop Carranza, Anita, and Br. Clark*

*Brs. Clark, Guire and Tom with Sr. Pamela Clare arranging flowers before a service*



### Novice Mission to Mexico 1999

*Anita Catron, Provincial Minister (from Franciscan Times Spring 1999)*

For ten days this last March, a group of Franciscans (Brothers Tom, Clark and Guire (SSF novice), Sister Pamela Clare, and I) were invited to do a preaching/teaching mission in the Diocese of Mexico. The Right Reverend Sergio Carranza, Bishop of the Diocese of Mexico, and Father Vincent Schwahn, Dean of the Seminary of San Andres, organized the nine-church engagement. The goal was to share



*Anita with Graciela Alvarez y Fuentes*

*Br. Tom Preaching TSSF in Mexico City*

our personal Franciscan journeys, describe the whole Society of St. Francis, give homilies, and learn about Mexican Anglican spirituality—all in Spanish. The churches where we went ranged from small mission churches in outlying areas to large congregations in Mexico City. A few of the Anglican churches were over 100 years old. In general, the Diocese of Mexico is growing.

Perhaps what we gained more than we offered. We found the Mexican congregations to be very welcoming, friendly, inquisitive, and open to the idea of Anglican religious orders. One of the most rewarding experiences took place when we accompanied a priest to the homes of two sick parishioners to pray and visit with them. The hospitality exhibited by our Mexican brothers and sisters was outstanding; one whole evening was organized around a shared evening meal. One of our group put it quite well: the spirit in the more remote churches was most moving and generally deeper than elsewhere. We even learned about some of the deeply-rooted, pre-Spanish customs woven into the services.

There was even time to tour the pyramids at Teotihuacan; the exquisite Templo Mayor (Tenochtitlan), archeological ruins excavated within the last twenty years in the center of Mexico City, the main archeological museum; and to re-master the metro and bus system, which is less hectic than I recall from twenty years ago when I was last in Mexico.

I very much enjoyed returning to a country where I once lived for three years and returning to the Spanish-speaking congregation of San Jorge where my own vocation developed. I loved reviving my Spanish language skills, seeing former friends, and being a whole family with my First Order brothers and sister. It was also a real treat to visit two of our four Third Order members who live in Mexico.

True, we did miss interacting more with the seminary students and learning from them, but, when we return at the Bishop's invitation in Advent 2000, perhaps we can remedy that shortcoming.

## TSSF Helps Form the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities

*Franciscan Times Spring 2000*

Four of the Episcopal Church's Christian Communities met with Bishop Rodney Michel of the House of Bishops' Standing Committee on Religious Communities in late February to report on the formation of NAECC, the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities. Five of the church's eight canonically recognized Communities have voted to proceed with the formation of this association, which Bishop Michel has hailed as of vital importance for the spiritual growth of the Episcopal Church. As he told the gathering, "You are spokespersons for your community, your parish church, and the Episcopal Church." Religious life is one of the best-kept secrets in the Episcopal Church, and Bishop Michel called on the communities to be more active in the dioceses in which they are resident, taking part in diocesan conventions, and furthering the mission of the church whenever possible. Sparked by input from George Gray (Community of the Paraclete), the association defined its purpose: to "share and communicate the fruits of the Gospel, realized in community, with the church and the world." This year's meeting, the third such conference of communities, focused on discernment and formation, and began to explore the Rules of Life followed in each community. Bishop Michel stressed the importance of the discipline of the Daily Office, common to most Rules, as a means to foster a sense of community. As conference convenor Tobias Haller (Brotherhood of Saint Gregory) put it, "an invisible wave of prayer washes over the world several times each day as people around the globe open their prayerbooks and breviaries, whether alone or in choir." Carol Tookey (TSSF) added that given the international character and the flexible rule of her community, the Office is being prayed in many ways by many voices. The next

step for the association is the adoption of by-laws, which will be explored at the next conference.



- 1—Anita Catron and Andrew Wilkes, TSSF
- 2—Congregation of the Companions of the Holy Spirit
- 3—Order of the Paraclete
- 4—Brotherhood of St. Gregory
- 5—Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit

## Three Reflections by the American Province Representatives to Interprovincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC) 1999

*Anita Catron, Minister Provincial*

The experience of the 1999 Interprovincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC) in Brisbane, Australia, was one I shall remember fondly. It confirmed again that I have been called to follow Christ in the way of St. Francis. I remembered that it had been almost twenty years since my profession in that small lush garden far from home. Indeed I have been called to pray unceasingly. I have been called to love my brothers and my sisters, those whom I know and even those whom I do not know halfway around the world. Further, our Third Order aims tell me that I have been called to live simply, to spread the spirit of love and unity within the family of God and to make our Lord known and loved everywhere.

The IPTOC papers each provincial delegation wrote helped us have an early understanding of one another from province to province but also within our own provinces, where distances are great, and cultures, languages, devotions, and practices are varied. Each Franciscan province truly has its own rich and varied heritage to be cherished and celebrated.

In Brisbane, I had a chance to test once again my various Franciscan callings. I was in a new and different location, new people, new way of expressing the English language; new cultures—both indigenous and Australian; new foods (scones!), new ways of praying the Daily Office, new reasons to love my Franciscan family. And yet, it was as though I belonged to this new, far-off setting. During my lifetime I have lived in three other countries and six different American cities, experiencing the diversity of life each offered. To my amazement, my heart recognized the Franciscan charism everywhere I lived or traveled.

One could say, after all, that I've been well-grounded in the Third Order Principles for Daily Reading, the intercessory prayers we say for one another around the globe, the Third Order Constitution, our own provincial statutes, the new Guide to Love and Harmony: "What first steps can I do today." Suddenly, the community obedience prayer, "Both here and in all your churches throughout the whole world..." took on true meaning. Besides the institutional ways of recognizing my callings, there was the mere "being" with one another in study, prayer, work (meetings!), meals, and sightseeing. To me these are all clear callings to witness Jesus in the lives of others wherever I may land or with whomever I may be. They even teach me something about myself, that while I am special accord-

ing to God's gift of grace, so is everyone else in God's creation. I am called to love others, and that love we share really is the glue of our community. Or, as William Countryman said in his book, *The Good News of Jesus*, unless I realize that you are as fully human as I am, there is no love (paraphrased).

Interacting with my tertiary brothers and sisters from other countries at IPTOC was part of the heavenly calling I have experienced. We were indeed fortunate to have the advantage of meeting with our First Order brothers and sisters, and one second order sister as well, completing the Franciscan family. Both our diversity and our similarities bind us together. Hence, we are called upon to be lovers, paving the way in this needy world of ours toward our ultimate, heavenly calling with God. Our journeys, then, may all be diverse, but the faith we share and celebrate in Christ and Francis is the same. For that we give thanks.

**From Joan Verret, IPTOC representative and Fellowship Coordinator of the American Province**

The jumble of sights and sounds and the discovery of sameness and differences at the Interprovincial Third Order Chapter have finally melded together into an experience that has identified for me the worldwide aspect of our Order. We came to IPTOC from diverse geographical locations and from varying social and economic levels within our own provinces.

The societies and cultures that we live in color our understanding of Francis and Clare. There are vast differences of "norms" of behavior in our own provinces, let alone throughout the world. The status of women, especially ordained women, educational opportunities or the lack of opportunities, and economic security are just a few examples of the differences that we experience.

Our language at first seemed the same, but nuances of meanings and sometimes totally different definitions of the same word or phrase led to confusion if not misunderstanding at times. And yet we came together united by our Christian faith, lived out by us through our Franciscan spirituality.

The Eucharist united us in thanksgiving and praise. The daily offices brought us together corporately to pray and study. As Scripture was read with various accents and pronunciations, I thought it must be pleasing to God to hear us all together, united in worship.

Our differences in preferred food and drink, accents, etc., became very secondary to our discovery that we are the same at the core of our beings. We are united in an Order that "sets out in the name of Christ to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all." We all offer the Community Obedience, and we attempt to live up to our Rules. Our vocation calls us to prayer, study and work. Hopefully others see in us humility, love and joy.

There is a bond between us that transcends language, custom, nationality and race. We are united in and for the love of Christ and Francis.

**From David Burgdorf, Provincial Chaplain**

A symbol, according to one of my teachers, "throws together" many experiences and makes them all available in one picture or word. As I reflect on the many moments of the First and Third Order Interprovincial Chapters in Brisbane last September, my brain has "thrown together" many experiences in one symbol. The picture is not, in fact, from any of the scheduled deliberations of brothers and sisters from around the world.

At one point, as a friar was professed in St. Philip's Parish in Brisbane with a church packed with family, parishioners and Franciscan friends, a high-pitched drum began a rhythm about half a regular heart rate. The most amazing sound came from the back of the church. Around the font were seated twenty or so very dark-skinned men and women from the Torres Strait Islands. The four-part praise song they began was unfamiliar to me, but its very strangeness and otherworldliness impressed on me the breadth of people God's love touches. These people were leading the praise of Africans, Americans, Europeans, Pacific Islanders, Australians and New Zealanders. Embracing us all with their unique sound, they pointed us and helped us respond to the boundless Love, which drew us



*L to R, Front to Back: Row 1: Dorothy Brooker (MP, New Zealand); Anita Catron (MP Americas); Joan Verret (Americas); Row 2: Val Tibbey (Australia); Anne Kotze (MP Africa) Marion Nevell (Europe); Back Row: David \_\_\_\_\_ (Africa); Keith Slater (incoming Minister General, Australia); Caroline Clapperton (MP Europe); Alden Whitney (outgoing Minister General); David Burgdorf (Americas); Allen Williams (Europe)*

all together in the first place. Later on January 1, 2000, when television images of Pacific Islanders welcoming the new Millennium flashed around the world, I thought of the Torres Strait Islanders leading our praise. Even now, hours before I get up in California, they lead my praise in time on any given day.

Often, staying in the Franciscan Way in the USA can be challenging simply because we live so far from each other. Remembering that the song praising God's love precedes and follows us around the globe shortens the distances and throws us together again into the immense community of the Beloved.



### **The Norms are Published For the First Time**

*Anita Catron (Franciscan Times Spring 2000)*

Following the lead of the First Order Brothers, Carol Tookey reviewed the minutes of ten years or so of Chapters (1988-1999) and collected items that were voted on and passed. Many had been reported in *The Franciscan Times*, so none of them were “new.”

They were compiled in one document in order to help Chapter members carry out their duties, and to inform those who were new of actions undertaken at previous Chapter meetings. As is our custom, they have been published in the minutes of each Chapter meeting over the years. In effect, they are informational and help all Third Order members, in many respects, to interpret the current TSSF Statutes and TSSF Constitution.

Here are some “Norms” that are unique to the Province of the Americas and that remain as part of our heritage from Father Joseph and TSF (see page 31):

- the requirement of each tertiary to read a Daily Office, and
- the sacrament of penance (e.g. confession) is normative, with two sacramental confessions required annually. (1996)

Additionally, professed members are expected to report yearly, renew their vows annually, and pledge to the Third Order. If there is no response to a request for clarification of status by the inactive member to two letters and two phone calls by the Area Chaplain, we will consider the lack of response to constitute a request for release from vows, which will be acted upon at the next Chapter. (1998)

Finally, it has been a Norm that all professed members be members of parishes in communion with the See of Canterbury. This has led to the creation of an Order of Ecumenical Franciscans, the Order of Lutheran Franciscans, and the Order of Old Catholic Franciscans.

### **Anita Catron's Final Report as Minister Provincial (October 2002)**

As I reflect upon my six years as your Minister Provincial, I am very grateful to each of you here, to all Third Order members and to my family—David, Stephanie and Ruth-- for the faithful support and love during this time of my ministry to the Third Order. The First Order Brothers and Sisters in this Province have also contributed so much to my upbringing, and I consider them family.

I have grown in my own spiritual journey in unimaginable ways, and for that I thank God and the Holy Spirit for leading me. The *Principles* of the Order have undergirded me, and given me an appreciation for the ministry of each and every Third Order member, and I celebrate the diversity that we share. I could not have designed this path myself—it was entirely God's doing.

There have been challenges—modifying the sacramental confession requirement, reinforcing use of the Daily Office in the American Province, helping fellowships grieve in a healthy way, recognizing Community Obedience, being asked to preach sermons at the last minute, and the loss of two Ministers Provincial. The joys far outnumber the challenges. The joys include seeing the Third Order as a truly global Christian Community, inclusion of non-Anglicans in the Order, birth of NAEC (National Association of Christian Communities), the recent Provincial Convocations, ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholic Secular Franciscans and the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans, the two preaching missions in Mexico, the beginnings of interfaith dialogue, engaging conversation with the First Order Brothers and Sisters worldwide, efforts for peace and justice, and much more.

Here are a few highlights of the past year. In November my husband David and I hosted a celebration of the ministry of John Scott, our first Minister Provincial/Guardian, in his Philadelphia home. About 20 members from the NJ and Philadelphia Fellowships attended. We shared our Franciscan journeys and how we had met John. It was evident from the “stories” that John had touched the spiritual lives of many of us, including David and me. It was through John that I was introduced to the Third Order.

I had a rewarding experience when I joined Brothers Clark Berge and Tom Carey on the preaching and teaching mission to the Diocese of Mexico. We were well received by Bishop Carranza and the clergy of the 12 churches we visited. The parishioners treated us kindly, always showering us with special meals and stories. One of the best memories was being housed at the “Asilo de Ancianos” (Old Folks Home) in Toluca!

Other memories were the penetrating questions people asked us about our Franciscan journeys. And the Provincial Convocation! A treat in so many ways, and a beautiful California location with time to pray, relax, meet friends, “discern” and hear Rabbi Huerta and Imam Ararat. The blessing from Father Masud, the Rabbi and the Imam was unforgettable.

I'm happy to report that my family is well. My granddaughter Emilie is as cute as a button—almost in the terrible twos—but she reminds me daily that life is a precious gift. While we saw the passing of my 90-year-old mother-in-law in January, later we were able to

celebrate my uncle's 90 birthday in NJ. In May I returned to Frederick, MD for a college reunion and in late October I shall go to my high school reunion in NJ. My work at American Express continues to go well, and life moves along, thanks be to God.

I urge you as tertiaries to focus on the future vision and hopes of the Third Order, to continue compiling our 85-year-old history in this Province, and to engage the talents and ministries of all Third Order members to further the three aims of the Order.

Thank you for the privilege of being your Minister Provincial. May God bless you all.

## “My Early Days in TSSF”

*Mary Alice White (Franciscan Times 2003)*

I do not know the date of Brother Robert Hugh's arrival from England and the merging of our Order and the English Order into the Society of St. Francis. I only know that there came a renaissance within the Order. Other brothers, of course, came. I believe actually it was 1960 that I first met Brother Robert when he visited Denver.

He told a small group of us what the brothers did in England as well as at Little Portion. Now that I think back upon it, I believe that his enthusiasm and knowledge of the brothers' work is what really inspired me to become a full-fledged tertiary in the first place. He then and now means so much to the Order and has influenced hundreds of people, I'm sure, to become Third Order people.

## Reminiscences of Br. Robert Hugh, SSF

*Br. Robert Hugh, SSF*



*Fr. Algy*

*All from memory, so no guarantees as to accuracy in every detail.*

I was 16-years old when I discovered that only ten miles from my high school was the headquarters of a Franciscan Friary organized in the Church of England. I had always supposed that strange characters like monks and nuns and friars were bound to be Roman Catholic. A weekend visit proved me wrong, and I came under the guidance of Fr. Algy, SSF, and his young secretary novice, Br. Michael. When I left school for military draft service in the army just after World War II, Algy suggested I become a Companion (Associate, as we would say in this Province), and helped me draw up my first Rule of Life and make my first confession, and was my spiritual director until his death in 1955. After reading theology at Cambridge, and going on to seminary at Oxford, I became a tertiary for the next decade as a parish priest in the diocese of Durham. First Fr. Francis and then Fr. Reginald were the friars who guided my Third Order journey. I also remember being sent off by bus to be looked at by Dorothy Swayne, a formidable but wonderful tertiary who in the 1930s had worked with Algy in adapting the Principles of the Christa Seva Sangha to become the Principles of the First and the Third Orders SSF.

In 1964 I left parish ministry to test my vocation in the First Order SSF, at Alnmouth, Hilfield, and Glasshampton. Only just first professed, I was asked to be one of three friars to visit the OSF

Friars in the US as part of an exchange at the time of the amalgamation of OSF and SSF. I was told it was for "a year, or so." At the end of November 2002 I shall have completed thirty-five years of "...or so"!

For three years I was Novice Guardian at Little Portion, while Br. Luke fulfilled that role in England. In 1970 I made my life profession in New York, and when Luke returned to the US and succeeded Br. Paul as Minister Provincial, he asked me to become Chaplain to the Third Order, which I did for the next four years.

Paul had been working to communicate his vision of the Third Order while he was Minister, and I saw it as my trust to further that vision. Paul saw the Third Order as free-standing in its own right, with its own administrative, pastoral and formation leadership, rather than being heavily dependent upon the paternal benevolence and guidance of the friars. In accepting Luke's invitation, I declared my hope that by the end of my term as Chaplain I should have worked myself out of a job, as the role would thenceforward be filled by a tertiary. That did not quite happen, as Br. Mark Francis followed me for the next three years, but already much progress was being made. During this time I traveled a great deal to spend time with fellowships and individuals, realizing that it is not really possible to win people to a different understanding of the Third Order by the written word alone. I believe that I managed to visit personally with all the professed but three or four during my years as Chaplain. Many were very responsive to this, but others clearly felt threatened by any change. In many cases they had a staunch Anglo-Catholic background, a deep commitment to their profession, and to the friars, especially to Fr. Joseph, which they feared they might lose if the Third Order stood free and equal with the First. Because Paul's initiative coincided with the SSF/OSF amalgamation, quite a number of tertiaries concluded that it was all a scheme that "hose dreadful Brits" (who, some of them were convinced, were "Black Protestants!") had



*Hilfield Friary*



*Br. Robert Hugh, 1968*

hatched. In fact it was the American Province that blazed trails in many areas that other provinces followed later.

I find it hard to believe how different my role as friar Chaplain to the Third Order was from that of, say, a Friar Visitor today. If new would-be tertiaries wanted to join, they wrote to me, and I approved their draft rule. If they were ready for profession, my approval as Chaplain was a key part of that. If a newsletter needed to go out, I was the one who composed it, and then typed it on to a stencil, put it on the Gestetner duplicator, and lamented as all the 'o's dropped out after the first fifty copies, leaving blobs of ink on the page. Fortunately, numbers were much smaller (my guess is about 150).

Formation was the first area really taken over by the Third Order itself, and I have the happiest memories of visits to Lambertville, NJ, where Peter Funk was composing the first set of Formation letters, as he and Marie Hayes guided those in formation (at first divided according to gender). John Scott became the first administrator of the Third Order (Guardian in those days, rather than Minister).

In 1979, when Norman Crosbie succeeded Luke as Minister Provincial, he asked me (I was Assistant Minister) to represent him and the Province in the relationships between the friars and the tertiaries. Thus began the Friar Visitor role. In 1981 I became Minister, and, as the

CSF Sisters have done consistently, combined both roles. For most of the years since 1987, when my term as Minister ended, I have continued to be Friar Visitor. Participation in Regional and Provincial Convocations and in the Third Order Chapter have been highlights for my years. Now, as Br. Derek begins his term as Minister, he is combining the roles, ensuring the closest possible links between the First and Third Orders.

I hope that these reminiscences may be of some interest to Chapter as part of our Provincial memory, and might perhaps be of enough interest to the wider membership to warrant reproducing in a future *Franciscan Times*.

*If you did not have the opportunity to experience one of Br. Robert Hugh's famous presentations with his British sense of humor, you can get a taste of his presentations from the following excerpt from his pamphlet, The Religious Life (A Franciscan Viewpoint) (1979), that appeared in the Franciscan Times.*

### **“Francis the Romantic”**

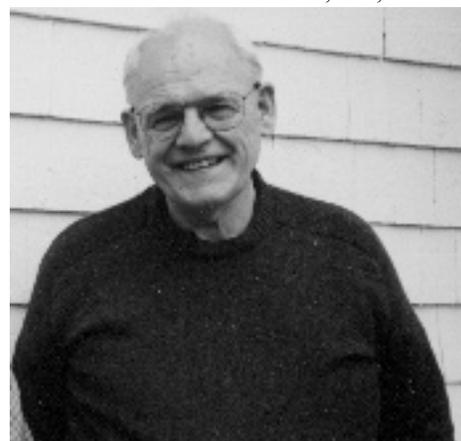
*Br. Robert Hugh, The Religious Life (A Franciscan Viewpoint) (1979) (pp. 10-13)*

As a Franciscan friar I find the great popularity of St. Francis a mixed blessing. On the one hand, Francis is so widely known and loved that most encounters and conversations start with a fund of good will. On the other hand, people often have their own assumptions as to who St. Francis was, and their own expectations as to what Franciscans should be. You would not believe how often we get calls from people who assume that as Franciscans we must have a limitless capacity for inheriting other people's discarded pets. And when someone says to me, “Oh, are you a Franciscan? I love St. Francis,” my heart sinks a little lest this be yet another person for whom St. Francis exists exclusively as the patron saint of birdbaths and/or the S.P.C.A.

Don't get me wrong: I am all in favor of being kind to animals, and certainly Francis had a great love for all the animal creation. All sorts of stories and legends of St. Francis—preaching to the birds; taming the wolf of Gubbio; introducing live farm animals into the first ever Christmas crèche at Greccio—testify to this. The problem is not starting here, but stopping here. Francis loved animals as part of a greater love for the whole creation as God's creation and for humankind as the crown of that creation.

Francis was undeniably a romantic. But a true romantic is not a sentimentalist. To make a thoroughgoing affirmation of the creation demands steel in the backbone along with the romantic vision. The sentimentalist is self-indulgent in allowing the luxury of being selective. If I say I love animals, or people, but in the end limit my love to those that are pretty, cute, grateful, responsive, or share my own preferences and prejudices, then I am being sentimental. Affirmation requires the risk of opening myself to the whole truth of the creature or person I affirm. If it is God's world, then it is all God's world, and not only the lovely bits of it: “He's got the whole world in His hands.” Francis understood that very clearly, as the story of the leper underlines. He learned that he would never meet anyone, however apparently unlovely, who was not created by God out of the same overflowing love as he himself was; never meet anyone for whom Christ did not die and rise again. So, shortly before his death, Francis could write in his last “Testament”: “When I was in sin the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself let me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me.”

It was Francis, the poet, visionary and romantic who wrote his great “Canticle of the Creatures” about our Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Fire and Sister Water. One might think of this as the outpouring of a young man, but, in fact, it was written in the last year of his life, when he had experienced much suffering and disappointment. He does indeed rejoice in and with Brother Fire “who is bright and cheerful and warm,” but for Francis, Brother Fire is still Brother Fire when he sears and burns. Thus, soon afterwards, lying



*Br. Robert Hugh, 2002*

frail and ill as thirteenth century surgeons try to treat an eye disease by heating an iron instrument red-hot in the fire in preparation for cauterizing his face from temple round to cheekbone, without any anesthetics, Francis can show himself the true romantic as without a trace of self-pity or sentimentality he says, "I pray you, Brother Fire, deal courteously with me."

Francis had learned that the gesture of true affirmation is also the authentic gesture of the cross, putting the one who affirms totally at risk to the one who is affirmed. This may help us to understand the phenomenon known as the Stigmata of St. Francis. Two years before his death he spent weeks alone in prayer upon Mount Alverna. During that time alone Francis was granted a vision of a Seraph responding to his earnest desire that he might be allowed to feel in himself something of the love that Christ felt for mankind and also something of the suffering Christ experienced upon the cross. When he came down from the mountain, for the brief remainder of his life, he bore in his hands and feet wounds as of nails, though he did his best to hide them from others. The fact of the stigmata in St. Francis is well attested. How should we respond? Cynically? "A most interesting example of hysteric symptoms in the light of our present-day understanding of psychosomatic illness." Or sentimentally? "What a beautiful story!" Or shall we just say that it was utterly consistent with Francis as the true romantic, who had learned that to make one's whole life an expression of the vulnerable gesture of arms freely stretched out upon the cross is inevitably to leave oneself open to hurt as well as to love and joy and peace?