

Chapter 14: John Brockmann, TSSF Minister Provincial 2011-2014



How I Grew in the Order

This history of the Province of the Americas has moved a macrocosm view of statistical large-scale generalities in the Introduction through the individual histories of the Ministers Provincial and the stories of what happened during their time in office. In this chapter the history of the Province moves from the macrocosm to the microcosm with the most specific memories of a particular Minister Provincial, me, and my 25-some years in the Province. Looking back on it all, my experiences in the Province almost seem *Forrest Gump*-like in the opportunities I have had to work with many of the major figures of the Province and experience so many important events of the Province over the last few decades.

My Beginnings in the Order

As an English professor at the University of Delaware, I spent many of my summers teaching short writing courses on four continents—a kind of busman’s holiday since teaching writing was what I did during the regular semesters. On those long, dark, over-ocean flights the question “What profiteth a man to gain the whole world and yet lose his soul” would often haunt the moments before I closed my eyes. Finally, at the end of one such a trip, I marched into the office of the rector of our campus parish, Bob Duncan (who later became first archbishop of the Anglican Church in North America), and I asked if he could help me find some stability in a life of prayer lived as a lay person.

He gave me Martin Thornton’s *Christian Proficiency* (1959), which I devoured, and, using it, I created a Rule of Life and began living it. Duncan then suggested that I talk with his vicar, *Rev. Jack Stapleton*, who had been elected Chaplain of our Province and then resigned in 1988 (See Chapter 4), and later asked for release from his vows in 1995. Jack suggested that I could more deeply live my Rule of Life in the company of others who were also trying to live a Rule of Life as lay people if I joined the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis. Thus, I applied to be a postulant so that I could more easily live my Rule of Life. I was officially received as a postulant on 5/20/1990; noviced on 5/09/91 and professed in 1993 at Graymoor (see below).

Thus when I began Formation, I was not *consciously* drawn into the Order by a knowledge of Francis and Clare, by an attraction to the Franciscan charism, or by romantic notions supplied by films like Zeffirelli’s *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. However, *unconsciously*, in the deep ways that God woos us, it was entirely fitting that I applied for postulancy in the Franciscan Third Order.

Growing up Roman Catholic, when it came time for Confirmation, all confirmands were encouraged to choose a new “spiritual” middle name. I was very excited about adopting a “macho” spiritual name like *George* from St. George who slew dragons or *Lawrence* after St. Lawrence the Deacon who withstood his tortures and even made light of them. However, my mother would not let her eldest son take on such ego-boosting spiritual names. Her retort to my choices was: “John, you need to take the name *Francis* from St. Francis of Assisi so that you can learn some humility.” Perhaps, then, it was the grace of Confirmation bestowed in that new middle name that marked my future spiritual path as revealed to me at just the right time and in just the right way—God’s *kairos* time and place.

Graymoor—The Northeast Convocation (NERC)

Drawing TSSF members from Virginia to Maine, the annual August meetings of NERC always had the reputation of being the largest of all the regional annual convocations as well as being the convocation home for many of past, present, and future TSSF leaders mentioned in these pages. This was the regional convocation home for John Scott, Alden Whitney, Masud ibn Syedullah, Ken Norian, Terry Rogers, Emmett Jarrett, Jane Ellen Traugott, Lynn Herne, Rick and Danni Bellows, etc.

For years NERC met at Graymoor Friary in Garrison, New York, the site of the first Franciscan foundation in the Episcopal Church, the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement. Father Paul of this Order created and publicized the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* celebrated around the world today at the end of January between the feasts of Sts. Peter and Paul. However, the monks and nuns of this Order left the Episcopal Church in 1908 to join the Roman Catholic Church (See Chapter 1).

On first arriving at the top of the long driveway zigzagging to the top of the mountain, the front of Graymoor always appeared to be a huge Stalinist edifice—all square and strictly utilitarian in design. Yet, once one arrived at the back of the building, there was a beautiful and unusual compound. A cliff outcrop by the crypt of Father Paul (founder of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement) looked out over the surrounding Taconic hills and mountains and down the Hudson River to distant New York City (see the very beginnings of the *Day in the Life of Convocations* streaming video on the TSSF website under *Resources for Tertiaries*. In this back compound was also the small St. Francis Chapel with a life-size statue of Francis, its face supposedly composed from his death mask, and the marble used for the altar came from Mt. Alverna in Italy, the site where Francis received the Stigmata.





Crypt of Fr. Paul and lookout over the Taconic Mountains.

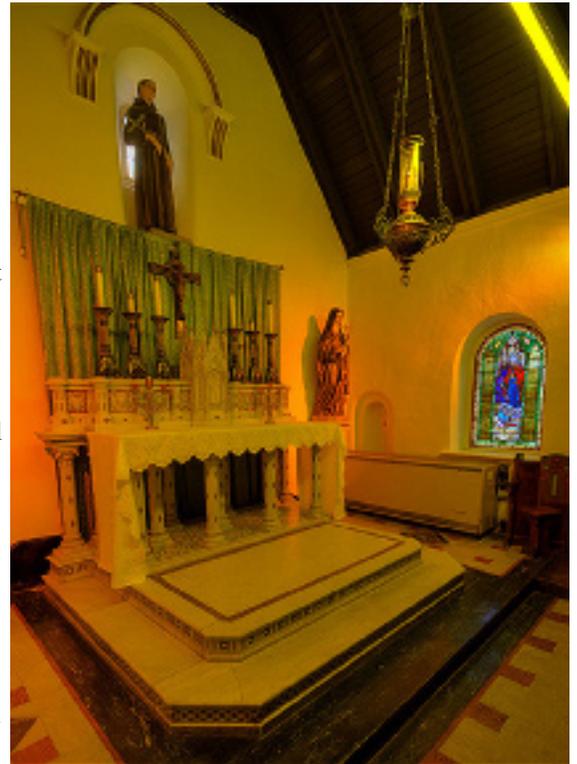
I met John Scott, the first Third Order Guardian, many times here at Graymoor. Ken Norian would mysteriously invite a select few to the meditation room where incense abounded. Jane

Ellen Traugott usually brought her tambourine, and in one memorable year Masud taught us about Taizé, its chants and prayers. Alden Whitney always came to the Northeast Convocation where I found him to be the “Very Model of a Modern Minister Provincial”--smart, insightful, with a certain weight of spiritual authority casually expressed. Alden received my profession here at Graymoor on August 28, 1993.

Graymoor was so important to me that when I married a wonderful woman named Sarah, we spent the tail-end of our honeymoon in 1994 attending NERC. A year later, Sarah and I presented the three-day program at Graymoor using multimedia and small group discussions formulated after Steve Allen’s

old show *Meeting of the Minds*. Our program asked participants to explore how many of the actions of Franciscan saints contrasted or even contradicted the traditional principles ascribed to Francis (e.g., Francis was a peacemaker, but St. Joan of Arc was a French war leader; Francis embraced poverty, but Sts. Kings Louis and Ferdinand had riches; Francis ordered his monks’ books to be destroyed in Bologna while later St. Thomas More wrote them and was one of the most learned men in Europe). (Portions of our presentation are captured on the *A Day in the Life of Convocations* made in 1995 and available for streaming from the TSSF website under *Resources for Tertiaries*.)

At NERC, time was always set aside for Chapter members to acquaint participants with what was going on in the Province at large. From one of these meetings led by Alden, I learned that the *Devotional Companion* was in the midst of being revised by Provincial Chaplain Marie Webner. I was only a novice, but one of the Franciscan books I found that opened my eyes to the wide world of Franciscan saints through the centuries was *The Poverello’s Round Table* (1939). From it I was keen, as a married man, to have included in our new *Devotional Calendar* the married Franciscan saintly couple Luchesio and Buonadonna (April 28). I also discovered a wide number of TSSF heroes or saints from other Third Order Provinces, e.g., Yona Kanamuyezi of Rwanda-Burundi, Jan. 23, and John Bradburne of Mutemwa, Sept. 5. Thus I was very interested to work with Marie in expanding the *Devotional Calendar* to include all these Third Order saints and heroes. I began working with Marie on the *Devotional Calendar* in late 1992, and she presented the revised *Devotional Companion* with the new *Devotional Calendar* to Chapter 1994. It was approved. (Twenty years later, in 2014, Carol Tookey again revised the *Devotional Companion* that includes the *Devotional Calendar*. I worked with her to include new Franciscan heroes from our Province whom you have read about in these pages: H. Baxter Liebler, Nov. 21, Desmond Lionel Morse-Boycott, Aug. 9, and Hugo Muller, Nov. 3.)



Statue of St. Francis with face created from his death mask.

Helping with the Franciscan Times

In fulfilling our Rule’s call for a yearly retreat, I was making a silent weekend Advent retreat in Burlington, Vermont. My bottom-bunk-mate was an older man who was pretty good at staying silent. Over the course of the retreat I saw that he was also an old hand at choosing the driest logs and lighting the fire in the cabin’s hearth, rubbing the backs of people he evidently knew from years past, and generally being the guru of lovely, warm places to meditate. It was only in the last three minutes of this retreat when words were finally allowed to pass that I found out I had bunked with just about the only Third Order Franciscan in Vermont and that his name was Robert Durand.

From that weekend of silent communion onward, Robert was a gracious mentor to me in the Order. We both were technical writers, and we both were adept at using computers for desktop publishing. He always had a kind word of encouragement for me as well as lots of red pencil marks

DEVOTIONAL
COMPANION
WITH CALENDAR

DRAWINGS BY RIK FITCH



RIK

THIRD ORDER, SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS
AMERICAN PROVINCE
1994



DEVOTIONAL
COMPANION

WITH CALENDAR
1983

Third Order, Society of Saint Francis
American Province
1983

for the articles and poems I submitted to him when he was editor of the *Franciscan Times* (Summer 1991 issue to the Lent 1996 issue).

At one point Bob Durand took me to my first fellowship meeting, The New England Fellowship (Br. Juniper Fellowship) on the outskirts of Boston which was presided over by Judith Gillette, who was for many years an Assistant Formation Director. Mona Hull was also at the meeting. Mona had been the first treasurer of the TSF Corporation (see Chapter 3). She had worked with Paul Sabatier's research materials that he had gathered for his 1893 biography of St. Francis. These materials were then donated to the Boston Public Library. (Her 1962 dissertation was titled *The Usefulness of the Original Legend of Saint Francis of Assisi in Religious Education*.) In these research materials she told us of seeing an actual document signed by the Poverello as well as a wood-bound breviary of an early monk. (Paul Sabatier, a French Protestant, wrote the first modern historical biography of St. Francis in 1893. It was put on the Index of Forbidden Books for Catholics in 1906.) There were many others at the fellowship meeting who were TSSF, SFO, Ecumenical Franciscans, and just good fellow travelers. Judith's husband David is one such fellow traveller and he has a talent for woodworking; he fashioned a wooden Tau cross on a leather strap which I wear each Sunday when I celebrate the Eucharist.



Bob Durand, editor of the Franciscan Times (1991-96).

All too soon, however, Robert Durand moved to Hawaii where he found that his ministries and his consultant work made it too difficult for him to continue as editor of *The Franciscan Times* (FT). Thus, with the Fall 1996 issue, I followed in his footsteps as editor and designer. (The same October 1996 Chapter that voted for me to become editor also voted for Ken Norian to become bursar. I was also nominated during that Chapter to run as Minister Provincial along with Julia Bergstrom (Assistant Chaplain) and Anita Catron (three term Fellowship Coordinator) was elected.) However, as editor of the FT, I was required to meet with Chapter each year, and, for many years, I was accorded voice and vote at Chapter.

Becoming a Priest Forever in the Order of Melchizedek

In 1995, my Bishop in Delaware, Bishop Cabell Tennis, knew that to express my TSSF Rule of Life, I was teaching Education for Ministry (EFM) and my university core course on Biblical and Classical Literature as a full professor (Study); had voluntarily done three units of hospital chaplain internship during a sabbatical (CPE as my Work/Service); had gone through our multi-year formation process; and had just finished a program in spiritual direction at Shalem Institute. Moreover, Bishop Tennis, like many bishops, had the perennial problem of small parishes that could not afford full-time clergy salaries and benefits. So the Bishop approached me and a few others to create a novel path to ordination, a variation on Canon 9. (Canon 9 had originally been designed by the National Church for places such as isolated rural villages. Bishop Tennis, who had been a canon lawyer, reasoned that the whole of the small Diocese of Delaware could be seen as such a "village.") He required that I and my compatriots promise only to serve as priests in the Diocese of Delaware, to be bi-vocational, and to serve only in small, financially strapped parishes—then he would agree that we would not have to go to seminary but would complete a program of local tutoring in order to pass the General Ordination Examination. God graced me in rural Delaware to have within five miles in one direction a retired dean of a British seminary, and, in the other, a retired leader of interprovincial policies from the National Church. So I and ten others entered this program.

However, by the end of the program, I was the only one ordained as deacon (May 1997) and then priest (December 1997); all the others had dropped out or been asked to leave. Then within a month of my December ordination, Bishop Tennis retired, and the incoming bishop ended this special ordination program; no one ever again would be ordained in this fashion. And then, within a short time, General Convention abolished the Canon 9 priesthood, and "regularized" all Canon 9 priests so that there would not be a two-tier system of priesthood within the Church. Thus I was ordained in a completely unique fashion only by the grace and timing of God—I very much feel to be a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. (Masud ibn Syedullah was the preacher at my December ordination.)

Provincial Convocations

Provincial Convocation 1997

The next year I was part of Anita Catron's team putting on the Provincial Convocation of June 1997 in New Orleans. Among other duties, I would jog along the streetcar tracks each morning to a French bakery, *The Staff of Life*, to buy the bread for the Convocation's daily Eucharist.

Provincial Convocation 2002

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 Suzanne Farnham's books on discernment in community (*Listening Hearts*), and persuaded Chapter to invite her as the keynote speaker.



Profession of Alice Banks (in blue on right) with Br. Juniper's Seesaw Fellowship members: (front to back) Bonnie Barnidge, Angie Rummel, Nancy Woodward, Janice MacDonald, and John Brockmann presiding.



Frances Baum's funeral with statue of Francis and the Birds in the center: (l to r) Fellowship members: Bonnie Barnidge, John Brockmann, Angie Rummel, and Anne Adkins.

The convocation was ensconced in a eucalyptus grove at the The House of 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 so many of us the most amazing part of the Convocation was the prayer service and blessing presided over by Masud who was accompanied by Iman Bashar 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 under *Resources for Tertiaries*, and by reviewing Chapter 8 on Anita Catron Miner's time as Minister Provincial.)

The Delmarva Fellowship, Br. Juniper's Seesaw

Though Provincial and Regional Convocations were important experiences for me, it was life in the local Br. Juniper's Seesaw Fellowship in Delaware that kept the Spirit alive for me month in and month out. When I was teaching at the University of Delaware, I would attend the newly formed Br. Juniper's Seesaw Fellowship that had branched out from the Philadelphia Fellowship with John Scott. (To understand our moniker, re-read Chapter 9 of the *Little Flowers of St. Francis*.)

At one time, the Philadelphia Fellowship with John Scott was the epicenter of the Province of the Americas. However, by the time I was professed, the number of people meeting in center city Philadelphia was dwindling while at the same time more were meeting in the Princeton, New Jersey area to the north where Peter and Mary Funk lived (see Chapter 1) and in the Wilmington, Delaware area where I lived and where Frances Baum lived. She was the first and only professed member of the Third Order in Delaware for many years, having had her profession received by Br. Robert Hugh in Assisi while she was on a pilgrimage with him in 1990. She was known by her first name Joan for some years of her life, but, upon profession, she resolved that all would call her by her middle name, Frances. And, so we all did.

In addition to Frances in our Fellowship, there were a number of Delaware people I met while attending NERC at Graymoor: Bonnie Barnidge who transferred from the Roman Catholic SFOs and Angie Rummel, our long-time visitor. A number of participants in my EFM classes that I mentored or my directees joined the Order. Some persevered like Nancy Woodward and Russ Bohner, while some followed alternative spiritual paths like Paul Garland who left Formation and became an archbishop in the Orthodox Church of Canada in the U.S.A. Together with Alice Banks from Norfolk Virginia, the Fellowship expanded and contracted as members from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey came and went.

One of the most memorable events of our Br. Juniper's Seesaw Fellowship for me was a Blessing of the Animals in Lewes, Delaware. During that Blessing, I gave a presentation along with a storyteller/holy person of the Nanticoke Tribe (local native people of Delaware) during which he and I explored for the audience the places of coincidence of Franciscan spirituality and understanding of nature with the Nanticoke spirituality and understanding of nature.

Life at Chapter by Maryann Jackman (*Information Sheet October 1985*)

Those of you who have participated in Fellowship retreats and area convocations, when we are able to share a bit of live-in community, will know how very special those times are. There is a certain bonding that takes place in such a family setting, working and praying together, sharing ideas, laughing together, sharing a meal, working through a hard problem, discovering more of who we are in relationship with each other and in our Franciscan vocations. Many things stand out as high points, and I'd like to share a bit of the joy I felt with you all.

First, I found that Kale King, who has always been special to me, was coming in on the same flight from our transfer point in Chicago. Greeting Kale at O'Hare as we boarded was the beginning of it. When we arrived at Islip, Dorothy Nakatsuji was there. Although we'd never met before, I knew her, it was as if we just picked up a life-long conversation we'd left off a few minutes ago.

The depth of sharing, loving, and openness among us all was amazing throughout the whole week. It felt as if the Kingdom had arrived. (We certainly felt your prayers!) Masud's installation as Chaplain has to rank among the highest of the high points. The Rev. Robert Goode ("Gooch") adapted the "Celebration of a new Ministry" from the BCP to our needs, and Masud was presented in turn with

- a Bible ("be among us as one who proclaims the Word"),
- the Formation Handbook ("help us form new brothers and sisters in the Franciscan life"),
- a stole ("be among us as a priest"),
- a cope ("help us celebrate the joys of the Franciscan life"),
- a cross ("remember the past for this is part of who we are"),

- oil stock (“be among us as a healer and reconciler”), and
- the Statutes (“obey these statutes and do not forget that our ministries flow from the bishops of the Church).

Gooch’s sermon was eloquent and moving. The whole process was one of numinous joy, and is something I will never forget.

The activity of the Holy Spirit was so apparent, and not just in the work we did—at one point I was talking to Alden Whitney about one of the novices in the men’s program whose address we had not known since his seminary graduation last June—he’s a really special one, and just as I said to Alden “I wish I knew where he was,” the phone rang for me—the lost novice calling to say hello and tell me where he was! Zap! The Lord was obviously “at it again” all through the week.

Another high point was the wild and wonderful game of Trivial Pursuit (won by Br. Kirk SSF & Jackie Richards!) that went on until midnight. The deck was obviously stacked—at one close point near the end, it was The Rev. Alden Whitney’s turn to answer and the fate of the game practically hung on that answer—what question did he draw? “Name the authors of the four Gospels.” But the all time favorite question was “which leg of a chicken is most tender?” This led to a continuing joke, and David Nard and Alden quoted freely from “The 1938 USDA Study,” giving number of trials per chicken, etc. We all laughed so much that we were sore from it.

There were quiet times, thoughtful times, serious times, too. Much work was accomplished. The day before Chapter officially opened, Br. John George SSF facilitated an all-day discussion of our assets and liabilities, and where we would like to go from here. Long-range goals were discussed, and during the course of the week, many of these began to fall into place, proceeding organically from our growth and development.

The strongest points seemed to be that we need to share the leadership workload, possibly on a regional basis. This is developing beautifully with the increased responsibilities of Area Chaplains and the AFD programs now operating in both men’s and women’s formation, and through the leadership arising out of area convocations); that we need more post-profession support and involvement (this also proceeds from the newly expanded Area Chaplains’ roles); and some upgrading of the formation program (already being planned and implemented). We all saw exciting new possibilities.

We have come from being more an adjunct to the First Order than anything else to being an Order in our own right, independent but related to the First and Second Orders, and fully self-determining. Our Guardian now has equal status with and shared responsibility for all three Orders in the province with the Ministers Provincial of the First Order and the Mother of the Second Order. It was clear from the results of the meeting that we know who we are and have some idea of where we’re going. That we remain open to where the Lord wants to lead us is most important.

Thank all of you for your prayers for us — we were carried through a long and difficult agenda on the strength of those prayers, and we are grateful to you all.

My Life at Chapter 1995 to 2010

During the 15 years I attended Chapter at Little Portion Friary each October I did so most often as the editor of the *Franciscan Times*. During this time I was also an elected member of Chapter for two terms and then, after three years, another term. The choices and initiatives of the Ministers Provincial who guided Chapter during the years I attended, Alden Whitney, Anita Catron, Masud ibn Syedulullah, and Ken Norian, are reported in each of their respective chapters, so I will only tell you what the experience of attending Chapter was like.

On one hand, attending Chapter was like experiencing a mini-Provincial Convocation each year. Where else would you get the opportunity to work on important projects and have discussions with tertiaries from all points of the Province: Canada, East and West Coast US, the Caribbean, Guyana and Brazil? Where else would you hear reports of what’s going on in the Third Order in Africa or New Guinea? Where else could you pray along with First Order brothers and sisters as well as Second Order Poor Clares?

On the other hand, Chapter could be very much like a three-day meeting of a parish vestry with endless voting, discussions, and subcommittee work. However, unlike most vestry meetings I have attended, Chapter is always wonderfully leavened by the communal recitation of the Offices and a daily Eucharist. During each Little Portion Friary Eucharist offered by the Third Order we honored the various Eucharistic settings of the Province: Canadian, West Indies, USA.

Eucharists at Chapter, as at a Convocation, include, at one, renewals; and at another, the installation of various officers and prayers of thanksgiving for officers stepping down. The most solemn of the Chapter Eucharists, for me, is always the one in which we pray the necrology for the year. Name by name those who had died that year are said aloud, and one or more Chapter members who knew the person would voice a short remembrance. At one Chapter when I was Minister Provincial, the ashes of one of our professed were interred in the very simple graveyard of the friary. We processed out holding the Friary’s new statues of Elizabeth and Louis (our Third Order patron saints), I dug the small hole, and we said the prayers, and interred the ashes. (See the grave markers of Alvah and Anna Hoffman in this cemetery at the end of Chapter 3.)

We read in our *Principles* on Day 28 that tertiaries “delight in fun and laughter, rejoicing in God’s world, its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean.” Thus there always seemed time after all the work of the day for a late evening run to McNulty’s *Ice Cream Parlor*, a celebration of Ken Norian’s wedding engagement, a taste of a Caribbean carnival including a limbo stick, or sing-alongs of praise and folk music from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s with a local Third Order musician.



Jacquie Belcher.

Surrounded each year by so many people, who with God's grace, work long and hard to make the Province of the Americas alive, I am often reminded of those of the past who worked just as hard but have, for one reason or another, asked for release from their vows and have left the Order:

- Warren Tanghe who worked hard to create the Province's original Statutes and organizational structure and C. David Burt wrote one of the three position papers to carry to England to begin the process of consolidation with TSF and TSSF;
- Maryann Jackman who created the logo and masthead most often indicative of the Province, the Dancing Francis (1985), and who wrote about Chapter just above, edited the *Information Sheet*, was Provincial Secretary and so many roles;
- Jacqui Belcher, who edited the *Information Sheet* for so many years and created the triptych we still use at diocesan conventions;
- John Tolbert, who was Br. Heriticus at the 1997 Provincial Convocation (see pp. 101-2) ; and

- Marie Webner and Jack Stapleton, who were both Provincial Chaplains.

For all of these men and women who worked so diligently in this Province, God, thank you for the time we had together.

Minister Provincial 2011

Our Provincial Guardians and Ministers Provincial have come from many different areas in the Province:

- John Scott and Masud ibn Syedullah had been Provincial Chaplains,
- Anita Catron Miner had been Fellowship Coordinator,
- Ken Norian had been Bursar,
- Kale King and Dee Dobson had been general members of Chapter, and
- I was the first to come from Communications and Publications.

When Ken Norian resigned after two terms as Minister Provincial on taking up his duties as TSSF Minister General, I was elected without any opposition.

Attending to Infrastructure of the Province

I had always been deeply embarrassed when informed of the overwhelming percentage of professed in other Provinces who financially contributed to the needs of the Order. The Province of the Americas' percentage of professed contributing usually came in last among all the Provinces. This had been a problem since the time of John Scott:

- Only 43% of the professed contributed in 1982, and the Order moved into deficit spending;
- There were special mailings in the *Information Sheet* related to stewardship during Dee Dobson's tenure (1985);
- We went into debt in 1994 when Alden Whitney was Minister Provincial, and
- Failure to contribute financially was a focus of Chapter in 1998 and, in 1999, a task force to investigate was established.

This problem keeps reoccurring despite the fact that the threefold marks of profession—Report, Renew, and Contribute—have been repeatedly publicized.

Thus the Provincial Bursar, Tom Johnson, and I decided to once again take a look at the list of the professed to see who had failed to contribute for a span of at least three years—the most easily observed mark of profession. We discovered nearly 80 professed people in a province of 500—nearly 16%—had not contributed for at least three years. We then worked with the Chaplain to discover how many of these had also not reported and renewed. Sadly, we found nearly all had not.

Then, to my great discouragement, we observed that, among such folks who did not “Report, Renew or Contribute,” there were Area Chaplains and Fellowship Conveners—the face and first responders of the Province—who were not achieving the minimum threefold marks of profession. Sadly, this was nothing new. Five years earlier in 2006, the Provincial Fellowship Coordinator discovered that a number of Fellowship Conveners were not reporting, renewing, or contributing as was expected of all professed members. Chapter at that time passed a Norm that any person holding a leadership position in the Province must meet all three marks. Five years later, a number of those holding a leadership position in the Province were still not meeting the three marks of profession.

To rectify the situation, Tom Johnson and I composed a series of personal snail-mail letters and were able to whittle down the nearly 80 professed people in the Province who had not renewed, reported and contributed to 12 (or from 16% to 2%). Most of those we contacted were pleased to be recalled to their vows and intentions...a few objected strenuously, and a few asked for release from their vows. However, by 2013, the local leadership of the Province and nearly all of the professed in the Province were meeting the threefold marks of profession: Report, Renew, and Contribute.



Four Ministers Provincial at the Minneapolis Provincial Convocation 2013: Ken Norian, Masud ibn Syedullah, John Brockmann, and Anita Catron Miner

Over Extended Travels of Ministers Provincial

Ken Norian's Minister Provincial Report of 2006 mentions another aspect of our Province's infrastructure that was problematic:

One of the areas that presents a challenge to a Minister Provincial is the amount of travel away from home that is requested. I would like to extend my appreciation to Ann Harris, Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell, Anita Catron and Masud Syedullah, who represented TSSF at the CSF Chapter, the OEF Chapter, Brazilian gatherings and the NAECC. This year I was privileged to attend the gathering of the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity, a regional gathering of the OEF, two Standing Committee meetings, the First Order brothers Chapter, the Northeast and Southeast Convocations, two gatherings of Franciscans International, and the European General Chapter at York, UK.

(Minister Provincial Report to Chapter, 2006)

No MP prior to Ken was expected to attend so many functions outside the Province or the Order. Moreover, the funding for attending so many functions was quite confusing; most funds for participating in such meetings came from the MP's "discretionary fund." meaning that advanced planning and budgeting for such expenses were largely missing. Thus I created the position of Coordinator of External Relations and offered it to former Minister Provincial Masud ibn Syedullah, who is expert in this area of external relations; he agreed to coordinate and propose budgets for all who would attend the myriad meetings outside the Province or the Order. Thus, henceforth there would be budgets and constraints in fulfilling travel and meeting commitments outside the Order or beyond the Province.

Chapter Becomes Peripatetic

No one wanted to disrupt the traditional practice of Chapter's annual meetings at Little Portion Friary (LPF) that had been taking place since the late 1970s. Little Portion Friary was familiar; Little Portion Friary brought our leadership into close contact and worship with the other Orders in the Province; and it was a beautiful location on the north shore of Long Island. (See "A Pilgrimage to a Modern La Verna" p. 21.) However, at the 2013 Chapter, our First Order representative apprised us of the possibility that LPF would not be available to TSSF for meetings within the very near future because LPF would be sold. (See Appendix below.) Suddenly we found we needed to reclaim our nearly forgotten Franciscan charism of being peripatetic—of being like Jesus: "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Francis had embraced this peripatetic aspect as a foundation to the Order, and so too had the Province when it met all over the continent during the days of John Scott. A very positive aspect to becoming peripatetic was that it would give Chapter opportunities to learn more from local fellowships and members and to make Chapter more transparent and available to the general membership.

As Anita Catron Miner, Bill Graham and I traveled home from Chapter 2013 by taking the hour-and-a-half ferry across Long Island Sound, we all pulled out our laptops and began to imagine locations where Chapter could meet for the next three years by looking at the addresses of Chapter participants to minimize airfare costs while meeting in convenient locations. Thus for 2014, we chose to meet in Boston, hold our meetings free of charge in my parish, and stay at an OEF-recommended location, the Walker Center in Auburndale—formerly an early 20th century respite home for returning Christian missionaries. For 2015, we chose Chicago and the Cenacle Retreat & Conference Center, and for 2016, we chose the San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA. In addition to minimizing airfare costs based upon Chapter participant's home addresses, all three are near mass-transportation so the usual costs required for taxis and shuttles to Little Portion Friary on Long Island could be dramatically reduced.

Continuing Care for the Professed

The Province is pioneering this work for the whole Third Order by creating a "Celebration of an Anniversary of a Profession," the idea of sabbatical pilgrimages, and the incorporation of wisdom from our elders into the life of the Province and the Order.

Not Re-elected

For the first time in the history of the Province, at the Chapter held in my parish, a standing Minister Provincial seeking re-election, myself, was not re-elected. The closest parallel to this occasion was the vote not to re-elect Marie Webner for a third term as Provincial Chaplain in 1994. In all previous Chapter elections I had witnessed for the previous 15 years, those nominated for positions were allowed to offer a statement and then, once absented, Chapter members would openly discuss the pros and cons of election choices. In this election, the Bishop Protector called for an election by silent discernment in which no open discussion occurred, and this approach was approved by the majority of Chapter.

Unlike the 2016 Clinton/Trump election which elicited much sturm und drang, the election was led by our Bishop Protector in total silence and prayer. There was no discussion; no positions debated; and then the vote was taken, and Tom Johnson was elected the new Minister Provincial.

Mere Thanks Are Not Enough

After I had finished writing, designing, and editing the Fall issue of the *Franciscan Times*, I sent it to our newly elected Minister Provincial, Tom Johnson, for his review and approval prior to being posted on our Provincial website. Unbeknownst to me, an introductory paragraph was added, reproduced below:

Mere Thanks Are Not Enough

As the fall issue of the Franciscan Times goes to press, it is appropriate that we celebrate the service and ministry of John Brockmann as Minister Provincial for the last three years (2011 - 2014). This term of service followed years serving on Chapter, as editor of the Franciscan Times, as archivist and historian, and as long-time leader in the Northeast Regional Convocation.

John's term as Minister Provincial was a creative season reflecting a long and dedicated ministry to the Third Order, Society of St. Francis. Those many years of service provided both history and wisdom as he endeavored to take the helm and to lead us forward.

Under John's leadership and guidance, significant steps were taken to move the Order forward in visionary ways. He led Chapter in "going peripatetic" after many years of meeting at Little Portion Friary, SSF, on Long Island, New York. He brought Chapter to Boston, Massachusetts, for its first meeting away from the "womb," hosting our meetings at his parish – Grace Episcopal Church, Norwood, MA, and coordinating – even cooking – our meals in the parish hall. He guided us as we elected Dominic George as Provincial Chaplain, Anita Catron Miner as Provincial Secretary and Liz Peacock who will begin service as Formation Director in December 2014. He envisioned a new, more efficient way to relate to outside organizations and steered Chapter to elect Masud Ibn Syedullah as Director of External Relations. He encouraged a new emphasis on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), and led us to elect Joyce Wilding as JPIC Animator.

John's leadership produced very real advances in the integration of the Regional Chapter of Brazil into our Provincial Chapter, in the areas of formation, election to profession, finance and local fellowship coordination. He helped streamline procedures of the Province for electing persons to profession, as we moved to quarterly phone conferences so that candidates did not have to wait months and months for Chapter's decision to profess.

All this, while keeping the Order moving forward and...continuing to edit the Franciscan Times, writing the history book, and in all the other ways, big and small, of ministering to benefit the Third Order, Province of the Americas.

John, we celebrate you, we thank you, and we wish you God's peace and rich blessings in the months and years ahead.

Appendix Little Portion to be Sold and Reflections

Ken Norian, Minister General (from Franciscan Times, Fall 2014)

Some of you have had the opportunity to spend time at the "motherhouse" of SSF in the Americas, Little Portion Friary in Mt Sinai, Long Island, New York. It is where the brothers of the First Order and the sisters of the Second Order have made their home since the 1930s. What follows is a communication from Br. Jude the Provincial of the First Order in the Americas. Not articulated is that 80 percent of the members of the community are aged or infirm.

In my conversations with Jude, I suggested that even a once-roaring fire that has been reduced to embers can still be brought to life, but, if a bucket of water is thrown on it, it will surely be extinguished. Jude and a few others are looking for a way to keep the First Order alive in the Americas. The tertiaries on Long Island are a fraction of all the members of TSSF in the Americas. Personally, though, this is hard, since Little Portion Friary was the place I "found Francis," and it was a source of stability for me for many years. The chapel of my profession 25 years ago this month has already become a garage with parked cars. I suppose there is a lesson there that Francis kept reminding his early followers: it's not a place, it's an ethos and the Spirit.

Keep the First Order brothers in the Americas in your prayers as well as the First Order in all their other provinces. Over the last few days I've reflected on how vitally important the Third Order is to the preservation and vitality of the Franciscan charism in the Anglican Communion.

Letter from the Minister Provincial of the First Order Brothers, SSF

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order,

As most of you know, the First Order Brothers have been meeting in a special Chapter this week in Los Angeles with Bishop Jon Bruno, our Protector, with outside advisers and Father David Burgdorf TSSF, [former Provincial Chaplain] helping to facilitate our meeting. It was a difficult meeting as we faced some of the issues ahead of us. It became clear that with our shrinking numbers and the number of elderly and infirm, we could no longer continue to maintain the present number of houses we have; that together with the fact that new people looking to join us are excited about our urban ministries and working with the poor; and the cost to repair and bring Little Portion up to code (three and a half million dollars), not to mention the fact that it requires six active brothers to run the plant, brought us sadly to the conclusion that we had no alternative but to leave Long Island. This was not an easy decision to make since Little Portion has been our home since the 30s.

We plan to fence off and maintain the cemetery as a place of burial for members of the First and Third Orders, build a Memorial Garden with access from the road, and secure funds from the sale of the remainder of the land to set up a trust to care for the plot. We hope other members of the Third Order in the area will help us see that the place is well-maintained. As you can imagine, all of this is going to take some time, and it will be a slow process to achieve it all, probably 18 months to 2 years. Please pray for the brothers as they undertake this major shift in their lives and as they seek to renew and revitalize their ministry and the call to "Rebuild the Church" in what could be a new and exciting way.

With our love and prayers, Jude ssf