



The Franciscan Times

A Newsletter of the Third Order,
Society of St. Francis,
Province of the Americas

Pace e bene

Spring 2017

From the Editor

Bishop Protectors Change Leadership

Welcome to the Province's first online presentation of the *Franciscan Times*. We hope that you will enjoy the color throughout the issue as well as the possibility to click on text links which take you to more information. We think you will appreciate that the cost to the Province for production and distribution should be about 80% less than for our print versions. We will, of course, be mailing black-and-white print copies to the dozen people who wrote last summer and fall opting for paper copies. Send us your reactions to this online version so that we may make it ever more user-friendly.

Our next issue will focus on our Centenary Convocation in Cincinnati. Please send your photos or responses to the Convocation to the editor. We also hope to offer the electoral presentations of the candidates for election to Minister Provincial.

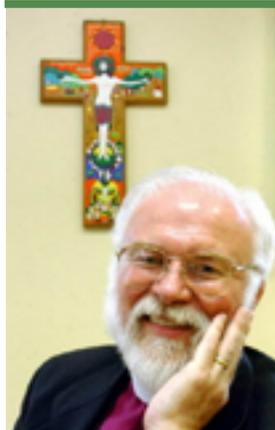
We also invite your reviews and responses to two books: Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*, and Murray Bodo's *Francis and Jesus*—the latter is the linchpin of Father Bodo's presentation at the Convocation.

As always, *The Franciscan Times* is where we share our common journey through news from Fellowships and individuals, reviews of books and other media, as well as poetry, stories, essays, reflections, photos, and whatever the Holy Spirit inspires you to send.

John Brockmann

During our Centennial Convocation in June, we will have the official change in Bishop Protector. Bishop Gordon Scruton will preside at the closing Eucharist. Below is a review and preview of two leaders who have, and will, play crucial roles in our Order. Bishop Rice is only the second Bishop Protector of our Third Order Province.

Bishop Protector's Valedictory Report, Chapter 2016 By Gordon Scruton



Each year at Chapter the Bishop Protector is asked to make a report. Of course, I do not know most of the people and detailed interactions within the Order. What I seek to do in my "report" is to ask questions and make observations that might be helpful to the ongoing faithfulness of the Order.

This year, what the Spirit has stirred up in me for you is a question, a kind of Quaker query to be pondered and lived with: Are you being foolish enough?

Paul and Francis both spoke of their call to be fools for Christ. Francis wrote: "My brothers, my sisters, God has called me to walk in the way of humility....The Lord has shown me that he wants me to be a new kind of fool in the world, and God does not want to lead us by any other knowledge than that." (*Regis J. Armstrong, Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol. 2, The Founder, New City: 2000, pp.132-133.*)

How might Jesus and Francis be inviting you personally, you as Chapter, and the whole Order to be more foolish in the context of our current world situation? The Marks of the Third Order are: Love, Joy and Humility. What might foolish love, foolish joy and foolish humility look like today in your life, in the life of the Order?

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◇
Editor

R. John Brockmann
 Send Editorial Contributions
 and all correspondence to:
 78 Mann Hill Road,
 Scituate, MA 02066
jbrockma@udel.edu

◇
Editorial Staff

Alice Baird, Asst. Ed.
 Victoria Logue
 Anita Catron Miner
 Cathleen Reynolds
 Stuart Schlegel

◇
Layout & Design

Alice Baird

◇
Where to Send

Name & Address Changes
 Convocation Dates
 Profession & Novicing Dates:

◇
Verleah Kosloske

Secretary of the Province
 3765 Keller Avenue
 Alexandria, VA 22302
mt.alverna@gmail.com

◇
For Chaplaincy Matters

Rick Simpson

Provincial Chaplain
 16 St. Mark's Lane
 Islip, NY 11751
frsimpson@yahoo.com



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Bishop Scruton, cont. from p. 1

Let's begin with foolish love. What would that look like? Jesus taught us to love our neighbors as ourselves, including loving our enemies. It is not "normal" in contemporary society for us to love our enemies. And there is a cost to this kind of foolish love. Francis foolishly walked to meet the Muslim Sultan in the Holy Land in an attempt to both love the Sultan, who was the target enemy of the Crusades, and to bring an end to the disastrous Crusader wars. His foolish love did not bring an end to the Crusades. And, upon returning to Italy, Francis discovered that others had taken over the Order and he was no longer the beloved leader of the Franciscans. Loving enemies can be both foolish and costly.

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Bishop Scruton, cont. from p. 2

I was first challenged to take seriously Christ's foolish call to love our enemies by a Ugandan, Bishop Festo Kivingere. In 1971 Idi Amin led a coup and became the dictator of Uganda. Amin's rule was characterized by human rights abuses, political repression, ethnic persecution, arbitrary mass killings, nepotism, corruption and gross economic mismanagement. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed as a result of his regime, including many Anglicans and the Anglican Archbishop of Uganda, Jannani Luum. Early one morning, Bishop Festo heard a knock on his door. A man told him, "Amin's men will be coming to kill you in one hour. You have to get away immediately." So Festo and his wife left immediately, on foot and walked through the jungle to get out of Uganda. Eventually Festo escaped to England. On Good Friday, he was praying in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and he was deeply convicted that, to be a faithful follower of Jesus, he had to love Idi Amin, the horrific enemy who had killed so many friends and parishioners of Festo and the enemy who tried to kill him. So Bishop Festo wrote a book titled: *I Love Idi Amin*. That is foolish love.

You may remember the tragic murder of the Amish schoolgirls in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, in 2006. After the shooting, that same day, some of the Amish men visited the shooter's widow and offered their forgiveness and desire to support the shooter's wife and children. The next day, mothers of the girls who had been killed visited the shooter's widow to express their forgiveness and desire to support the widow and her family. That is foolish love and forgiveness, yet the kind of forgiving love Jesus and Francis call us to demonstrate toward our enemies.

Who are the enemies God is inviting you to love and forgive? Leaders and soldiers of ISIS? Donald Trump and his followers? Hillary Clinton and her followers? Who are the people in your parish, your family, this Order, the world who are the most difficult for you to love? Perhaps it is easier to begin to love our enemies if we see or imagine pictures of them when they were children. Jesus and Francis are inviting us to be more foolish in the quality of our love for all people.

What might foolish joy look like? We live in a society burdened down by depression, anger, grief, rage, exhaustion, preoccupation with too many responsibilities and possibilities. Where do we find joy? Often young children model joy for us, even in the midst of messes. We will not experience deep love and joy without first embracing forgiveness and gratitude. Forgiveness frees us from bondage to the past and gratitude opens our eyes to the gift of the present. Look at pictures of the barren landscapes of other planets. Then look at the lush foliage surrounding us on much of this planet. If we are too busy, too preoccupied with our thoughts and fears, we may miss the joy, the beauty, the wonder and delight of the creation that surrounds us. Paying attention to God's creation, as Francis did, can open us up to joy every day. Have you ever noticed that the poor, in our country and around the world, often find more joy in the little things of a day than the frantically busy middle and upper classes of our country? Joy comes when we know in the depths of our being that we and all people are beloved by God, that God is with us always, in all circumstances, leading us forward, opening up new life on the other side of our deaths

and losses. Francis found true joy when he was refused food, criticized, attacked and thrown out of a town, because then he knew he had to depend more completely on God. Foolish joy.

What might foolish humility look like? We live in a culture of arrogance, entitlement and outrage. What if we dared to say to our self-confident neighbors, "I'm amazed that you are so confident that you know the solutions to our problems as a nation and a world. As I look at the complexity and enormity of the problems we face, I don't think anyone really knows how to solve our interconnected problems. I know I don't know all the answers." Addicts don't begin recovery until they have the humility to say, "My life is unmanageable." When we have enough foolish humility to be genuinely

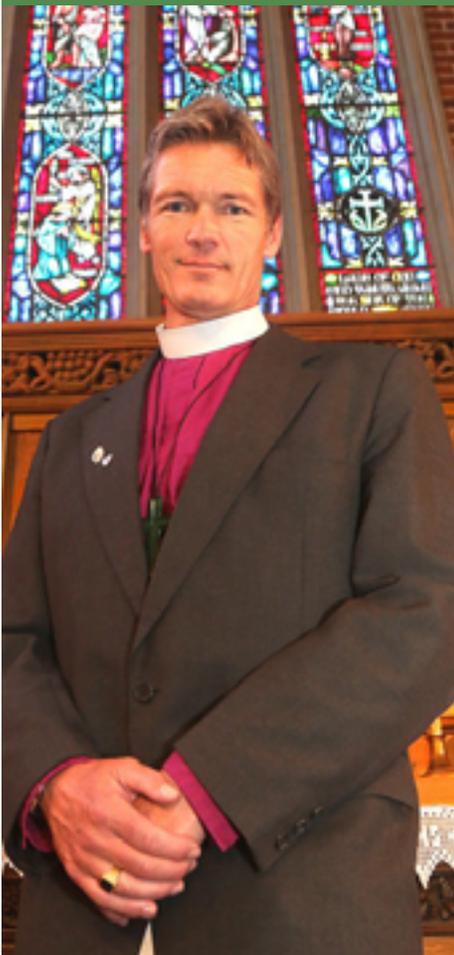
How can we grow in foolish love, joy and humility?

interested in learning from each other, we will invest time and attention to really listen to others. Then humility produces the fruit of love and joyful gratitude.

How can we grow in foolish love, joy and humility? We can begin each day by asking God to help us find ways to be more foolish in our love, joy and humility during the coming day. At the end of the day we can ask Jesus to help us reflect back over the day, asking, Where did I see myself and others practicing foolish love, joy and humility today? When did I miss opportunities to practice foolish love, joy and humility today? Lord Jesus, help me to be more foolish in my following of you tomorrow.

May God make us all more foolish followers of Jesus and Francis this coming year. ♦

*Introducing
Bishop Protector-Elect
The Rt. Rev. David C. Rice*



Episcopal News Service (March 6, 2017)

Delegates to a special convention of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin overwhelmingly voted March 4 to elect David C. Rice as their diocesan bishop. Rice wrote to the Episcopal News Service following the election:

“I believe the people of the Diocese of San Joaquin know ever increasingly that they are on a hikoi (intentional movement with a purpose [a word from Maori, the indigenous language of New Zealand]) and they have come to realize and celebrate my willingness, better said, call to walk, run, cycle, move with them. As for my own feeling and response, I couldn’t imagine a group of people with whom I’d rather share this hikoi of faith.”

The Rev. Canon Anna Carmichael said the gathering, the first major event since 2007 held at St. James Episcopal Cathedral, also represented, for many, a homecoming. About 200 people attended.

“It was wonderful, a great homecoming for many folks because it was their first time at the cathedral since the schism happened ten years ago,” said Carmichael, diocesan canon to the ordinary.

“We were able to do a blessing of the space as our coming home experience. We had a wonderful Eucharist, and a presentation on stewardship and then we took the vote and did all the necessary procedural things. It was a lovely gathering.”

Cindy Smith, president of the standing committee, said “We’re going forward and not to just survive but to thrive,” Smith said in a telephone interview March 6. “There is so much to be done now in the Central Valley of California with issues of trafficking, immigration, and a very high percentage of the population incarcerated.”

Rice was elected the diocese’s third provisional bishop in March 2014. Prior to that he had served as the bishop of the Diocese of Waiapu in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. A North Carolina native, Rice had also been a Methodist pastor for eight years prior to his ordination in the Anglican Church in New Zealand. ♦

A Bishop Who Bikes



From the Online Modesto Bee, October 28, 2015

A group of bicyclists finished up a long ride in Modesto last week intended to bring attention and money to the fight against human trafficking.

Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin Bishop David Rice and several other primary riders completed the Tour Against Trafficking, an 18-day, 750-mile ride, at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church on Friday afternoon.

Riders went through communities that included San Andreas, Hanford, Fresno, Sonora and Bakersfield. Organizers estimated they raised more than \$50,000 in the effort. They said proceeds will go directly to local agencies and organizations that offer support to victims of trafficking.

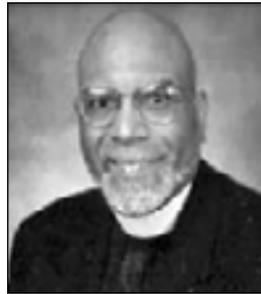
*Last Five Chapters of the
History of the Province
of the Americas Now
on the Website*

To order your copy of *The First Hundred Years of The Society of St. Francis in the Province of the Americas, 1917 - 2017*, please [see page 6](#).

By John Brockmann

The last chapters of the history of the TSSF have been written and the entire book—300 pages!—is in production. The printed books will be available for sale at Convocation in June. In the meantime, these final chapters are posted on the website. Links are provided from each summary below.

Chapter 12: Masud Ibn Syedullah, Minister Provincial Era 2002-2005



The hallmark of Masud's tenure was reaching out beyond the customary boundaries of the Order: reaching out geographically, ecumenically, within ECUSA, and politically. At the first Chapter he chaired as Minister Provincial in 2003, a motion was made and accepted to change the name of the province from the *American Province* to the Province of the Americas.

Chapter 13: Ken Norian, Minister Provincial 2005-2011; Minister General 2011-



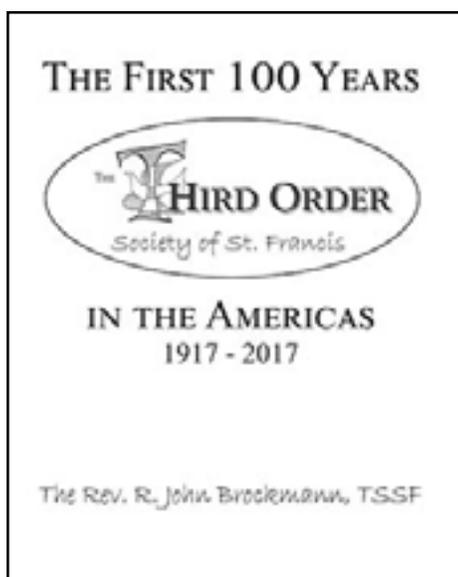
Ken's installation in 2011 as Minister General by Bishop Protector General, The Most Reverend Roger Herft AM (Archbishop of Perth and Metropolitan of the Province of Western Australia).



The explosive outreach initiatives begun during the three short years of Masud Ibn Syedullah's tenure as Minister Provincial basically took the two terms of Ken Norian's tenure to work out in detail and incorporate (or attempt to incorporate) them into the internal life and structures of the Province. Much of such overlapping and long-term experiences of the Province were captured in Chapter 10: the ongoing tumultuous work managing a "proto-province" in Brazil; and the ongoing work with the House of Bishops in ECUSA around the policies of "Safe Community." With the former, the evolution of the relationship with Brazil continued after Ken's two terms concluded; with the latter, Ken proved to be a skillful canon lawyer capable of crafting a solution that pleased all parties, clarified the Province's position in ECUSA, and even left our standing as a "listed" Christian Community in ECUSA's Red Book ([see Chapter 10](#)).

Ken was elected Minister General of the worldwide Third Order in August 2011. This was only the second time that a Minister Provincial of the Province of the Americas was elected to this position (previously Alden Whitney served one term from 1996-99). In 2015, Ken was elected to an unprecedented distinction for the Province of the Americas, the first person from this Province to be re-elected to a second term as Minister General.

continued, page 6



The cover of the forthcoming history book, which will be available at the Provincial Convocation for the special introductory price of \$9.00.

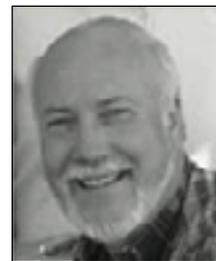
This 25% discount is for pick up only at the convocation—after that, you may order the book directly from Amazon.com for \$12.00 (plus S&H). If you want to pre-order copies at the discounted convocation price, please email John Brockmann at jbrockma@udel.edu by June 1. Indicate how many copies you would like in the subject line.

Note: You will be charged for shipping and handling unless your order is picked up at the convocation. No discount orders will be accepted after June 1.

There will an author-signing at the convocation. (A Kindle version at \$9.99 will be available in mid-summer.)

Chapter 14: John Brockmann, Minister Provincial 2011-2014

John's efforts during his tenure were focused on attending to the infrastructure of the Province, especially the threefold marks of profession: Report, Renew, and Contribute. John also created the position of Coordinator of External Relations 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.



John also had to tackle the fact that Little Portion Friary was going to be sold, and that Chapter would have to reclaim its peripatetic meeting experience last done by John Scott in the 1970s. John also wanted to invest more time and energy in the Care of the Professed 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.

Chapter 15: Tom Johnson, Minister Provincial 2014-



Tom's efforts thus far have been focused on re-envisioning:

In this context of a changing world, and as we approach our 100th anniversary, I believe we in the Third Order Society of St. Francis Province of the Americas must take time to re-evaluate who we are. I am asking that we place a high priority on *re-envisioning* what "...rebuild my Church" means for us in the 21st century. That we place a high priority on *re-envisioning*, to

paraphrase Francis, "what is ours to do" as we move into our next 100 years of service to the Church.

His chapter also recounts Kathryn Challoner's medical missions to Africa (*please see p.20 in this issue*).

Chapter 16: Eight Authors of the Province of the Americas

We have already read of six authors who have been members of the Province of the Americas: Desmond Lionel Morse-Boycott (Chapter 2), H. Baxter Liebler (Chapter 2), Peter Funk (Chapter 3), Hugo Muller (Chapter 4), Harold MacDonald (Chapter 12), and Emmett Jarrett (Chapter 14). Here are eight others with reviews or excerpts drawn from the *Franciscan Times*: William Haynes, Lucy Blount McCain, Jeff Gollither, Susan Pitchford, Stuart Schlegel, Rick Bellows, Scott Robinson, and Emily Gardiner Neal.



Nomination for Minister Provincial, Province of the Americas (2017 - 2020)

Dear Professed Sisters and Brothers,

The time has again come for us to consider who shall lead us as Minister Provincial for the coming three years. All professed tertiaries are eligible to stand for election and/or nominate a professed tertiary.

The actual election is the responsibility of Chapter with all nominations coming from the professed. The current Minister Provincial, Tom Johnson, is eligible to run again, and he has agreed to stand for another three-year term. He may be nominated for re-election.

Please pray for our Order and who you believe the Spirit is calling to lead us for the next three years. Discuss our future with your fellowship and other tertiaries. If you would like to nominate a brother or sister, please contact him or her *first* to make sure he/she is willing to stand for election. All nominations must be submitted by July 1, 2017 to the Provincial Secretary either by post or email. If using email, please include the nominee's name, your name, and the date you make this nomination. If using post, please return the ballot below to me at the above address no later than July 1st.

Although Chapter is meeting in June this year (in conjunction with Provincial Convocation), it voted to maintain the Statutory schedule for electing a Minister Provincial, taking the vote in October electronically, as permitted by the Statutes.

Verleah Kosloske
 Provincial Secretary
 3765 Keller Avenue
 Alexandria, VA 22302
mt.alverna@gmail.com

Nomination for Minister Provincial (2017-2020)

As a professed member of the Third Order, Province of the Americas, The Society of St. Francis, I _____, nominate for the office of Minister Provincial the following professed tertiary: _____

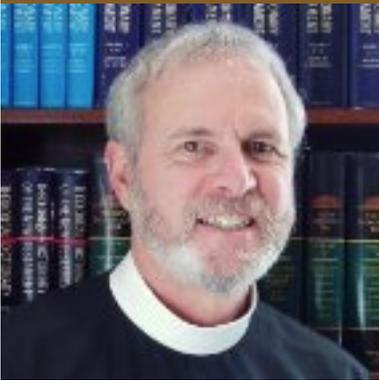
Date_____

*Bursar Laying Groundwork
for Electronic Funds
Transfer*

by David Lawson-Beck

In this, the first all-electronic publishing version of the *Franciscan Times*, it seems fitting to bring up the concept of electronic funds transfer (EFT) for our donations. In the last two years I have had several requests for EFT. While several requests does not represent an overwhelming demand, many nonprofits now are moving in that direction, and it is clear that EFT is the wave of the future. Therefore, I am in conversation with our Communications Task Force and Webmaster, and we are considering allocating funds next year to set up a feature on our website permitting EFT either for one-time gifts or periodic automatic withdrawals from bank accounts. It would be very helpful if any tertiaries who want EFT would send me an email (at lawsond44@aol.com) so I can get a sense of how many people might use this method in the near future. Thanks, and in the meantime, keep those checks coming! ♦

Re-envisioning Fellowship



*Peter Stube, Fellowship
Coordinator*

Recently Peter Stube circulated a letter to all TSSF members and asked that fellowships discuss it together. If you have not read his thoughtful comments about invigorating our fellowships in new ways, we have created a link to it on our website, following his introductory remarks, below.

As an Order we sustain community in local Fellowships, yearly regional gatherings and provincial gatherings. Since our fellowships are the places where community happens we may want to explore ways to create disciplines that enhance the Franciscan vision and values. With this essay I propose a way to address the strategic concerns addressed by Chapter in 2015; specifically the concerns to invite “millennials” to our order and the desire for more intentional lifelong formation. I offer these thoughts as a way of TSSF’s continuing renewal, inviting your reflections until we discern together the mind of Christ.

Franciscans are a missionary people in the best sense. We live in the world striving to know both the Gospel of God and the culture we serve so that we may enact God’s vision of justice with compassion, live God’s concern for the marginalized and for creation, and proclaim the Gospel in deed and word which softly transform the hearts of those we encounter. As we have disciplines for postulancy and our individual devotion, so we could benefit from discipline in our Fellowships that enhance our lifelong formation.

If we are to create ever-increasing intimacy and strength in the Fellowships, we might do well to adopt disciplines that deepen our companionship on the journey while also creating ways to invite others to our Fellowships. **Read more by clicking here.**



*Fraternity/Fellowship:
Where We Learn to Be Loved*



For many years, Anne Mulqueen was the Order of Franciscans Secular (Roman Catholic) official representative to our Chapter meetings and Convocations. She has served in many leadership positions in the OFS and continues to be a dear friend of TSSF. She has given permission for her article below to be reprinted in the Franciscan Times. The “clarification” of fraternity vs. Fellowship is my insertion.

—Tom Johnson

By Anne Mulqueen, OFS

Reprinted with permission from TAU-USA Winter 2016 Issue 90

The fulfillment of fraternal love requires that we sacrifice the demands of our individual egos so we can become one body in Christ – not in a closed way, but in a way that allows us the freedom to grow into the unique persons God created us to be. On the night before he was crucified, Jesus uttered the words that best describe fraternal

Christ calls us to love our sisters and brothers just as they are, and not as we wish them to be.

love; “A new command I give you: Love one another. **As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**” (*John 13:34*)

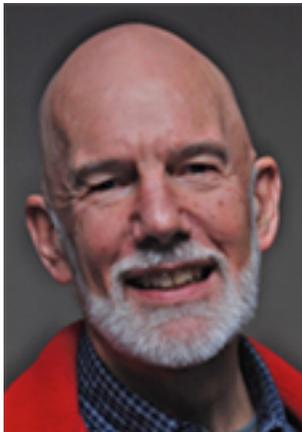
The fulfillment of fraternal love has its source in Jesus Christ. Being able to love and be loved in fraternity (*Fellowship*) requires that each person following St. Francis’ imitation of Christ receive and give others respect, affection and acceptance. Each must be willing to communicate on an intimate and authentic level. To love and be loved as Jesus commands requires commitment to our Secular Franciscan form of life.

No fraternity (*Fellowship*) is perfect; therefore, to love and be loved in fraternity (*Fellowship*) must flow from our love of God and our desire to do God’s will. Communicating on a deep and personal level and placing the needs of our sisters and brothers before our own enhance and solidify our relationships. Christ calls us to love our sisters and brothers just as they are, and not as we wish them to be. And remember, “Love never fails.” (I Cor. 13:8) ♦

How Community is Empowered in the Third Order

By Lance Renault, *Land of the Sky Fellowship*

Finding spiritual fullness in community is foundational to Third Order life. We read in Day 27 of the Principles, *The Third Order is a Christian community whose members, although varied in race, education, and character, are bound into a living whole through the love we share in Christ. This unity of all who believe in him will become, as our Lord intended, a witness to the world of his divine mission.* And again in *Forming the Life of a Franciscan*, chapters 4 and 5, we find an excellent description on how community functions in the Third Order.



Allow me to explore a little deeper what empowers community for us. This is important to understand when we consider that our provincial membership is thinly distributed throughout the Americas. We can find face-to-face community in our Fellowships if one is near us, and in regional and Provincial Convocations. Outside the Third Order we find Christian community in our churches and outreach ministries. And, of course, we have all manner of online communities today. But there must be more than periodic gatherings and electronic media to empower community for the Third Order.

The Third Order is distinguished by three important empowering characteristics. The first, as described by the Apostle Paul, sees community as fundamental to our faith. He sees believers - the Body of Christ - as an interdependent group that draws on and expresses the unique gifts and strengths of each member so that the community as a whole can be light and salt to the world.

For each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, are one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12: 4-5

So here we have a body of believers - local, national, and international - who function at a unique individual and community level. Each member, with specific gifts to offer, is serving every other member so that their combined spiritual and material resources fulfill the mission of the whole community.

The second empowering characteristic of community is what holds it together. Shared vision, mission and selfless service to each other are important, but selfless love is the glue that unifies any Christian community, especially ours. This love of God and neighbor is not an option for us, it's a commandment. Mature Christians don't love out of obedience but out of a transformed heart and mind. They are awake to the Christ that lives in them. Francis, who radiated love of God to all creation, including the three orders he founded, is our model here.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13: 4-6

Finally, examples of Third Order community empowerment are not limited to the temporal sphere. The Trinity is our model, totally giving and totally receiving. The dynamic interaction of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit demonstrate three unique ministries and yet they are one, completely unified in love. The ideal Christian community, and therefore the Third Order, will be a visible expression of our

The Trinity is our model, totally giving and totally receiving.

triune God. Fr. Richard Rohr, in his book *The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation* helps us see the Three-in-One God:

At the heart of Christian revelation God is not seen as a distant static monarch...but a divine circle dance, as the early Fathers of the church dared to call it. God is the Holy One presented in the dynamic and loving action of Three.

God for us, we call you Father.

God alongside us, we call you Jesus.

God within us, we call you Holy Spirit.

You are the eternal mystery that enables, enfolds, and enlivens all things.

Even us, even me.

“Introduction,” SPCK Publishing, 2016

Yet the Third Order community is not perfect. It has its share of broken people who suffer from dysfunctional relationships and sick bodies. They push and pull the fabric of community, creating tension here and stress there. But the community, is also a healing, reconciling body that draws on the unconditional love of God for renewal and empowerment. The degree to which its individual members can receive all from God and give all in the name of God will influence how dynamic the community will be as an expression of God's love. ♦

Milestones

Newly Professed:
Gerald Hancock



“A Relationship in the Divine I Did Not Know Existed”
By Gerald Hancock

Greetings from Franklin, Tennessee. I am Gerald Hancock, married almost 50 years to Lorinda, daughters Catherine and Ashley, grandchildren, Carter, Corbin and Julia.

I have been blessed with many gifts and have tried to link those with need, wherever that might be. I worked for 45 years in heart surgery, would arrive early and invite the staff to join me in Morning Prayer, asking help in doing our best. Retired, I enjoy golf, so I used that activity to link up with guys who may have retired and have little or no grounding in the Cosmic Divine. I offer to wash dishes at church activities to reduce waste and have my “Golf Guys” come off the golf course and wash dishes with me.

Yes, I had aprons made in Master’s Green with “Golf Guys” embroidered on them. The kitchen is always where the fun is. As our church grew, community through small groups became more important than ever. I facilitate a group that has been meeting for 25+ years that discusses social justice, the Church/Gospels and our personal responsibility in the world. Through EFM and other religion seminars, I wondered how the teachings of a poor man from Galilee evolved into my Sunday service?

I joined another small group and now facilitate it. We use “The Great Courses” DVD series to walk us through early man, social evolution, mysteries of the Divine, down to our current divisions, our trust and mistrust of our Brother.

I collect clothes and prepare meals for the homeless of Nashville. I boarded a young homeless lady for six months but was unable to help her accept the assistance I lined up for her, a spiritual low point for me.

I am handy so I install rain barrels when I can to conserve water. I work through a Methodist organization (Mt. TOP) joined by youth from all over the country, doing home repairs for residents of the poorest county in Tennessee. If you haven’t picked up on it by now, there was a lot of “I” telling God what I was going to do and almost no listening for and to God. I was completely out of balance.

My Franciscan journey, with its discernment through reports and spiritual direction, has grounded my actions in a relationship in the Divine I did not know existed. The contemplative prayer group in our church met on a night when I was already meeting. I started an afternoon group for myself and for those who didn’t want to get out after dark. I feel I have moved into a state of continuous contemplative prayer. As Brother Rohr might suggest, I, we are all part of the Trinity, individual yet a oneness in the continuous flow of giving and receiving, emptying and filling. Part of the Divine energy, the Christ that was, is and ever shall be.

My Brothers and Sisters, I am blessed to be present in the Presence.

Peace, G ◆

Newly Professed:
Edith Craig DiTommaso



"I pray with people and feed them and speak truth to power, whenever needed."

By Edith Craig DiTommaso

I am a retired elementary special education teacher and case manager for Early Childhood Intervention, and I am the proud mother of three adult children, all of whom have served their country in the military. I have seven grandchildren ranging in age from two years old to 17. One of my daughters is married to a captain in the Army who is currently serving in Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, in the Army Medical Corps and who has two of my youngest grandchildren. My middle daughter lives in Charleston, SC and is finishing her degree in Marine Biology at the University of Charleston. She has one daughter in high school. My oldest son is an underwater welder who lives in Austin with his wife and four children, who range from 17 to 8 years old. I am a domestic abuse survivor.

I transferred to TSSF from another Franciscan order, the Franciscan Order of the Holy Cross, which folded in 2009. I was life professed with that order. At the 2006 Episcopal General Convention, I met Brother Clark, SSF, who invited me to meet with the other Franciscans at General, which I did. I am very excited to be part of TSSF as I have been living as a Franciscan for many years but without the support of other Franciscans. I am part of the Franciscan Action Network and the Franciscan Crown Rosary group. Whenever possible, I attend the Heart of Texas Fellowship meetings. I have recently started meeting with the online fellowship.

I own a very small food business called Sister Edie's Sweet Temptations. I produce jams, marmalades, pickles and fruit sauces along with baked goods made with gluten-free flours that I sell at the Golden Spread Farmer's Market here in Amarillo, Texas, during the summer growing season. I am a big believer in using locally grown produce whenever possible, so I buy much of my produce from the market. Environmentally conscious, I ask my customers to return the canning jars for a \$1.00 discount off their next jar, and I have switched to eco-friendly packaging that is biodegradable and compostable. I produce dark and white chocolate truffles and candies, which are fair traded and don't use child slave labor, believing that as a manufacturer, I should be reducing my carbon footprint. I sell the confections at local craft benefit shows, including a large one for the Amarillo Museum of Art.

Besides my small business, I am a deputy volunteer voter registrar and very active politically here in the Texas Panhandle. As part of my political action, I work with Hispanic and black political action groups such as Los Barrios and NAACP. I volunteer with Food Not Bomb to feed a group of homeless people on Saturday afternoon. I have become good friends with one of the ladies and am trying to get her started in the craft shows locally to help her become more independent. My parish, St. Andrew's, is starting a homeless ministry, in which I will be involved. I am part of the choir, serve on the Christian Formation team and am on one of our breakfast teams. Recently, I have become part of the Panhandle Women for Peace, Justice, and Sustainability group, where I serve on the racism, governmental action and LGBTQAI focus groups. I am currently being vetted to work with the large refugee population here in Amarillo, especially Muslim women who are subject to discrimination here in the Panhandle.

People ask me what I do, to which I reply. "I pray with people and feed them and speak truth to power, whenever needed." ♦

Carol Anne Foerster , RIP***Carol Anne Foerster, Professed 17 Years****Reprinted from the online Davis Enterprise newspaper, March 17, 2017*

“Greetings from The Enchanted Kingdom” was a favorite salutation of Carol Anne Foerster, formerly of Davis, who died peacefully in her home on Feb. 12, 2017. She will be remembered for her energetic, creative and optimistic spirit and her learn-all-you-can attitude. She called it like it was, stood up for what was right, and made a difference!

Carol was born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 24, 1940. In 1966, she moved to Davis with her husband for a job opportunity with Larry Blake, a family member and restaurateur. Eventually the family would become owners of the restaurant, which was renamed The Brewster House.

Carol received her associate degree in business from Sacramento City College. She spent most of her life working in property management in Davis, Sacramento, Fairfield and San Francisco —first in the for-profit industry, but later in nonprofit and not-for-profit.

Carol was a vibrant part of the Davis community. Shortly after she arrived in Davis, she became a member of the Chi Sigma chapter of the Beta Sigma Phi non-academic sorority. Later, when her kids were in school, she held the position of PTA president at West Davis Intermediate School.

She loved and was loved by a large and diverse group of friends. A leader in her West Davis neighborhood during the 1970s and 80s, Carol was largely responsible for organizing her street, Notre Dame Drive, into a community, which had amazing parties and even built floats for the UC Davis Picnic Day Parade.

Carol was an avid reader and constant seeker of knowledge. She had a strong interest in theological studies, taking and eventually leading Education for Ministry classes through the Episcopal Church. She enjoyed books by Clive Cussler and political biographies. She was a fierce Scrabble competitor, even playing online with people from all across the country.

Carol is survived by her daughter Karen, of Sacramento; son John, and daughter-in-law Danielle of Maui, Hawaii; and daughter Trish, son-in-law Tony and granddaughters Carolyn and Sarah of White Plains, New York. ♦

*Peggylee Stephens, RIP****Peggylee Stephens: Professed 17 Years (and 10 Days)****by Lynne Herne*

Peggylee Stephens passed away at the age of 89 on February 24, 2014, ten days after the 17th anniversary of her profession. She was born in Tonawanda, New York, on July 28, 1924, attended Hamburg High School, University of Richmond (then known as Westhampton Women’s College of Richmond) and earned her Master’s Degree from Columbia University.

A school psychologist, she was employed by Peekskill Military Academy and BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services), NY. She retired from BOCES in 2000. She was a member of Church of the Epiphany, Trumansburg, New York, and belonged to the Sweet Adelines. She was married to the late Edwin A. Stephens for 23 years and left behind her son, Mark Werner Stephens of Ambler, PA, and two grandchildren. ♦

Focus on Fellowships and Tertiaries

Nature's Dome is Church of the Woods' Only Chapel



Worshippers stop for a moment of prayer and gratitude as they walk to the service at Church of the Woods.

By Heather Beasley Doyle (with permission from the Episcopal News Service)

All photos by Heather Beasley Doyle.

The Rev. Stephen Blackmer is a TSSF postulant.

Thick with golden-red leaves, the harbinger of fall in Canterbury, New Hampshire, a mosaic of tree branches rustles above and all around The Rev. Stephen Blackmer. A dozen worshippers face him. He encourages them to edge closer. “The Holy Spirit is so very loud today,” he explains as they advance their semi-circle, hoping to hear the 61-year-old priest’s voice above the autumnal wind. Beyond the woods, the wind roars. Within this natural sanctum, the sound dulls, announcing itself steadily through leaves and branches.

Blackmer had begun Sunday afternoon service at Church of the Woods by tossing the Boston Red Sox baseball cap from his head and efficiently draping a green stole over his neck. Like other Episcopal priests, he read from the Gospel of Luke and the book of Joel. Unlike many, Blackmer added a reflection by the Franciscan priest Richard Rohr. He led his small group in simple song and expressed gratitude for the week’s much-needed rains. He wove the day’s readings into a very brief homily on abundance and humility.

With that, he sent his small flock into the woods for 25 minutes “to encounter God.” Some immediately

disappeared into nature. Others sat or wandered. When Blackmer rang two large bells, everyone reassembled. They adorned the tree-stump altar, readied for Eucharist, with acorn tops, dried leaves, mushrooms and other mementos. They spoke of sunlight, brilliant leaves and gratitude. They passed the peace with hugs, smiles and hushed, warm voices.

Breaking the bread for Eucharist, Blackmer offered the first piece to the earth. Once everyone had sipped wine from a ceramic goblet, he poured the last drops back to the earth as well. When the service ended, congregants helped carry everything out of the woods, their chapel. Because if Blackmer is clear on anything, it is this: The woods *are* the church, the space in which seekers commune directly with the divine.

Blackmer seems at once the most and least likely person to lead Church of the Woods, the main program of Kairos Earth, the religious nonprofit he started in 2013. He dedicated the first 25 years of his career to conservation, ultimately founding and leading the Northern Forest Center. He’d established a daily meditation practice. He’d grown up without any religion in particular. He had never read the Bible. “Well, he was completely unchurched,” says Professor Janet Ruffing, a Sister of Mercy who taught Blackmer at Yale Divinity School.

In 2005, a vision quest in the desert left him feeling that “something had profoundly shifted in my life, but I had no clue what it was.” That feeling idled until a return trip from an authentic leadership workshop two years later. As his plane descended toward the Dublin, Ireland, airport for a layover, he saw a church steeple through the window and heard a very clear voice say: “You’re to be a priest.” Black-



A tree-stump altar at Church of the Woods in Canterbury, New Hampshire.

Church of the Woods, cont.

mer paid attention. “I instantly knew it was true,” he says. “It wasn’t a proposal, and it wasn’t a question.”

The idea didn’t go down easily; the thought of becoming Christian, let alone joining the clergy, unleashed serious internal grappling. He visited an Episcopal monastery, where on the third day, “I felt like my heart just broke open and tears came to my eyes,” he says. Four months later, walking into an Episcopal church (on a Monday – “I was still too chicken to go on a Sunday”), Blackmer instantly knew that it fit.

Reading the Bible for the first time at Yale Divinity School, Blackmer began to see “the entire universe as the physical manifestation of the divine.” He also read that Jesus prayed in nature. “It never says, ‘and then Jesus went into the temple to pray,’” he says. Seeing nature as sacred and finding the divine by going into nature for prayer and contemplation made sense to Blackmer.

In Episcopalianism, he also discovered a ritual and liturgy that he loves. “Steve makes the connection between the sacrament of nature and the sacraments as we experience them liturgically,” Ruffing says. “He’s functioning from a very highly sacramental theology.”

Throughout divinity school, his concern became, “How does this calling to be a priest fit with my calling to the natural world?” Environmental work still beckoned. And he felt an unexpected pull to start a church. He ignored the latter until 2012 when that pull resurfaced as he stood on the land that is now

The idea didn’t go down easily; the thought of becoming Christian, let alone joining the clergy...

Church of the Woods. “Oh, you mean like a woods church?” he thought. “I could do that.”

Anywhere from three to 30 people attend Church of the Woods’ weekly services. Andrea Chan rarely misses a Sunday. She grew up Catholic, then left the denomination in high school. In college, she turned to Evangelical Christianity. Forty years later, Chan stopped going to church and waited, she says, for God to show her what was next. That was four years ago. While waiting, Chan spent Sundays in contemplative prayer and walking. “I’ve always been an out-

doors person,” she says, “but had never really connected that with my spirituality.” In 2014 Chan read an article about Church of the Woods in her local newspaper. She knew it offered the next step on her spiritual path. “It felt like an immediate community,” she says of Church of the Woods.



The Rev. Stephen Blackmer eyes his alfresco church on a Sunday afternoon in October. He hopes to build a second building in the space to the right of him for retreats, but he says there will be “no gourmet food” at the retreats.

Wendy Weiger, who travels five hours from Maine every few weeks to attend, echoed this sentiment. “It’s been wonderful to have a group of people who’ve thought about these issues; the theology,” she says. Weiger, a research physician, environmental activist and writer, found solace in the woods after a deeply challenging period in her life when she was in college. “By connecting with nature, I was able to reconnect with God,” she says. “It was just integral with my healing.”

Despite his congregants’ ardor, Blackmer questions the demographical soundness of his plan. According to the Pew Research Center, New Hampshire is the least religious state in the country: 36 percent of New Hampshire residents identify as “unaffiliated” with any religion and only 20 percent consider themselves “very religious.” Forty percent of all Americans consider themselves “very religious.” “By any normal standards, we shouldn’t be doing this,” he says.

Is it foolhardy to imagine such a place – an alfresco Christian church steeped in nature, contemplation *and* liturgy – thriving in secular New Hampshire? Perhaps it makes complete sense: Maybe the time is right, the place perfect, for just such a religious twist, particularly considering declining Episcopal membership and attendance.

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Church of the Woods, cont.

“I think part of my job is to witness the death of what has been and to midwife something new,” says Church of the Woods congregant Rachel Field, a 27-year-old graduate of Yale’s Berkeley Divinity School and an Episcopal deacon who spent her supervised ministry placement at Church of the Woods. “But it will be different, and it will be good because it will be led and rooted in Christ.”

Decay is “an always thing,” Blackmer says, noting the fungi as he scans his church’s leafy ground. Fungi play a key role in the decay process, in renewing the earth. He notes in nuanced fashion that the natural process of decay and rebirth, as seen clearly in the woods, is a real-time, tangible example of the biblical theme of death leading to new life.

Blackmer recently connected with six other congregations in the United States and Canada whose theology and worship echoes Church of the Woods’. In them, and others, he senses the germ of a new faith expression. “There’s something that’s really waiting to take shape,” Blackmer says. He stands ready to nurture this emerging movement, however small.



Church of the Woods includes a barn stacked with wood. In extremely inclement weather, the Rev. Stephen Blackmer conducts portions of the service in the barn.

“It’s lovely to see Christianity not heralding the domination and usurpation of the Word, but reminding us of whose creation this is,” says The Rt. Rev. Rob Hirschfeld, bishop of New Hampshire. “There’s nothing that mediates; there’s nothing that’s humanly constructed. ... For some, it’s challenging,” he says. “Who wants to brave the rain, the snow, the wind?”

Blackmer’s hearty crew, for one. In particularly bleak weather, they take refuge in the church’s small barn,

River of Life: Connecticut River Pilgrimage, 2017

In June 2017, join the *River of Life: Connecticut River Pilgrimage*, an interfaith reflection on the interconnected nature of earth, water, and life, following the Connecticut River from the headwaters in Northern New Hampshire, through Vermont and Massachusetts, to where it meets the sea in Southern Connecticut.

Water is central to life, and living, flowing rivers have played a central role in ecological, social, economic and spiritual practice worldwide since time immemorial. The Connecticut River is a prime example of a river carrying the lifeblood of a region.

In partnership with local, statewide, and regional organizations along the Connecticut River, the Episcopal Churches of New England and Kairos Earth are organizing the first-ever pilgrimage along the length of the river. A core group of river pilgrims will journey the full length of the river, being joined by “local pilgrims” as they traverse local stretches and communities. Locally organized events will draw attention to the beauty and challenges — ecological, social, economic, and spiritual — along the waterway.

Click here for more information at <http://kairosearth.org/river/>, including a two-minute YouTube video and Weekly Schedule. And, to visit the Church of the Woods liturgy page, **click here**.

completed last December. It takes a lot to keep them inside, though, away from the heart of their spiritual practice. “Church for this community is not a casual thing,” Blackmer says. “It’s serious, but it’s joyful.”

And it’s a uniquely joyful earnestness: to follow the liturgical calendar and break bread together as the seasons unfold above, below, sun shining, snow falling, wind cooling worshippers’ faces; to center into quiet, connecting with God in a deep way.

“I just never thought that I’d find anything like this,” Chan says. “It never even occurred to me to pray for it. I think for the first time in my life I’m in the right place.” ♦

*A New Retreat for These Times
More people are attending programs to
reflect and discuss: one gathering
tackles how to listen differently*

By Clare Ansberry (Online Wall St. Journal,
March 14, 2017)



Through my ministry, Roots & Branches: Programs for Spiritual Growth, I co-lead a retreat, *Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear*, with Garrett Mettler, my associate at Holy Cross Monastery (an Episcopal Benedictine house) here in the Mid-

Hudson region of New York about a month ago. Consequently, a journalist from *The Wall Street Journal* wanted to interview us, which led to the creation of an article to appear in *The Wall Street Journal* (March 15).

I share this with you because this retreat certainly reflects the impact of Franciscan spirituality on my life. I am so grateful for our Order and its guidance towards the Way of Christ. Although the journalist chose not to emphasize the spiritual/religious dimension of our work—probably because of her sense of her audience—know that Jesus, Francis, and Clare were present throughout. *Masud ibn Syedullah, from the listserv.*

Alex Gilchrist needed a break from the pressures of life. An economist with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. in New York City, he commutes four hours a day from Wappingers Falls, New York. He teaches classes one night a week. He is married and has three grown children. “There is a lot going on,” he says.

He also needed a break from talking or hearing about politics, saying dialogue had become “toxic.”

Mr. Gilchrist checked the retreat offerings at nearby Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York. One stood out: “*Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear*” led by Masud Ibn Syedullah and Garrett Mettler, both Episcopal priests. It promised to



A graphic from the flyer used to promote the retreat in New York.

“create safe and constructive dialogue among those who have not had much positive conversation with each other regarding race, politics, class or religion.”

“I thought it was pretty relevant,” says Mr. Gilchrist, 54.

Retreat centers, which traditionally focus on timeless themes of contemplation, mindfulness and spirituality, are responding to current anxieties.

“We have a profound duty to meet people where they are at this moment,” says Andrew Zolli, chair of the Garrison Institute, which develops and hosts contemplative retreats in a renovated former Capuchin monastery on the banks of the Hudson River in New York.

Attendance is up 20% at Garrison programs such as “Mindfulness and Compassion Practices that Release the Trance of Fear,” since the election last November, he says. With many programs filled, the Institute is going to offer in coming months a special program off campus called “(Mis)Information Overload: Living in Truth in a Post-Truth Age” presented by a psychologist, a data scientist, a journalist, and a contemplative teacher. Garrison also plans to offer special retreats for refugees and the people caring for them.

Anne Luther, a professor of spiritual direction who conducts retreats in South Bend, Indiana, says retreats have traditionally been a time and place to step away from the world and its problems. But now people want a safe place to talk about them, without being judged, and figure out a good way to respond, says Dr. Luther. Her annual Lenten retreat will focus on: “What are the present day world challenges and opportunities that require our response and

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A New Retreat for Our Times, cont.

The Rev. Garrett Mettler, who co-led the retreat with The Rev. Masud Ibn Syedullah.

participation as ‘citizens’ of a wounded world?”

Rev. Syedullah and Rev. Mettler came up with the idea of “Agents of Peace” last summer after a string of shootings in the U.S. It evolved as the year progressed and public discourse grew polarized. They will be giving the same retreat this summer at the Taconic Retreat Center, in Milan, New York. One of their main goals is to “help people establish a sense of empathy and understanding even if people hold a radically different position,” says Rev. Syedullah.

That appealed to Mr. Gilchrist, who found himself and others getting wound up when people had different political or ideological stands. After he read the retreat description, he recalls thinking: “Holy cow! It would be nice to dial it down and encourage other people to dial it down. How do you do that?”

One way is by listening, a skill he thought he had developed well.

He and others at the retreat were presented with five categories and opposing preferences for each: City living versus country; foreign cars versus domestic; public schools versus private; Homeownership versus rental; and dogs versus cats.

Tips for being a better listener:

- **Focus on the person**, not their opinions. **Be attentive.** Don’t look around, check your phone or sigh.
- **Suspend your own judgment** and analysis until the other person is finished.
- **Don’t interrupt.**
- **Don’t form rebuttals in your head** while the other person is talking.
- **Summarize objectively** what the other person said.

Each person was directed to listen for two minutes, without interrupting, to someone with a different opinion on a subject and then present that person’s opinion to others in the group. “Don’t start to form your own argument and say ‘Yeah, but,’ and don’t tolerate what they say and wait until they are done to make your point,” advised Rev. Mettler, who says they deliberately avoided more emotionally charged subjects.

Mr. Gilchrist favored private schools, saying they aren’t as constrained by budgets, which allows them to do “crazy wonderful things.” His partner said public schools serve her and her family well and offered more diversity and better reflected the community.

“It was a turning-point experience,” says Mr. Gilchrist. He realized that something as basic and seemingly simple as listening had turned needlessly difficult. Our attention spans seem shorter and our desire to voice our own opinions is greater, especially in these heated times, he says, making listening secondary.

“We are waiting for the person to pause because we want to make our point, which of course is better than theirs,” says Mr. Gilchrist. “We need to listen without an agenda.” Most of his friends don’t go on retreats. “I mention these things periodically and get quizzical looks,” says Mr. Gilchrist, who went to a retreat a year ago at Holy Cross Monastery on silence and contemplation, and has gone to other retreats over the years with his church.

Sarah Witmer, a 21-year-old Columbia University student, didn’t fully realize until the retreat how often we listen with the intention of changing the other person’s mind. “We’re just hearing their words but thinking of how to convince them to think another way.”

On the last day, being the economist that he is, Mr. Gilchrist organized his thoughts, drawing a rough diagram with circles and arrows showing who—the Trump administration, people and institutions—were acting on whom and how that influences us and how we interact with each other.

“I had to get those things on paper,” says Mr. Gilchrist.

He thinks he is a better listener now. “The way I approach things and think about things has absolutely changed. I know how to detach myself and get into a listening mode and try to understand the other person,” he says. “I don’t have to combat it, accept it, reject or judge. It takes a lot of stress out of it.” ♦

Art as Lectio Divina:
Mandala of the Prayer
Attributed to St. Francis

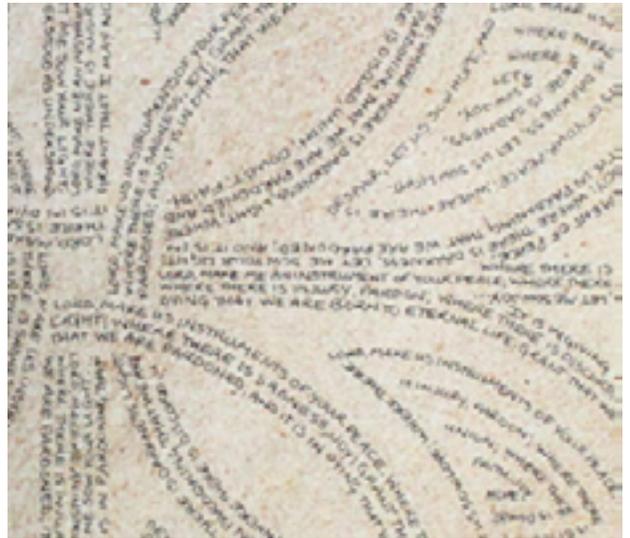


From afar, the viewer would take in the loveliness of the mandala's design as a whole. Seen up close, the text adds a surprising contemplative dimension to its beauty.

by Janet Strickler

For the past 14 years TSSF Novice Janet Strickler, serving as Artist-in-Residence at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Longmont, Colorado, has been making a piece of art for each season of the liturgical year to hang in the narthex of the church for the duration of the season. This year one of her other pieces was this mandala drawn with the repeated text of the Prayer Attributed to Saint Francis. The design of the mandala includes four peace signs, interlocking with each other and with natural forms of leaves and buds. There are two versions of the prayer; the personal "Make *me* an instrument," and the corporate "Make *us* instruments," which is in our BCP. Both versions are included in the mandala, with the leaves and buds made from the singular version and the circles being comprised of the plural one.

Janet developed this way of creating art from text a few years ago for a mandala made with the text of several Psalms, and another one called the Creation Mandala, which incorporates the first two chapters of Genesis, the four elements from Native and Celtic traditions, and scientific descriptions of those elements. The design is first worked out in pencil, and when it is finalized, drawn on plain paper with heavy lines. This pattern is then laid on a hand-built light box with a sheet of drawing paper fixed over it. When the light is turned on, the shadow of the black lines is visible on the top paper, so the lettering can follow the path of the lines. Creating one of these pieces is a form of *lectio divina*, for Janet as she focuses on the text one word at a time, and in this case repeated over and over again, providing a deep engagement with the passage or prayer.



A detail of the intricate mandala shows how the text flows repeatedly and precisely in all directions, all of them readable.

The original lettering is done in black on white, so that it can be reproduced on various backgrounds. If you are interested in a print, they are available, unframed or framed, by contacting from Janet at janartist@gmail.com, or 303-776-2052. If you would like to check out some of her liturgical pieces over the years, many can be found at www.wheelofseasons.wordpress.com. ♦

Miracles at Phebe Hospital in Liberia



Kathryn Challoner in the Phebe Hospital ER in 2015 with a girl bitten by a black mamba snake.

By Kathryn Challoner

The second time I visited the Phebe hospital in Liberia, I saw the local help beating the trees and bushes. I asked, “What were they doing?” I was told they had seen a green mamba snake and were attempting to find it. “But we have antivenin?” I asked. When I was told that there was no antivenin, I was horrified and suggested that we should let sleeping snakes lie.

After this incident the Third Order began to provide FAV antivenin to Phebe hospital.

I had called everywhere seeking to find the antivenin. While the search was in progress, I returned to the ER to find that my colleague, Dr. Benedict Kolee, located the antivenin right here in Liberia. The UN had several vials, and Dr. Kolee was able to secure some. A breathless messenger arrived in the ER and handed me a package packed in ice. The next morning I announced at rounds that we had the antivenin, that it was in the ER refrigerator, was free, and gave quick instructions on how to use it.

THAT VERY NIGHT a little girl arrived who had been bitten in the heel by a black mamba. She was in the end stage of envenomation: breathless, numb, tingling in hands and feet, clammy, and low blood pressure. A Liberian medical resident rushed to the refrigerator for the antivenin and immediately administered it intravenously. The little girl lived and walked out of the ER several days later.

The Third Order immediately went to work and shipped the new antivenin to Phebe....Since that time, many lives have been saved.

We then discovered that the FAV antivenin production had been discontinued, and we joined the general uproar about this along with other agencies such as Doctors Without Borders. I also called my old friend who was a toxicologist at Los Angeles County Hospital. Dr. Levine was able to tell us of an alternate antivenin, which was expensive but available. The Third Order immediately went to work and shipped the new antivenin to Phebe while preserving an uninterrupted series of refrigerated production, storage, and distribution activities. Since that time, many lives have been saved.

We are receiving, on average, about three to five snakebites monthly (it varies a lot with the season). We have observed most of these bites to be poisonous.

God’s timing—and the quick response of TSSF—was perfect in getting these lifesaving supplies to us. ♦

*Lilies of the Field Visiting
the Sultan?*

*Not exactly, but it felt
a lot like a modern-day
version of it.*

Below, members of the Lilies of the Field Fellowship go Coptic with friends and family. Back Row: John Shepic (Charlotte's husband), Nick Pijoan (TSSF professed), John Kerr (former Franciscan of a different order). Front Row: K. D. Adamson (John's girlfriend), Charlotte Shepic (TSSF aspirant), Fr. Jacob Soliman (Coptic Orthodox), Sarah Hartzell (TSSF professed), and Susan Israel (Coptic Orthodox).



By Sarah Hartzell

In fact, it was a group of Franciscans, and friends seeking to bridge the gap, and extend the hand of friendship between East and West in the Christian Church. The journey began when my husband and I hosted a high school girl for three weeks while she studied English and college prep at CU Boulder's International English Center. Robel Gebreweld was born in Sudan to Ethiopian parents and now lives in Australia. Our agreement in hosting her was to help her honor her faith tradition, Ethiopian Orthodox, a branch of the Coptic Orthodox church founded by St. Mark in Alexandria in the first century. As a result, we were able to experience their liturgy in English, Coptic and Arabic, with lots of multilingual chanting amidst clouds of incense.

We were graciously invited to lunch, and had a long talk with the priest about his prayers for his congregants, most of whom are Egyptian, Ethiopian, or Eritrean. Many are socially isolated and still carry the trauma of violence and marginalization of Coptic Christians at the hands of Muslims in Egypt. His longing was for a "fresh voice," to bring people who might see life from a less disempowered point of view, who might acknowledge Christian friendship despite the religious, cultural and geographical differences. When I heard his plea, I couldn't help but think of Francis and the Sultan, and how he crossed "enemy" lines to plea for peace. The Orthodox church isn't exactly an enemy, and we weren't in any danger by going there. Still, it felt like there was a gap to be bridged by simply showing up. Without hesitation I offered to find out if some of my Franciscan friends could come and visit.

After consultation with my Lilies of the Field fellowship group, we identified a few members who could attend on Sunday morning, February 19. Including family and friends there were six of us who came to the mass, with men and women (heads covered with scarves) seated on opposite sides of the room. We had been offered a few minutes to speak at the end of the service, and used the time to extend our greetings and acknowledge our oneness in Christ beyond our apparent differences. We also presented an icon of St. Francis as a gift.

Fr. Soliman reinforced our unity message and invited us to the lunch which followed. Over soup and sandwiches we found ourselves in animated conversations with new friends, comparing notes about how we each worship, and celebrating both similarities and differences. Egyptians (along with Ethiopians and Eritreans) are known for their hospitality, which was certainly in evidence with this group.

Nadine, one of the parishioners, insistently echoed Fr. Soliman's invitation to lunch. I received a big smile across the room from the assistant priest's mother, who speaks no English. I'd connected with her on the previous visit and even attempted to learn a few words in Amharic to greet her. Before we left Fr. Soliman invited us into a small chapel to meet, to thank us for coming. He's keen to continue the cross-pollinating in whatever ways we can. It will be interesting to find out what adventure comes next. In these turbulent times, this event proves, once again, how important it is to show up, build relationship and simply be there with an open heart. ♦

Reception of Postulants in Cuba

By Raciél Prat (translation courtesy of Tom Johnson)

Here are photos of the reception of the Rev. Haydee Lugo and Yulién Yuslán as postulants on Saturday, February 25, 2017, during a break in the meetings of the 108th Annual Synod of the Episcopal Church of Cuba. The ceremony was presided over by the diocesan bishop, Bishop Griselda, and included the participation of the Rev. Armando Delgado and myself. The ceremony was held in the chapel of the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas.

Also on that day we conveyed a message to the assembly for the Church of Cuba on behalf of the Third Order, and the Bishop expressed words of praise and a brief explanation of the Order. ♦

Photo right, from left to right: Bishop Griselda, who received Yulién Yuslán and the Rev. Haydee Lugo as Third Order postulants.



Provincial Convocation 2017: Centennial of the Province of the Americas *There's Room for You at Provincial Convocation! Register Now!*



Centennial Convocation Prayer

*(Refer to your prayer card
in three languages)*

Lord Jesus Christ,

when the world was growing cold, you raised up blessed Francis, bearing in his body the marks of your suffering to warm our hearts with the fire of your love. Help us always to turn to you with true hearts, and for love of you to bear the cross; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, One God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Registration is open, and, according to our registrar, we are rapidly filling up. So register soon. We want as many of our brothers and sisters present for our “family reunion” and our Centennial Celebration. To register go to: <http://tssf.org/convocation-2017>.

Donations to the scholarship fund have been coming in, and they are really appreciated. So far it looks like we are going to be able to meet the requests for scholarship help, but we are also expecting more applications, so if any others want to help make it possible for another tertiary to attend, send scholarship donations to:

TSSF
c/o Alison Saichek
P. O. Box 92, Fremont, CA 94537

Provincial Convocation Scholarships

Do you want to attend the 2017 Provincial Convocation in Cincinnati but are held back because of financial constraints? You may be eligible for a scholarship. Send a request to PC2017Registrar@gmail.com for a Scholarship Application Form. All those who have applied for scholarships have been awarded their full request, and we still have scholarship funds available!

Reminder to all Fellowships: Banners & Tri-fold Boards

Please create a simple banner which can be used in our worship space. Include the name of your fellowship, your location, and a symbol or graphic that represents your fellowship.

Please also put together a tabletop-sized tri-fold illustrating the members of your fellowship and the various ministries each are doing. These displays will line the hallway to our main assembly room, and celebrate all the good work that we do to serve others in the footsteps of Francis. (An alternative is to bring loose photos to put on tri-folds onsite.)

Some things to look forward to at this convocation:

Videos on the website during convocation ♦ keynote speaker Murray Bodo ♦ John Brockmann's history scavenger hunt ♦ discernment process for our future through small group work ♦ options for 6 workshop timeslots led by tertiaries and other persons of note ♦ field trip to the Freedom Center, site of our TSSF roots, and Cathedral in Cincinnati ♦ rich worship experiences with sermons by some of our own best preachers and our bishop protector ♦ bookstore/gift shop with many items by our own artist members as well as books authored by tertiaries ♦

New TSSF Brochures Available

The Communications Task Force last year jointly created a new TSSF brochure. They wrote, created the layout and selected the artwork to provide us with a dynamic, attractive brochure

that tells the TSSF story in an appealing way. Chaired by Victoria Logue, the Task Force also includes Lucinda Dyer, and Joseph Wolyniak. The brochures may be ordered in bulk from the TSSF Literature Distribution center: John Pedersen, 1725 E Lewis Lane, Nampa, ID 83686; tauteacher@gmail.com.

There is no cost for the brochures, though a small contribution to help cover shipping is always welcome. ♦

The Three Aims of the Order

To make our Lord known and loved everywhere.

By word and example, Tertiaries witness to Christ in their daily lives. By prayer and sacrifice, we help forward God's work, wherever He has called us.

To spread the spirit of fellowship.

By working happily with people of different race, color, creed, education and opportunity, Tertiaries seek to break down the divisions in the world. We try to live in the spirit of St. Francis' prayer: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."

To live simply.

Acknowledging that everything belongs to God, we seek to use His gifts wisely and to be good stewards of this fragile earth, never destroying or wasting what God has made. We provide the things necessary for ourselves and our families without demanding luxuries. We seek never to forget the needs of others.

About us

The Third Order consists of men and women, single or in committed relationships, who, though working in ordinary jobs, are called to a dedicated life of service to our Lord through prayer, study, and work. Like the First Order, Tertiaries make a lifetime commitment to live a Rule of Life in company with the sisters and brothers in their Order. Tertiaries follow Francis in prayer and action by striving to be peacemakers, working for social justice, and deepening our relationship with God. We share Francis' concerns for the well-being of the earth, the poor, and the marginalized.

Visit us online
tssf.org

The Third Order
Society of Saint Francis
Province of the Americas

In the way of St. Francis of Assisi
Follow Jesus

Then

In 1205, Francis of Assisi was called by God to rebuild the Church. Early in his ministry, he recognized the need to include people from all walks of life within his movement of reform and renewal. The work of following Christ in humility, love and joy, which is the vocation of all Christians, could not be restricted to the traditional life of the Friars and Sisters. This was true in the thirteenth century and it remains so today.

Today

Today, there are estimated to be over a half-million Franciscans worldwide in the various denominations of the Christian family. Anglican Franciscans are divided among five provinces worldwide. The Province of the Americas stretches from Canada to Chile including Central America and the Caribbean. It currently includes the First Order Brothers and Sisters – who live a celibate life in their respective communities – and the Third Order.

Is The Order for you?
Are you ...

- Striving to be a peacemaker?
- Passionate about social justice?
- Yearning for a deeper relationship with God?
- Concerned with ecology, the poor, the marginalized?
- Called to action and contemplation?

St. Francis

Francis of Assisi lived and died eight centuries ago. What is so attractive about his way that people still want to follow it? He had a genius for seeing the face of Christ in everyone he met: bishop or leper, Christian or Muslim, friend or stranger. Francis faced some of the biggest questions of his day: How to respond to the growing gap between rich and poor? How to make peace between enemies? What is our relationship to the world God made? Where is God when we suffer? Because these are also the questions of our own day, Francis has much to say to us.

Contact:
TSSF Secretary for Inquirers
PO Box 17016
Salt Lake City UT 84117
inquirers@tssf.org

Jamie Hacker Hughes
Elected Minister
Provincial for European
Province



Averil Swanton did not stand for re-election and resigned early. In a snap election, Jamie G. H. Hacker Hughes was elected Minister Provincial for the European Province, taking up office June 2017. Jamie was elected prior to normal schedule. What follows is his presentation for the election.

My first encounter with SSF was just under 50 years ago, when I was 10 years old, and Brother Donald came to Llandaff Cathedral to lead Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Twenty years later I learned of the Third Order from a fellow parishioner tertiary at our church in inner city London. And then another ten years later I made my profession, with Brother Donald celebrating the Eucharist. Since then I have had the privilege of acting as Novice Guardian to several novices and have served as Area Novice Guardian for the East London and South Essex Area (2012-14) before the move to our South London parish.

I have been married for 27 years to Katy, an Anglican priest, and we have a son at university. Since our move back from Essex to South London Area three years ago, I have led young people's work in the vibrant and diverse community in our church at the Elephant and Castle. Professionally, I am a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist. A former army officer and business person, I was head of healthcare psychology for the Ministry of Defense and then followed an academic career. During the last three years I have served as President of the British Psychological Society and chair of trustees of an organization of nearly 60,000 members with a turnover of over £13 million. This role comes to an end at the beginning of May, and my main work now is in therapy with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and supervision of staff members in organizations and charities working with them.

I have a simple Christian faith and my vision for our Order is simple too. If we are to fulfill the first aim of our Order, to make the name of our Lord Jesus Christ known and loved everywhere, we need to be visible and to be recognized as being distinctive, both individually and collectively. If we are to spread a spirit of love and harmony, we need, in so many different ways and according to each member's calling, to be active, and to be seen to be active, in the causes of social justice, peace, conservation and environmental work. These are all actions which St. Francis espoused. But we do really need to work on simplicity in our structures, our meetings, our documentation, and our communications—unfettering ourselves as far as possible from any unnecessary bureaucracy.

At the same time, we have to ensure that we have the best possible systems for governance, safeguarding, and pastoral care. We are members of a religious order and bound by its objects, aims and principles, and we also have a fourth duty to our Order, which is caring for all our members, supporting and sustaining older Tertiaries, and also encouraging, stimulating and continually seeking to renew and reinvigorate the Order by attracting and drawing in new, especially younger, members. New Monasticism is a growing movement within the Church and this presents us, as an Order, with a real opportunity.

I believe the role of Minister Provincial to be fourfold: 1) servant leadership - guarding the vision; 2) efficient management - ensuring that the Order serves all its members and enables them to serve the Order as well as possible; 3) pastoral care - in the many ways in which it may be required, and 4) representative - serving the Order. This is what I feel called to offer the Order if it is your will and the will of God. ♦

*Help Your Provincial
Library by Buying Books*

By John Brockmann and Janice Syedullah

At our June Convocation, we plan to demonstrate our new online library system, and help anyone who likes to register for a library account (no need to wait; you can get an account now by contacting one of us by email). The cost of sending out the books is covered by the Third Order.

The way we will be funding this cost is by selling off books from our library that are in good condition but easily found elsewhere and outside our new strict focus on a Franciscan library. To view a copy of the list, please [click here](#).

The cost of books is \$3.00 each, with an estimated \$2.72/book for media mailing. Please make checks out to TSSF and write "Books" on the memo line. Mail your check to R. John Brockmann, 78 Mann Hill Road, Scituate, MA 02066.



May our Blessed Lady pray for us.

May St. Francis pray for us.

May St. Clare pray for us.

May all the saints of the Third Order
pray for us.

May all the holy angels watch over us
and befriend us.

May the Lord Jesus grant us
his blessing and his peace.