

## *Mere Thanks are not Enough*

The Rev. Dr. R. John Brockmann  
Served as Minister Provincial, TSSF,  
From 2011 to 2014

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.

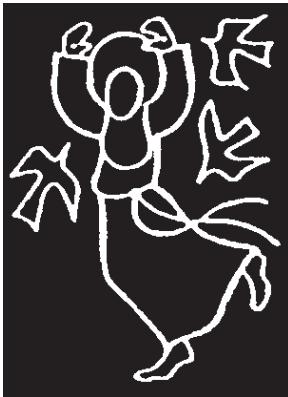
John's term as Minister Provincial was a creative season reflecting a long and dedicated ministry to the Third Order, Society of St. Francis. Those many years of service provided both history and wisdom as he endeavored to take the helm and to lead us forward.

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 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.



# The Franciscan Times

Fall 2014

A NEWSLETTER HELPING MEMBERS OF THE THIRD ORDER,  
SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS, PROVINCE OF THE AMERICAS  
SHARE THEIR COMMON JOURNEY THROUGH NEWS FROM FEL-  
LOWSHIPS AND INDIVIDUALS, REVIEWS OF BOOKS, CDs, DVDs,  
POETRY, STORIES, ESSAYS, REFLECTIONS, MEDITATIONS,  
GRAPHICS, AND WHATEVER THE HOLY SPIRIT MIGHT BLOW  
OUR WAY ■

## Little Portion to be Sold and Reflections

*Ken Norian, Minister General*

Some of you have had the opportunity to spend time at the “mother house” 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 made their home since the 1930s. What follows is a communication from Br. Jude the Provincial of the 1st Order in the Americas. Not articulated is that of the community 80 percent are aged and infirmed.

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 as Little Portion Friary was the place that 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 facilitate us. 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 30's.

We plan to fence off and maintain the cemetery as a place of burial for members of the First and Third Orders and 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 the place is well-maintained.

As you can imagine, all of this is going to take some time to achieve 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

## Election of the Rev. Tom S. Johnson as Minister Provincial, Province of the Americas

*Ken Norian, Minister General of TSSF*

The only constant is change....

Last week Bishop Fryar Godfrey was elected the new Minister Provincial of the Province of Asia-Pacific. This week I can announce that the Rev. Tom Johnson was elected as the new Minister Provincial of the Province of the Americas, succeeding the Rev. John Brockmann.

I've attached a very special picture of the past five current and former Ministers Provincial of the Province of the Americas.

*Continued on page 2*

### **Election of the Rev. Tom S. Johnson as Minister Provincial (cont.)**

Americas. It's quite amazing to be able to have five generations of Ministers Provincial at the same Chapter—almost two decades of leadership still active and participating in the life of their province!



*Ministers Provincial: Masud ibn Syedullah, John Brockmann, Anita Catron Miner, Tom Johnson, Ken Norian*

### **The Rev. Thomas S. Johnson**

The son of missionaries, much of Tom's early life was spent overseas, first in China and then in Bolivia.

In his late teens and early twenties Tom was employed by the American Bible Society – in Venezuela for two years, and later in Colombia where, at age twenty, he was placed in charge of the entire Colombian enterprise with two local offices and over 20 Colombian employees. After two years in Colombia, he identified and trained the first Colombian national executive.

Tom graduated from UCLA and Fuller Theological Seminary and was ordained a minister in the United Presbyterian Church.

He served for another 11 years with the American Bible Society first in Chicago and then at New York headquarters where he became a senior executive in charge of the "Ways and Means" Division including Direct Mail Fundraising, Church Relations, Public Relations and Deferred Giving. In 1979 he joined the Russ Reid Company, a major advertising agency, as its Vice President for Direct Mail Fundraising. Eight years later, he established his own advertising agency, Tom Johnson & Associates, specializing in raising funds for non-profit organizations raising millions of dollars for charitable causes with award-winning direct mail campaigns.

In 1997, Tom was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, and served for five years as Vicar of St. Hugh of Lincoln, Idyllwild, CA, followed by four years as Rector of St. John's, Indio, CA and, concurrently, Vicar of Santa

Rosa del Mar, Desert Shores, CA. While Vicar of Santa Rosa del Mar (a Spanish-speaking congregation) he arranged the purchase of property and supervised the installation of a church building. He retired at the end of 2006.

Tom was professed in the Third Order in 2002 and served as retreat leader for a Southern California Convocation and -- briefly -- as convener of the St. Bernardine Fellowship. He

and his wife Susan moved to Northern California in November 2008, where they are active in the Living Waters Fellowship. Tom has been TSSF Bursar since December 2009. He is currently a Priest Associate at Trinity Episcopal Church in their hometown of Folsom.

Tom speaks Spanish fluently, Portuguese passably.

### **A New Bursar Elected**

There is a new Provincial Bursar for the Province of the Americas. David Lawson-Beck was elected by Chapter to succeed Tom Johnson who Chapter elected to be Minister Provincial. Please send all pledges/contributions, Expense Reports and financial correspondence to:

**Bursar  
TSSF Province of the Americas  
PO Box 121  
Rahway, NJ 07065**

David's email address and phone number are listed in your directory.



**Follow-up From the Little Plays of St. Francis by Laurence Housman article in the last issue.**

#### *John Brockmann*

You might recall that I heartily recommended it for use by Fellowships. Well, in reading through old issue of *The Little Chronicle* from Little Portion, I found a short note in the December 1933-34 issue saying that the New York Custody (a.k.a. fellowship) will be putting on one of the *Little Plays* February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1934.

### **Please Note:**

The TSSF Directory is not to be used for solicitations of any kind unrelated to Third Order, Province of the Americas.

## Introducing Your Newly-Elected Formation Director, Liz Peacock

Liz Peacock was raised Southern Baptist, where she gained her deep love of the Bible. As a young adult, she joined the Episcopal Church, but always longed for that deeper spirituality they don't tell you about in Sunday School. That longing led her to explore many different traditions in her younger years. She has a deep respect for all spiritual traditions, but ultimately found her deepest fulfillment in the Christian monastic and mystical traditions, and most especially in the way of St. Francis. Liz finds that the structure and accountability of her Rule of Life and the TSSF community help keep her rooted in Christ and focused on the things that really matter. Her awareness and compassion for the marginalized of our society led her to leave a banking career to



minister to homeless men and women living with HIV and AIDS. Liz has also served as AFD for four years, finding great joy in watching inquirers grow into mature Franciscans through our formation program. Recently retired, Liz is eager to find new ways to offer her gifts and energies to TSSF. Her term begins December 1, 2014.

Liz feels this is an exciting time to serve as Formation Director, with new technologies, greater diversity in our membership, and improved communications within and between the provinces. Liz sees listening as her first job, so invites dialogue and suggestions of ways the formation program might be improved.



**The Franciscan Times**  
is a publication of The Third Order  
Society of St. Francis Province of the Americas.

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- Name and address changes
- Convocation Dates
- Profession & Novicing Dates
- Notification of Deaths

Send to Secretary of the Order:

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### For Chaplaincy Matters

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## Chapter 2014, Grace Episcopal Church, Norwood Massachusetts--The First Peripatetic Chapter in 35 Years

(Insert) Sr. Anjelika (OEF Visitor); Front Row (l to r): Joan Verret (Elected Chapter Member (ECM)); Liz Peacock (Newly elected Formation Director); Janine Scherone (ECM); Anita Miner (Provincial Secretary); Sr. Jean (CSF); Barbara Baumgarten (Regional Minister, Brazil); Brenda Stewart (ECM); Diane Jones (ECM)

Back Row: Anne Mulqueen (OFS Visitor); Bishop Gordon Scruton (Bishop Protector); Masud ibn Syeddullah (ECM and Minister for External Relations); John Brockmann (Out-going Minister Provincial); Millicent Ramcharan (ECM); Joyce Wilding (ECM and JPIC Animator); Carolyn Benjamin (Formation Director); Bill Graham (Fellowship Coordinator); Tom Johnson (Out-going Bursar/Incoming Minister Provincial); Dominic George (Provincial Chaplain); Ken Norian (Minister General).

**From Recently Professed:****(1) John Cooper**

*It's been written that our suffering and sorrow is the portal to the mystery of our hope; the gateway to our Hope, which is in Christ Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Right here, in the midst of all this, is the house of God, and here is the gateway to heaven, right here in the midst of our sorrow and shame. Though the way is narrow and closely guarded by legions of demons blocking the way and disguising the path, it's here nonetheless. And I can't say that I've ever stepped through that portal, but I know that I've stood close enough to feel a momentary draft. The following reflects a little time spent with a man whose name is Chris.*

**An Inheritance**

There is a guard that works in this unit who is known for telling the prisoners that it's her mission in life to make their lives miserable. I can't understand all that, and I can't understand the vengeance, hatred, and mind-games. I can't understand our country's justice system, and find our sense of justice less and less defensible.

The part I do understand, when it all boils down to lay its claim on me, when the prosecutorial world is done for the day and home watching TV with their family, is the part where I'm standing in the bathroom of a men's prison holding a 25-year-old man while he cries himself sick. Sick to death, with a senseless, incomprehensible fear of being released into a world he knows will despise him. A world, a parole officer, a system that has taught him it's their mission to make his life miserable.

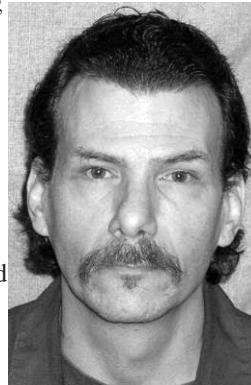
Diagnosed with schizophrenia, given to drug abuse and self-mutilation, this young man was involved in a consensual relationship with an underage girl when he was 18. He has now done seven years in prison, receiving no help for his issues, and trembles in tears and fear of being released into society that will plaster his picture on flyers, TV, and elsewhere calling him a danger to society and our children. No one will want him next door or anywhere else.

To someone clinically paranoid and told by correctional officers that they are actually out to get him, the fear and rejection he is confronting is something most people will never know. His journal troubles me deeply.

In shame he told me he isn't stable. He said he wanted to tell me something but needed my promise I wouldn't tell. I gave him my promise and said, "Show me."

So he rolled up his sleeve and showed me how he'd cut himself all up in some kind of last-ditch despair.

We had a long talk about God and



life, good people everywhere, and hope, while we washed and doctored his arm with antibiotics. Then I made bean burritos.

Now, while recording my thoughts, the entire matter is beyond my comprehension. I just can't understand. And the only moment that makes any sense is when I asked him, "Who loves ya?", and he pointed his thumb at me. And to whom do I owe that honor?

*Finally, all of you be of one spirit, having compassion for one another, be tenderhearted, be humble, not repaying evil for evil, or abuse for abuse, but on the contrary, repay with a blessing, knowing that your were called to this that you may inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9*

**(2) Diana Turner-Forte****"A Franciscan Journey"**

Long be arriving here, I received a sacred code.

Implanted deep it set my course,  
Compassion, peace, simplicity, and service,  
Mold these traits in St. Francis's way.

In the gardens of my school  
St. Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus, winged Gabriel held my gaze.  
Life size they stood, looming over study, talks, prayer,  
And outdoor play, a reverent act.

Holy Eucharist, worship, meditation  
Fertile ground for pure devotion  
Order and rituals set the day,  
Soon deep rooted into a holy life.

Buber and Julian, Underhill and Teresa,  
Parents and nuns, inspired guides  
Mentored by their selflessness  
Freed I was to contemplate.

The path was never all that straight,  
Wandering here, there and in between  
Art, dance, music played their roles  
Integrated I evolved through college, career, and married life.

Torn apart by fear and doubt  
Tears of sadness, despair and grief

All through distractions, trials and errors, the self held fast  
In the tension—illusions, envy and greed unraveled.

Portals opened one by one,  
The path then narrowed to no choice;  
Change, transform and die to life  
True claim on me was only One.

Thank God's persistent, immortal guide -- the soul.

Nudging, pushing, challenging pride;

Six decades later vows professed

Three notes resound and resonate: humility, love and joy.

## A Meeting of Canadian Monastic Orders

*Frank Jones*

Archbishop Rowan Williams has declared religious orders to be “the heart of the church”. Though small and hidden within the body, without the working of the heart, the body has no life. Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, said: “As we acknowledge the ministries of the Religious Communities of Canada, let us name them for what they are: labours of love for Christ and His Church.

My wife, Diane, and I had the privilege to attend a meeting of Religious Orders of the Canadian Anglican Church in Toronto last March. A subcommittee of the Canadian House of Bishops called the meeting. There were some representatives from “new” monastic groups and some from older established Orders. The main purpose behind the meetings was to see how each group or Order could help others from their experiences.

The “new” monastic groups founded or re-founded in the last five years include

**Threshold Ministries**, from St. John, New Brunswick, is not really new but in 2009 changed their name from “The Church Army.” I include them as “new” because while keeping their original thrust, they are intensifying some subordinate parts of it. The main work of training evangelists for the mission field is still very important, but they are now going into parishes to help groups with administration and one-on-one contact methods. <http://thresholdministries.ca/>

The **Jeremiah Community** founded in 2009 has as its main work the stabilization of failing parishes. According to their website, The Jeremiah Community is a “New Monastic” community in the Anglican tradition. We are a theologically and generationally-diverse community of people – parents, children, artists, activists, students, workers, retirees – who have committed to a common rhythm of life in worship, prayer, study, work, service and celebration. A Rhythm of Life is designed to help us discover and connect with the Spirit of God in our everyday lives. <http://jeremiahcommunity.ca/>

The **Emmaus Community**, re-founded in 2013, has as its object to be a place where individuals can encounter the Living Christ along the way, a place where prayer and Sabbath are lived and shared, a place of stability and of pilgrimage, a place of simpler living, a place that will build relationships of peace and reconciliation. According to their website: “We are a ministry of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia and were previously known as The Community of the Reconciliation. While being rooted in our Anglican heritage, we are ecumenical/inter-denominational in our membership and welcome Christians and sojourners of all stripes into the conversation.” <http://emmauscommunity.ca/>

**Contemplative Fire** originated in the Diocese of Oxford in England, and was established in Canada in 2009 by a team in Toronto. **Contemplative Fire** describes itself on its website as “a dispersed community that meets in homes, churches, any attractive space or even out-of-doors. We meet as a large group for *Gatherings* (worship services), *Pilgrimages* (awareness walks and retreat days), and *Living the Mystery* (study days). We meet more frequently in small groups for times of deep listening to each other, to scripture, to contemplative texts, and trustfully to God. Our small groups vary from meditation to study, to food and fellowship times. Each one is woven with times of stillness, respectful listening and spaciousness.” <http://www.contemplativefire.ca/>

(For further information on “New Monasticism” see *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism* by Rutba House (2005))



*Canadian House of Bishops Invited All Canadian Christian Communities to Come Together In March For the First Time—TSSF Was Well Represented By Diane and Frank Jones of Vancouver (first row center).*

The monastic orders in existence for more than five years include:

**The Oratory Of The Good Shepherd.** The Oratory of the Good Shepherd (OGS), begun in Cambridge in 1913, is an international community of Anglicans, ordained and lay, who share a common Rule of Life. The OGS Rule calls members of the Oratory to daily Communion, Private Prayer, and the Office. It encourages the labour of the mind, fellowship, and the faithful stewardship of talents and resources. They are a very active order and have chapters in North America, Australia, South Africa, and Europe. Besides leading various religious activities they engage in any work that their resources will allow. <http://www ogs net/>

**The Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit.** Worker Sisters of the Holy Spirit *Continued on page 6*

**From the Bursar**

*Tom Johnson (Outgoing-Bursar)*

It is an immense joy to receive notes from so many of you and to see in very practical terms the generosity of our members. God was good to the Third Order during this last year, providing through the gifts of Postulants, Novices and Professed alike, over \$61,000 for the work of the Order. Our expenses for the year were just under \$54,000, so as we prepared the budget for fiscal year 2014–15, we were able to increase the amount of money we will spend on Outreach and on other important programs.

During the Chapter meeting, we heard that the food supply barn in Jawalla Village, Guayana, where Winston Williams and his wife live and serve had burned to the ground with all the food that had been stored for future distribution. In addition to our prayers for the Williams and their villagers, Chapter voted to send \$500 to help the village recover and to purchase seed for the new season.

Chapter also voted to allocate funds for a new Communications Task Force to develop and implement a plan to reach and motivate a younger generation to follow the way of Francis. The task force has set a goal of reporting within five months. Additionally, we increased our contribution to Franciscan Aid Fund, Franciscan Action Network and Franciscans International over last year's level and increased our financial commitment to JPIC.

The Challoner Medical Mission Fund, which is administered by a committee of tertiaries, has provided nearly \$30,000 for urgently needed medical supplies for front-line health care workers in Liberia as they battle the epidemic of Ebola. Contributions continue to come in and further remittances will be made. Dr. Ben Kolee, a colleague of Dr. Challoner and a Liberian on the scene, has been the contact through whom funds are sent and purchases of medical supplies are made from neighboring countries.

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As we move into a new Fiscal Year, I pray that God will continue to bless each of you as you share generously of your substance not just with the Order, but with so many in need throughout our world.

**Meeting of Canadian Monastic Orders (cont.)**

was founded in the United States in December 1972. The Worker Brothers of the Holy Spirit originated in 1979 and the Community expanded to Canada. The Worker Brothers of the Holy Spirit, named for the Worker Priests of France who sought to be workers-among-workers on docks and in factories, is a Covenant Community which offers women and men, regardless of marital status, a path for individual spiritual growth through prayer, worship, becoming, discovery, belonging, relating, commitment, and mission.

Formed in 1884, **The Order of The Holy Cross**, by James Otis Sargent Huntington to provide a specifically North American expression of monasticism, OHC has four houses, three in North America and one in South Africa. They live in community, follow the Benedictine rule of life, and observe daily use of the Divine Office and the Eucharist. <http://www.holycrossmonastery.com/OHC/OHC.htm>

**The Society of Our Lady Saint Mary.** This group, founded in 1979, is a Nova Scotian order and have an active ministry, which includes prayer, apostolic outreach, hospital visits, home visits, Bible studies, quiet days, and any requests from the Bishop for assistance. They are assisted by a number of ordained and lay associates.

**The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine.** Formed in 1881, the Sisterhood is “a contemporary expression of the religious life for women within the Anglican Church of Canada. We are a prayer- and gospel-centered monastic community, bound together by the call to live out our baptismal covenant through the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.” <http://www.ssjd.ca/>

**The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis.**

Two larger organizational groups were also at the meetings, The National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (<http://www.naec.org>) and The Conference of Anglican Religious Orders In The Americas (<http://www.caroa.net/>).

The participants of the consultation arrived in the mid-afternoon. We were assigned to our accommodations and at 5 PM went to Evensong. After the service we went for dinner and many of us had a surprise as the sisters, with whom we were dining, eat in silence. After the initial meal the silence rule was relaxed, and we could talk during lunch and dinner, but breakfast was still silent. After dinner we went to the meeting room to go over the program for the next four days. Shortly after we had had our briefing our guest speaker arrived, the

Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Fred Hiltz. The Primate spoke about his feelings about religious order and expressed some hopes for the results of our meetings. After speaking for about 45 minutes, the Primate asked for questions and then spent another half-hour answering those questions. After the formal time, we had coffee and tea and the Primate spoke to everyone individually.

The next morning started with Morning Prayer and then breakfast (silent) and then into the routine of the day. One of the first things we did was to draw numbers from a bishop's mitre. The number that you received gave you a position for telling the group about your Order. We had a spot on Thursday, which meant we could concentrate on what the others were saying. All of the groups were asked to put a symbol that represented their Order on a table so there was a visual presence for your group. We used a small picture of Saint Francis. Each group had 15 minutes to tell their story followed by a question-period of 20 minutes.

In the afternoon the three bishops who were with us were asked to tell us what the thought might come out of the meetings. The three had a lot to say and a wide list of expectations of what they thought could be accomplished. One thing they agreed on was that their report to the House of Bishops would show some of the members a new area or pool of resources that they could draw on. Later that day, after our talk, the group was asked to line up according to our founding date with the newest in the front. There were more than just one representative for each Order so there were a lot of people. Diane went into the line for us, and I watched from the side. You can imagine thirty or so people trying to sort out where they fitted in that line. Diane was being buffeted about but enjoying the chaos when one of the bishops ask her when our group was founded and she answered, "The thirteenth century." His response: "Go to the end of the line."

On Friday morning we gathered for a summing up meeting and were asked a few questions about what we thought had been useful. We were put into groups and my group had the question, "What are we offering to the wider Church in Canada?" Our answers were: (1) alternative ways to living the gospel; (2) vocational options; (3) hospitality; (4) post-denominationalism; (5) removal of the boundaries and the limits that we have put on relationships.

Suddenly it was over. We left for the airport, but had lots of things to think about. How do we implement the insights we gained, and who do I know who can help? I guess I better make an appointment with my bishop.



## **Remembering Sister Josephine Crooks**

*Ossilla James (picture on page 9)*

Sister Josephine Crooks died on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2014 after a period of illness. She was a retired nurse and a professed Franciscan. At her home-going service tributes were paid by former colleagues, family members and friends. The Tobago Area Chaplain represented the overseas members who called and asked that their condolences be extended to the family.

We all remember her in different ways from interacting with her at meetings, at church, even on the streets, and, at each time, some notable traits stood out. She remarked once she would never forget some of the things that she was taught as a student nurse; things that must *always be done* for patients as well as those that must *never be done* to patients. She realized that patients are often scared, frustrated, sometimes angry, and/or anxious, and her duty as a nurse was to put the patient at ease, and not aggravate the situation. She kept telling herself: "Josephine, be patient with your patients."

She was never one to abuse her authority. She was always a humble and an enthusiastic believer who loved her God. She had the art of encouraging people to trust in God no matter what the situation. Perhaps, because she was a nurse, she understood that, even though her physical body was being destroyed, she understood that her discomfort could not destroy her peace, nor her confidence in God, nor shut out the memories of the good times she experienced in life.

In a conversation one day she said that a particular psalm gave her hope and reminded her of God's love and his grace. She thought that God had given her more time to praise him, and that she would do that to the end—and that is exactly what she did! From our Sister Josephine we can learn that even though our bodies sometimes are severely afflicted and we may have to struggle, yet if we keep trusting in God's love, our spirit will remain strong.

We will all remember a kind, committed respectful sister who, evangelist that she was, would have reminded us as follows:

*In happy moments, Praise God.  
In difficult moments, Seek God.  
In painful moments, Trust God.  
Every moment (as long as we have life), Thank God.*

*Left to Right Brenda Cummings, Stephannie Harrison, Fr. Claude Berkely, Josephine Crooks, Fr. Hilton Bonas; Julia Bergstrom, Provincial Chaplain (hidden Francilla Rodriguez), Fr. Philip Isaac, Emeris McKenzie. (reprinted from 2003 Easter Franciscan Times)*

## **Remembering Joan Kidd (January 28, 1936-July 25, 2014)**

*Rebecca Goldberg for the New Umbrian Fellowship, San Francisco, CA.*

We in the New Umbrian Fellowship are grieving the loss of our sister and friend, Joan Kidd, who died on July 25 after



a six-month struggle with cancer. Joan is survived by her daughter Janet and son-in-law Matt, her two grandsons Jack and Mitch, and a loving extended family of colleagues and friends from around the world.

Joan tirelessly served her community. She worked as a nurse in San Mateo County for over 30 years. She served in the Ombudsman program in the San Mateo area, was an active leader in both

Good Shepherd and Holy Family Episcopal Churches, served as formation counselor and registrar for convocation in the Third Order Society of St. Francis, and still found time to volunteer in first grade classes at Hatch Elementary School. A person who took a lively interest in the world around her, she brought a contagious energy and enthusiasm to those she met.

Joan had a rollicking sense of adventure and loved to travel. At fellowship meetings, we always looked forward to hearing about her latest journeys, whether it was driving the RV up the California coast, going "across the pond" to England, or visiting her daughter and family in Australia. She always had colorful tales to share that brought faraway places to life and made us feel we were actually there with her. A lover of all of God's creatures, she was especially fond of her kitties, and sharing stories of their furry antics and exploits.

What I appreciate most about Joan was her acceptance of life on its own terms, her sense of gratitude and joy, and her deep, and unpretentious faith. She didn't complain when life brought hard things, such as the death of her son, her husband, and her own terminal illness. She accepted the times of joy, of peace, and of suffering and pain as part of the life God has given us. She didn't spend a lot of time regretting what might have been, or fearing what might lie ahead. Instead, she was busy loving, laughing, and living, enjoying people and relationships. Her faith in the goodness of God was palpable, and her spiritual insights both nourished and

challenged us. I know that when I struggled in my Franciscan journey or with a difficult decision, Joan was a person I would go to because her humility and sense of herself in relationship with God were an example and an inspiration to me. Joan cared deeply about the life of the brothers and sisters in the fellowship. I saw her two days before her death, and one of the first things she said when she saw me was "Is there anything going on in the fellowship that I should know about?" It was so typical, her concern for others before herself.

So we will all miss you, dear sister. You are forever a light for Christ and our Brother Francis. Rest in the peace and joy of life in union with God!

## **RIP: The Rev. Emmett Jack Fowler**

*Carol Tookey*

Members of the Four Corners Fellowship think of Fr. Jack as simply larger than life. He served the Navajo people in various capacities for well over 50 years. He came to the Navajo Reservation in the 50's as a Missionary Pilot for the Church of the Nazarene. In those days many areas of the Reservation weren't even accessible by auto, so it was either by plane, by horse, or by foot. Jack flew into remote locations to pull a tooth, help a baby be born, and always to share the Good

News by word and deed. He married former Miss Navajo, Anna, who was his wife for 49 years, and they raised five children together and helped raise numerous grandchildren. So he knew Navajo life and culture from the inside, although in describing himself in relation to the Navajo kinship system he claimed to be from the "Clorox Clan."

After being introduced to the catholic tradition of Christianity and participating in the Charismatic renewal and the Cursillo movement, he joined the Episcopal Church and studied for ordination at Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California. But denominations were not able to contain Jack's radical and widespread faith. He took a foray into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and at one point served as a Mormon Bishop, before returning to the Anglican fold under the tutelage of another Franciscan Navajoland missionary, the Rev. Dan Treece.



Jack's Franciscan charisms of joy and peacemaking were evident in his life and ministry. Always hopeful and optimistic, he looked for the best in everyone he met, which made every encounter one of joy. He always sought what the Navajo call "hozho" or harmony in relations, whether in his family, within the church, or within the community. He recognized God in numerous faith communities within and without the Christian faith. Intimately in touch with the Navajo culture, he recognized Navajo philosophy and practice as a way to connect with the Holy. Within the Christian community of San Juan County New Mexico, he called himself an "Ecumeniac" and a "Pentecostapalian." One of his fondest memories was of his life profession to the Third Order, made at the local Roman Catholic Church in Shiprock, NM in which he con-celebrated the Holy Eucharist with the local Catholic priest.

In the Franciscan tradition, he was also at home with God in creation, going to the family cabin in the middle of the San Juan mountains of Colorado on a regular basis, and making extensive backpacking trips around the Rocky mountains with family.

As a recovering alcoholic, he had a special heart for ministering with addicts, and to the end of his life, he continued to go every week to teach spirituality and meditation at the Four Winds detoxification facility. He had experienced the ravages of addiction in his own life, and wanted to help his brothers and sisters to find ways to connect with the Sacred.

Even though Jack 'retired' from active Episcopal Ministry around 2000, he never caught on to the 'rocking chair' mode of transportation. He continued to ride his Golden Wing with sidecar around the area along with his orange VW Beetle, continuing to help out at local churches including the 'new thought' congregation, Fellowship of Spirit. He became a full-time grandpa, acting as transportation minister to and from school, activities, and jobs.

Since his death in April, our Fellowship has not been able to hold a regular meeting, instead opting on going for supper together. The hole at the head of the table is still too empty for us to carry on as normal.

### **Elizabeth Sofra (October 18, 1928- August 29, 2014; professed 2001)**



*Kathryn Challoner*

My favorite memory of Elizabeth is what I would call her feisty index. She was quite the rabble-rouser in her working days. She worked with unions and wrote protest letters (she didn't care

who was the recipient—if she felt they needed to hear her opinion, she was going to express it!) My kind of lady!

Another memory was her hospitality. She believed the whole world would benefit from Italian pasta (homemade) and Italian cookies (also homemade). She once sent cookies to our Bishop. When my son was very ill, she did the same thing—off went the cookies accompanied with many prayers.

She was an example to all of us in her final illness. Always cheerful, always smiling. If I went in there grumpy, I would just have to look at her and then mentally kick myself! "I am ready for Heaven"—she would say—pointing upward. She "died" twice and modern medicine hauled her back. She said that next time would we please let things be? I said we needed her more than God did—I meant it too.

### **Introducing the TSSF Prayer Request Ministry**

*Stu Schlegel (from his 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report to Chapter 2014)*

I received the regular *Hot News* in January of this year 2014, and noted that it included a couple of requests from TSSF members for particular prayers. When I was offering those intercessions the following morning, it struck me that something I could do with my free time in retirement would be receive prayers daily from the sisters and brothers and send them to a list of us who volunteered to offer such prayers. With the approval and encouragement of the Minister Provincial, Secretary, and Chaplain, I sent out an announcement on January 27th to all the tertiaries with email addresses, asking them to let me know if they would be interested in joining such a ministry of prayer, and that is how we began.

Very soon, about 30 or so had signed on to receive the requests, which I have sent out by email to them every Saturday morning since. There are now around 50 stalwarts. We have never received a large number of requests, but we do not see this as a problem, so long as the whole membership is aware that we are there for them if and when they feel a need. I expressed to the list a concern about how few requests we were getting, almost all from a certain small number of folks, and many have joined in an ongoing effort to be sure the word is getting out to everyone.

Any member of the order, at whatever stage of formation or profession, has only to email me ([schlegel@cruzio.com](mailto:schlegel@cruzio.com)) either to join the roster of praying people or to request a prayer from them. I also pass along any updates I receive or words of appreciation regarding a previous request. On a typical Saturday, I now send out eight to twelve requests received the previous week from an average of five or six people.

An early understanding was that a request would be active for a week, unless the sender asked for longer. That had to be given up, however, especially when we began including requests that had appeared on the TSSF Facebook page from people, many not in the order, who were unaware of any of our policies.

*Continued on page 10*

**Introducing the TSSF Prayer Request Ministry (cont.)**

Another understanding that has endured is that we maintain anonymity by not publishing the names of the prayer group. In our internal communications we name the one who made the request, but that stays within the group.

Very early on, the labor involved for me was reduced to a minimum and the whole process became routine and easy. I am so happy that this effort has worked out so well for everyone, and that increasingly its availability is known by the entire provincial membership. It will never be of any significance how heavy our volume of requests becomes; what counts is that we stand ready to offer prayers for anyone who wishes us to do so.

I feel great gratitude to all who pray via this ministry and to all — both members of the prayer roster and officers of the Order — who have worked so hard and so creatively to make it widely known. I believe we are well launched and will remain available to serve the Province in the coming years.

**STOP THE PRESS!!**

*John Brockmann*

The centennial history book of the Third Order, SSF, in the Province of the Americas has now been completed, and we will begin serialization with the next issue of the *Franciscan Times*. Serialization will provide an inexpensive way to get our history into everyone's hands on paper. Once in final form, we will investigate publishing the whole book, including the Table of Contents and the Index, as an online Kindle-type book for posterity.

My entire body of research, based on all published and archival sources, is complete but that doesn't mean that you cannot help make our history even better. If you know of stories or pictures that have not appeared, or, if you see ways in which the writing can be improved, or, if you have an alternative theory to explain past events, please send them to me. This is our history composed of dozens and dozens of voices of tertiaries of the past and present, and filled with photographs to bring the past alive.

**Whither Francis?**

*Joseph Wolyniak*

It was a quiet morning in Assisi. My wife and I had arrived at the crack of dawn. It was our first visit to the place that Francis called home. It was a true spiritual pilgrimage for me, especially significant since I had just become a professed member of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis a few months earlier. Having been to Jerusalem and seen what the throngs of tourists can do to a holy place, we were eager to get to the city center early. *Really* early. Before a single soul had stirred.

It was everything I had imagined it would be. And more. The place seemed unsullied by the throngs who, like my wife and I, flocked to see the places where its most famous son had once stood. The buildings and streets seemed preserved in the amber of slow time. Things were just about how Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone had left them. We almost expected to turn a corner and see him. In fact, we think we may have.

I should say that the place seemed *mostly* unsullied. There were, of course, chintzy shops throughout the city center where one could buy a knickknack (made by an underpaid worker in a Chinese sweatshop and shipped thousands of miles via fossil fuels to meet our bottom-dollar demands). There were also high-end boutiques where the especially well-off could pay more than most people make in a year for a stunning piece of art or—fittingly—some finely tailored clothing. The churches were not to be left out of the potential business ventures. Each and every one featured a gift shop filled with postcards, pamphlets, magnets, mugs, icons, t-shirts, holy water fonts, and figurines (almost all of which, again, were made with the cheapest materials possible by the cheapest labor possible for the cheapest price possible). If they didn't have it there, you could also order online and have it shipped directly to your door.



fee mug, which memorialized the overindulgent, ale-loving archetype that had become a literary fixture since at least the “Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar” plays of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries—think the Friar Tuck who Robin Hood and Little John encounter as they go walking through the Sherwood Forest in the 1973 Disney version. That friar—who we are led to presume has indulged in his fair share of eating, drinking, and being merry—is radicalized by his encounter with the rogues who rob from the rich to give to the poor. According to Disney’s account, in Friar Tuck’s first encounter with Robin Hood and Little John he consoles the wayward wanders by telling them: “Oh for heaven’s sake, you’re no outlaw! Why, someday you’ll be called a great hero!” To which Robin Hood replies: “A hero?! You hear that, Johnny? We’ve just been pardoned!” In Assisi, you can take the loveably friar home for your morning coffee. And, yes, my wife and I very nearly bought one. We settled on the Assisi magnet instead.

We had canvassed most of the town and still had it all to ourselves. It would be hours before a single tour bus would arrive. We had left the best for last, the Basilica of San Francesco d’Assisi, and began to make our way there. As we turned yet another labyrinthine corner, onto the street we’d walk to make our final ascent to the basilica, we spotted him. Disheveled, smelly, and quite literally adorned in sackcloth rags, he was making his way up to the basilica as well. And he, like us, had gotten to the city center to make his ascent at the break of dawn to avoid the crowds. But he was making his journey on his knees, rosary in hand. Seeing him stopped us dead in our tracks. It stops me now still.



Francis, in the famous words of Albert Schweitzer’s description of Jesus, comes to us as one unknown. We encounter him refracted through myths and legends, which are no less true if admittedly less literal than “facts.”

We see in him bits of ourselves we wish were more like the him we want ourselves to be. But whether we are ready to be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with is another

question. He was a radical. Which is to say, he went back to the very roots of the story. The Little Poor One was simply trying to follow the One who became poor. Simply, radically, radically simple. I’d like to think I’m ready to follow Francis as Francis followed Christ. But I am not sure I am really, truly ready to follow him on my knees. Most days, I’d rather just take the picture, buy the magnet (maybe the mug too), and head back home.

Francis beckons us to follow him still. To follow him as he follows Christ. To follow him in penance and poverty, renunciation and redistribution, losing our life to find it. He reminds us how “it is a great shame for us, servants of God, that while the saints actually did such things, we wish to receive glory and honor by merely recounting their deeds” (*The Admonitions*, §VI “The Imitation of the Lord”).

Dare we follow? What would it even look like in our context, our day? It’s a dangerous question to ask, for it’s the same question Francis asked. It’s a question we who wish to follow must ask still.

*Joseph Wolyniak is a DPhil candidate in theology at Oxford University and a visiting scholar in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Denver. He was recently appointed as a Theologian-in-Residence at the Church of the Ascension in Denver, where he lives with his wife (the Rev’d Elizabeth Costello) who is a curate at Saint John’s Cathedral. He can be reached at joseph.wolyniak@du.edu*

## Why Pilgrimage?

*Carole Crumley, Senior Program Director, Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, reprinted by permission from their website (<http://www.shalem.org>)*

We live in what some have called “threshold times,” not just a time of change. We are in an era of profound re-ordering of the social, political, economic, religious and spiritual landscape. In this contemporary context, the ancient-yet-ever-new practice of pilgrimage is undergoing a remarkable resurgence. People want to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, visit sacred sites, connect with lives of holiness and inspiration, walk the Camino. People want to “kneel where prayer has been valid.” To do this, they are going on pilgrimage.

One person wrote to me recently that she was preparing to leave on pilgrimage. She said simply, “I want to find silence and listen for answers.” It seems that in this fast-paced world we need room to go deeper. We need space and time to hear “deep calling to deep” (Ps.42). Without the roles, responsibilities and routines of home life, pilgrims find that they are able to open more fully to God’s presence in their own lives and the world, and truly listen.

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**Why Pilgrimage? (cont.)**

This listening can help reveal the insufficiency of an old way of living/thinking/doing and inspire a fresh possibility. It can contribute to opening our eyes to the new life and vision that God is seeking to birth in us, the church, and the world. It may expand our capacity for creativity and holy imagination and lead to new ways of thinking and doing.

Those who went on pilgrimage in the early centuries of the Celtic Church, understood the journey as going to the “place of their resurrection,” that is, to the place of their truest, most authentic self. They were living the Gospel message, “In order to find your life, you must lose it. In other words; all the forms to which we are so attached—our ideas, beliefs, prejudices, social role, status, religion, politics—all the forms that can blind us to God’s loving presence need to be challenged and loosened. Pilgrimage assists our letting go. Thus the Gospel paradox is realized. By losing, we begin to discover our true Self in God.

But pilgrimage is not for the individual’s spiritual growth alone. On the pilgrim way, pilgrims may experience authentic spiritual community, broaden their spiritual practices and find inspiration in the worship life of other faith communities. They may experience new ways of being church that more fully address their own needs as well as those of seekers, believers and “nones.” Their experiences may lead to a re-formation of many ministerial aspects of congregational life and offer new possibilities for shaping communities of faith in the 21st century.

The Psalmist implies that special blessings await all those on the pilgrim way (Ps. 84) and that the blessings are for the communities back home. According to Jim Cotter’s beautiful translation of this Psalm, pilgrims return home nourished and refreshed and become “springs of healing for others, reservoirs of compassion to those who are bruised. Strengthened themselves, they lend courage to others.”

At its heart, a contemplatively-oriented pilgrimage reinforces the understanding that the spiritual life is always moving toward deepening love: love for God; for others, for self, and all of God’s creation. It reveals that God is present and active everywhere; always intimately involved in human lives, and always willing and wanting to guide our steps toward that deepening love. For all on the pilgrim way, this requires a radical willingness to trust God’s guidance. Perhaps that is the first prayer, asking for an empowered sense of trust in God as you discern the rightness of a particular pilgrimage for you.

In your prayerful reflection, some questions you might ask yourself are: What in your prayer is drawing you to this journey? How does this pilgrimage connect with what you sense is needed now for yourself or others, your community or congregation? What about the particular place is drawing you to it? What are you seeking?

You may be able to give perfectly rational answers to these questions while, at the same time, the answers don’t really touch the yearning that is in your heart. Perhaps you sense a deeper kind of knowing, an intuitive knowing that this is right and you don’t really know why.

But when it comes right down to it, all I can really say is that it just seems like the right thing to do. There is an inner knowing that I can’t put into words, that I turn to when I doubt my rationalizations and reasons. It just seems right.

If a pilgrimage seems “right” to you, even if you don’t know why, then I hope you will step into that unknown land of pilgrimage and trust that blessings await.

**Statutes and Reports of the Professed**

*Terry Rogers*

I’m writing in response to the recent comments (on TSSF-I) about the reports of the professed. I decided to check with the Statutes and here’s what I found, in III.C.4:

*“Professed brothers and sisters shall normally report at least once each year, with the option of reporting more often if they wish, on the observance of the Franciscan way of life and their own Rule of Life. The newly professed shall normally report four times during the first two years and then review the frequency of reporting with their area chaplain.”*

So the question is not: do the professed have to report on their rules of life? The statutes are clear: the answer is yes.

The question is: how to make this report a valuable source of growth for those who report (as well as for those who receive the reports).

It’s hard for me to imagine any significant area of my life (or anyone else’s life, for that matter) that could not be talked about in relation to one or more areas of the Rule. The longer we live this life, the more our Rules become integrated into our lives.

However....

One can always report on the Rule and add other news, reflections, perspectives, and struggles. These help give context to the report and deepen the connections we share as a family.

Also...

The area chaplain’s attentiveness, genuine concern, and thoughtful feedback - challenging as well as supporting- can help make the reporting on the Rule a time of serious and engaged reflection.

In the past I’ve been an area chaplain and assistant chaplain. I have received over 200 reports from professed tertiaries. You just can’t imagine what a gift it is, to the person receiving it, to be given thoughtful, honest, creative and humble descriptions of what its like to live the Rule and the vowed life we share.

Of course, if the Rule has been meaningless to someone for some time, that's a different matter, and the area chaplain and Provincial Chaplain need to know that. But otherwise, the chance to reflect on it once a year is, it seems to me, a positive grace.

Now I am taking a deep breath, and I am going to be truly honest. In my view, if you still care about keeping your Rule, but reporting on it seems to be only checking off boxes, it's still better than saying little or nothing about the Rule.

Please, please don't think it's a waste of time. If nothing else, it's an act of humble obedience, and therefore, in fact, deeply Franciscan. It's doing what we promised we would do when we were professed, and when we renew our vows every year. It's hanging in there. Some years there's more, or less, to say than others. Just like the Daily Office can be more, or less, engaging at different times.

Even "checking off boxes" lets the area chaplain know you still care, still feel it matters to "live under a definite discipline and vows" (Day 3). And knowing this can strengthen and affirm the area chaplain's vocation as well. This really minimal obligation to report yearly on the Rule, when we're faithful, is one of the many strands of faithfulness that support and strengthen us as a community. We may not see the results directly, but I do believe this is part of how we are "bound into a living whole through the love we share in Christ."

## **The Daily Collects in Plain English**

*Rose Christie-French, Province of The Pacific*

### **Sunday**

Almighty God, your love led Francis and Clare to establish our three Orders. Draw us into your love that we may grow in love towards all those we know, for the sake of Your son, Jesus Christ, who gives Himself in love to all. AMEN

### **Plain English Collect for Sunday**

God, Francis and Clare formed our three Orders because of their love for You. Help us love You more so we can love everyone we meet today, for Jesus sake, who gave Himself for us because He loved us. AMEN

### **Monday**

Heavenly God, you are always pleased to show yourself to those who are childlike and humble in spirit: help us to follow the example of our blessed father Francis, to look upon the wisdom of this world as foolishness, and set our minds only on Christ Jesus and him crucified; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all glory for ever. AMEN

### **Plain English Collect for Monday**

God, You are always happy to show yourself to people who are childlike and simple.

Help us to follow the example of our blessed Father Francis; To see that the things the world says are wise/ are foolish,

and to see only the crucified Jesus, to whom with You and the Holy Spirit, be all glory forever. AMEN

### **Tuesday**

O God, you resist the proud and give grace to the humble: help us not to think proudly, but to serve you with humility that pleases you, so we may walk in the footsteps of your servant Francis and receive the gift of your grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord,. AMEN

### **Plain English Collect for Tuesday**

God, pride is not as important to You as humility. Help us not to be proud, but to work for You humbly, This will always please You. Then we will be following Francis and receive Your grace as a gift. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN

### **Wednesday**

Merciful God, you have made your church rich through the poverty of blessed Francis: help us, like him, not to trust in earthly things, but to seek your heavenly gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

### **Plain English Collect for Wednesday**

God, by Francis being poor You made Your Church rich in spirit. Help us, like him, not to trust the things of this world. Instead help us look for Your will, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

### **Thursday**

Lord, without you our labor is wasted, but with you all who are weak can find strength: pour your Spirit on the Society of St. Francis; give your laborers a pure intention, patient faith, sufficient success on earth, and the joy of serving you in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

### **Plain English Collect for Thursday**

Lord, all that we do is wasted without you. Although we are weak we find our strength in you. Pour your spirit on the Society of St. Francis. Give those who work for you pure motives, faith that will last, enough success on earth and the joy of serving of you in heaven. AMEN

### **Friday**

Lord Jesus, in your servant Francis you displayed the wonderful power of the cross; help us always to follow you in the way of the cross, and give us strength to resist all temptation; to you, Lord, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all glory for ever. AMEN

### **Plain English Collect for Friday**

Lord Jesus, you showed us the wonderful power of the cross through Your servant Francis. Help us to follow you on a road that may be difficult and lonely, and give us strength to say no to things that are wrong. To you Lord, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory forever, AMEN

*Continued on page 14*

**Daily Collects in Plain English (cont.)****Saturday**

Heavenly God, by the life of blessed Francis you moved your people to a love of simple things; may we, after his example, hold lightly to the things of this world and store up for ourselves treasure in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

**Plain English Collect for Saturday**

God, the life of Francis shows us how to love simple things. May we follow his example and not want too much. Instead, may we want the treasure that heaven can give. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

[from the Editor]

**What is Plain English?**

According to *Wikipedia*, Plain English is “is a generic term for communication in English that emphasizes clarity, brevity, and the avoidance of technical language. The goal is to write in a way that is easily understood by the audience: clear and straightforward, appropriate to their reading skills and knowledge, free of wordiness, cliché, and needless jargon.

**Why Use Plain English?**

Using Plain English is usually a first step in the translation of an English text into a foreign language or for use by those with English as a Second Language. The Provinces of New Zealand and Australia are finding increasing large numbers of new members in the Solomon Islands and Papua/New Guinea where English is not the primary language. [Our Province could probably use such Plain English versions in Guyana where our Amerindian members do not use English as their primary language.]

Lest we view the use of Plain English as only an altruistic action for the sake of foreigners, it has been repeatedly demonstrated over the years that the use of Plain English also benefits native English speakers and improves the readability of such texts. Moreover, sometimes we can hear new meanings in prayers that have become a bit rote when we read them or say them in just a slightly different wording [e.g., the two versions of the Lord’s Prayer in the BCP].

With our Provincial Chaplain’s consent, we began using these Collects at Chapter to try them out so that when the Provincial Ministers all meet next year to consider these Plain English versions, we will have some specific feedback to offer.

Why don’t you try them out and see what you and your Fellowship think about them? If you have some specific feedback or changes, please send them directly to the Minister Provincial.

If these work for you, perhaps we can share the monthly recitation of the Principles in the next issue?

*(If you do your Daily Obedience online as I do, by writing to me I can send you a .pdf version of the Daily Collects you can load on your mobile phone or tablet.)*

**Francis, Rebuild My Church!**

The Bishop’s address to the Diocesan Convention, Diocese of Colorado, October 3, 2013.

*(Reprinted and edited with permission from the Rt. Rev. Rob O’Neill, Bishop of Colorado)*

*“For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything: but a new creation is everything!”*

Galatians 6:15

Tonight as we begin this 126th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Colorado, we are also observing the feast of Francis of Assisi – a saint whom I greatly admire, a personality to whom I am instinctively drawn, and yet, if I am honest with myself, one whose life I find to be deeply challenging. Francis is also a saint who has much to say to the Church today, and thus it is a good thing that we are gathered in his name this evening.

The story of Francis is deceptively simple. Francis lived in the hillside town of Assisi in the early thirteenth century. He was the son of a wealthy silk merchant. He was educated. He was well travelled. He had position and prestige and, by all appearances, everything was just fine for Francis. But at the same time, it appears, nothing was actually right for him. He found perhaps the material abundance with which he was surrounded to be empty. He clearly recognized the great disparity between rich and poor. He knew first-hand as a soldier and as a prisoner both the brutality and the brutal politics of war. He was dissatisfied with the superficiality he found in many of his relationships, and, as much as Francis tried to conform to the conventional wisdom of the world, as much as Francis tried to follow in the conventional paths that were open to him as a young man, something within him simply was disturbed – unsettled.

One day in church on the feast of Saint Matthias, Francis heard these words from scripture – the same words spoken by Jesus to the disciples when Jesus first sent them on what is known as their first missionary journey. You know these words. You have heard them before. Jesus sends his disciples out, saying simply: “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, no bag, no bread, no money – not even an extra tunic.” (Luke 9:3) These words are clear. Jesus is very direct, and as you and I both know, they are deeply challenging. But when Francis heard them on that particular occasion some seven centuries ago, something shifted – something in that moment connected deeply within his heart, some essential truth about himself broke into his consciousness, some level of denial or self-deception evaporated – and there was recognition, deep awareness, awakening, if you will, rebirth. Francis, as the story goes, leapt to his feet and exclaimed, “This...this...is what I want.” There was something about this way – this way of surrender, this way of relinquishment, this way of self-offering and self-emptying, this way of moving freely and nimbly, of giving oneself away in love – there was some-



thing about this way that Francis understood not simply as essentially Christlike, but even more surprisingly, also essential about himself. This way – his deepest self. This way – his true humanity.

Later, as he prayed before the crucifix in the rundown church of San Damiano, Jesus spoke to him from the cross, calling his name and saying simply, “Francis, rebuild

my church.” Now, there’s a commission! “Rebuild my church.” And with that, as the story goes, Francis gave away his possessions. He renounced his inheritance. He assumed the garb of a beggar, and he lived very much like Jesus. He cared for the poor, he tended lepers. He went off into the wilderness in solitude to pray and be still and silent, and he taught the Kingdom of God to anyone who would listen.

In the world of the medieval Church and within the imperial structures of the Holy Roman Empire this lifestyle was, to say the least, countercultural! In Franco Zefirelli’s 1972 film, “Brother Sun, Sister Moon,” the young Francis can be seen recovering from a fever, balancing precariously on the ridgeline of a rooftop as he reaches out enthralled by the sight of a sparrow. He can be seen hurling rich fabrics – silks and damasks – out of the window of his father’s warehouse into the hands of the masses in the street below. And, as he finally leaves the confines of Assisi’s walls, Francis can be seen standing stark naked, hands outstretched, framed by the city gate, moving through this tunnel of darkness into a rich and colorful world of light and openness and freedom. If those images make you uncomfortable, they probably should. It is not entirely clear in Zefirelli’s film whether Francis’ conversion is the result of inspiration or insanity. And in his novel about Francis, Nikos Kazantzakis, puts only one word in the great saint’s mouth. Just one word – “love.” That’s it – “love.” Francis walks along streets and stands in squares, he teaches about the kingdom of God, he proclaims the good news of Jesus to anyone and everyone who will listen, but he says only one thing over and over again. “Love. Love. Love.” And the response? People are either angered or irritated or resentful or confused, and they say only one thing over and over and over, again and again. “What is this new madness?”

Paul writes that this is the way of love. “Let this mind be in you,” he says in Philippians, “which was also in Christ

Jesus.” Then he goes on in that ancient hymn to talk about this way of self-emptying, this way of surrender, this way of kenosis, this way of the cross. He goes on to say in another passage, this way appears as complete foolishness to the world. So, when will we understand that our heart’s deepest desire, which is both our true humanity and our divine nature, is this – simply to spend our self, freely, generously, completely in love, to love, for love?

Francis lived in a time of great cultural upheaval and change – not the least of which had to do with the deeply enmeshed politics of the church and state, the power struggles between the two, and the consequent by-product of massive indifference to the suffering of the poor. As a result, Francis has come to be seen as a kind of reformer of the people of God, a kind of reformer of the church from within. Think about this – his deep commitment to silence and prayer; his absolute devotion to Jesus; his passionate embrace of suffering; his simplicity of life, his refusal to be trapped by possessions; his relentless focus not on institutional maintenance but on the life and freedom of God’s kingdom. Do you hear it? Francis’ voice – like Jesus speaking to Peter at the beginning of Luke’s gospel – constitutes a call to all of us to stop paddling around in the shallows and, as Jesus says to Peter, to “Set out into the deep waters.” (Luke 5:4)

There, Jesus says, we will actually find something.

Although our specific circumstances are different, we too live in a time in which seismic shifts have already occurred around us. On one level, ours is a story about the decline of cultural Christianity. The physical, mental, emotional, habitual structures that we know and identify with as the Church in America were conceived and built in another era, born of a different culture and society, designed to embody Christian faith and life in a world that was vastly different than ours. On the other hand, even with all these seismic shifts all around us, our story is one of divine opportunity – to “Build my church” so to speak – the opportunity for us to ask the great Pentecost question about what this means. What is God stirring up among us? How might the Holy Spirit be calling forth among us a kind of newly courageous, prayerfully creative, spiritually imaginative manifestation of the faith? What big dreams do we need to dream as God’s people for all God’s people? What risks are we being asked to take in order to speak the word of love to a world that is starving to know what true love looks like?

The question is, what is essential to a trajectory of growth and renewal? To my thinking, the keystone, the fundamental connector across the board is spiritual formation – raising up, strengthening, developing, embracing those practices by which we ourselves will be deeply led into the center of our life which is Jesus. What if, for all the talk about the changing culture and the changing church, what if our priority is not so much about reconfiguring, repackaging, and re-mar-

*(continued on page 16)*

**Francis, Rebuild My Church! (cont.)**

keting the exterior circumstances of our ecclesial life in some kind of desperate attempt to make the depth of faith more attractive? What if the movement God is calling forth among us is instead about embracing that far more narrow way of entering deeply into our inner life in order to discover even more fully and powerfully for ourselves the realities and contours and energetic dynamics of our life in the Spirit? What if the real cultural shift needing to take place among us is, in reality, a shift within the culture of our hearts, our souls, our consciousness?

If we seriously intend to proclaim the gospel, to do the work of evangelism that we are called to do, we cannot assume that those we wish to invite into a life of discipleship have even the most rudimentary religious vocabulary or knowledge of this faith or any other faith. If we seriously believe that we, as God's people, are to offer this world a more transcendent vision of itself – a vision of human beings being fully human, then we must recognize that we ourselves have nothing of substance to offer unless we ourselves are willing to go deeply, courageously, into our own life in the Spirit of the living God, into that intimate union with the living God that is our inheritance. "Set out to the deep," Jesus says.

Our work as pastoral leaders is to raise the bar – not so much learning about God, but even more profoundly, learning God. Our work within our communities is to open up even more fully the most basic practices of the Christian faith and life – to insure that all of us are being formed in our knowledge and understanding of scripture, to expand and deepen our life of prayer, to create safe, honest communities of authentic spiritual friendship in which we can all look fearlessly and honestly and openly at ourselves and reflect together on the ways in which divine grace is already intersecting with and transforming all the sharp, jagged, and untidy edges of our lives.

We know Francis mostly as a benign figure, a rain-soaked or snow-covered greyish piece of statuary, hand outstretched, feeding the birds. We like to take Francis, reduce him in size, make him immobile, and place him in a corner of the garden, half-buried behind the rhododendrons where he can stand silently as we admire him from a distance, safely avoiding the real demands of divine love. But blessed Francis' life and witness to us was far more than that. "Let it go," he says. "Take nothing with you," he says. "Give it away. Spend it. Build the people of God." This is what he was told by the love of his life. So Francis moved. He moved deeply, he moved powerfully, he moved courageously, and he gave himself over – radical surrender, complete self-emptying, abandoning himself in love, to love, for love.

His life and his love are still speaking to anyone who is willing to listen. Do you know what he is saying? "This...this is the way." -- Amen.

**Real People Caught in a Broken System:****Piecemeal Immigration Reform**

*Dianne Aid*

*An estimated 12 million immigrants, their families' friends and advocates have been waiting and working for comprehensive, humane, immigration reform since 2007. Congress has been fighting about the issue and has moved nothing. Instead, what we have seen are piecemeal laws, and many destructive ones passed by states.*

**Raids**

Immigration raids in work places have declined in the past few years because law enforcement has moved in as the primary feeder of new detainees. There still are, however, workplace raids, raids in apartment complexes and outside of churches where immigrants gather.

Rene Martinez, a member of St. Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church in Auburn, Washington had entered the U.S./legally on a work visa. In 2004 his immigration attorney told him it was time to adjust his status to Legal Permanent Resident, he paid all fees and assumed all was well. Rene is married and has two U.S. Citizen children. He has served on vestry, diocesan committees and other community activities, and has no criminal history. He is always willing to give a helping hand.

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Rene went to work; he grooms horses at a local race track. Immigration and Customs Enforcement swept in and picked up 15 workers, including Rene. Much to our consternation, later that day we discovered his attorney never filed the paperwork that Rene had paid her thousands of dollars to file.

Seven years, three additional attorneys, and thousands of dollars later, Rene is still awaiting the decision of The Board of Immigration Appeals. We are told to expect an answer sometime in 2017. Rene's children have grown up with the uncertainty of their father's future.

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Rene declared that he was seeking sanctuary. To date he has not had to live inside the church for protection, but the Faith Community through the New Sanctuary Movement has been accompanying Rene. He has spoken publically throughout the Pacific Northwest bringing attention to thousands of families like his own.

**Secure (Not so Secure) Communities****Immigration Enforcement**

What we have gotten instead of true reform are fragments of reform and intensified enforcement. One of these enforcement programs is called "Secure Communities". County and municipal jails across the country have chosen to honor ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) detainees. When an immigrant is booked into jail on even the most minor

offense (e.g. a Bench Warrant for missing a traffic court appearance), their fingerprints are shared with ICE. A hold is placed on the individual and the person is held for ICE to pick up the person, who now is “released” from jail time. The law requires that the hold not exceed 48 hours, but that is often ignored and the hold is much longer.

Secure Communities has created a great deal of fear in the immigrant community and crimes are going un-reported.

The following story highlights why.

### **Claudia’s Story**

Claudia, a resident of Auburn, Washington was referred to us at the Jubilee Center at St. Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church in Auburn to receive support services and advocacy resulting from incidences of domestic violence. Claudia is a young mother of three and an un-documented wife of a US Citizen.

Advocates were working on filing necessary papers for a protection order for Claudia. This was in process when her husband showed up at her apartment. She called me, and I told her to call 911 – she did. Her husband was attempting to strangle her and she bit him in the arm to get his hands off her throat. Her husband ran out of the apartment and intercepted the police as they arrived showing them the bite on his arm, and claiming he was the victim. He is fluent in English, Claudia is a Spanish only speaker. Claudia was arrested and taken to the SCORE jail in Des Moines, an ICE hold was placed on her.

It took about three weeks to raise the bond money to get her out of detention. The story does not end here. Since her 3 month old baby was present when she was arrested for “Assault, domestic violence” a protection order was put in place barring her from contact with her child. The baby was placed in the custody of the father who apparently deals drugs.

We had to go with Claudia to several court hearings for her to regain custody of her baby.

Today, a year later she has a U-Visa petition pending.

Claudia was arrested in error, eventually this all got straightened out, but she still is working on complex immigration issues directly related to the “Secure Communities” program.

*As of this writing, jurisdictions across the country are now refusing to honor ICE holds for non-criminal offenders. King County, Washington and several municipal jails have withdrawn their cooperation with ICE providing much relief.*

### **The Dreamers**

A positive program which is up for renewal is the DACA program (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), an Executive Order signed by President Obama in June of 2012.

This allows for young adults who were brought to the United States as young children the opportunity to remain in the United States without fear of deportation. A work permit is granted with a DACA. It has offered thousands hope and eradicates the fear of deportation.

### **Lupe's Story**

Lupe is a 21-year-old member of St. Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church in Auburn, WA., a full time student, works full time in a pre-school and volunteers in our Jubilee Center. English is her primary language. Lupe is un-documented although she has been in the US for 21 years. She was brought into the US by her parents when she was six months old. She knows no other country. Her four siblings were born in the US and are all US citizens. Her siblings all have opportunities linked with their Social Security numbers, college, good jobs, etc.

The signing of DACA (sometimes referred to as the Dream Act) has given Lupe the hope and dignity of being able to pursue her hopes and dreams. Under supervision of an immigration agent and through the Jubilee Center, Lupe has assisted other young adults gain their own work permits. What a gift!

### **Detention**

Many do not realize that immigration detention centers are generally not run by The U.S. Government. Most are private for profit prisons. Non-criminal immigrants are being held for days, weeks and months. Private corporations such as GEO (which incident runs the prison at Guantanamo Bay) receives up to \$200.00 per day per immigrant detained.

The program Secure Communities spoken about above has been the primary feeder of detention centers. Anti-Immigrant legislation in states like Arizona have been funded by corporations investing in detention centers.

Conditions in detention centers are poor. Very little access to medical care, insufficient food, outbreaks of food poisoning, over-crowded conditions, and intimidation by guards.

Inmates work in the detention center in cleaning and kitchen jobs, their “pay”, one dollar per day. Overpriced phone cards can be purchased from detention center commissaries, and, the inmate telephone system only allows use of cards purchased in the detention center.

Families often cannot visit loved ones because of their own immigration status and U.S. Immigration is reluctant to give information to immediate family members. Recently, a seriously mentally ill man was moved over 1000 miles from the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington (near where his family and advocates live) to another detention facility without explanation. We have been working for three weeks to try to get mental health intervention and have not been successful.

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## **Real People Caught in a Broken System (cont.)**

Detainees without criminal histories, and with US citizens who are immediate relatives can get out on bond, but bonds run \$7,000.00-\$15,000.00, and the only collateral allowed is real estate or a credit line equal to the amount of the bond. Immigration bonds are higher than some bonds for felony crimes in the general prison population.

To better understand the economics of immigration detention, see “Immigrants for Sale”, a short video on You Tube.

## **What Can We Do?**

Advocate and organize in our local communities. The following organizations offer tool kits for organizing and advocacy. Let us know your interest in working in a TSSF Action Circle on Immigration. Immigration is one of the priority issues for the Franciscan Action Network – franciscanaction.org, or find us on Facebook - Franciscan Action Network”

## **Tertiary Report: One Body—Mission in Honduras**

*Jane Ergood*

We all have associations with the words “ministry” and “mission”; sometimes we think of the “Great Commission” – to go forth and preach the gospel in all lands. One Ohio church member told me she opposed missions because the word brought visions of westerners putting grass skirts on natives, and otherwise destroying a living, indigenous culture. If we check the dictionary meaning of ministry, we are lead into a more familiar definition—bringing a service or aid to an individual or group.

Perhaps that is where, and why, so much of our daily and/or national efforts seem so unproductive: we do not consider ministry to be “transformational”, and something that affects the giver as well as the recipient. I suspect that both Jesus and Paul knew that relationship. I suspect that knowing that “giving to another is like giving to Christ” (Matthew) can change the giver and the receiver, not just provide aid to the other, and that NOT giving also has an effect on each. I suspect that the writer who knew that “faith, hope and love abide” had had a great deal of experience in all three areas, and was himself always being transformed by his experience—not just once on the road to Damascus. I know that the little work I have done in this ministry in Honduras has changed both me, and my perception and appreciation of, Paul the Apostle, and the Gospel.

Although my husband Bruce and I began our work in Honduras in 1998, our Latin American service experience began, separately, in Mexico in the 1950’s. This became our initial personal bonding experience while he was a Divinity student

at Yale and I was in the graduate nursing program. This work also provided a basis for both language/communication and professional experience in the US with poor, rural populations and also civil rights, before he returned to school for a PhD and college teaching, and we had two children. It was also basic to our community work with Central American political refugees.

After Hurricane Mitch and consultation with SAMS (the then South American Mission Society) and with financial support from the Diocese of Southern Ohio, Bruce accompanied the then Bishop Frade’s team to assess the Honduras church’s needs. Twice subsequently we took church work groups on weeklong projects to Honduras, and twice we “filled in” for several months while missionaries were on medical leave. The second time, I coordinated medical and construction brigade visits from the US to the Deanery of El Paraíso – now Yuscaran. While this involved learning computer skills, it also involved trekking out to the rural areas to meet with the Dean, Reverendo Dagoberto Chacon, and holding conferences about project decisions on the hood of the car. We began to: 1) wonder who would be there when the medical brigade left and 2) realize we were “in sync” with Reverendo Dagoberto’s commitment to faith and works, as well as his team approach; we knew we were “at home”.

Our sense of a call, but confusion about the “how”, was furthered by our summer visit to the Silver Bay YMCA Conference Center in the Adirondacks, where a doctor at Friends Yearly Meeting gave a weeklong seminar on training rural community health workers or Guardianas de Salud. When we returned to Honduras in the fall, a priest and his wife contacted us and said they wanted to assist us. God seemed to be underlining His point, and this was doubled by a Honduran conference on Sustainability. With the help of God, the priest’s wife, and the Deanery staff, we began our training groups. (It is important to note that there are three vehicles in the whole Deanery (two belong to clergy) and three doctors in the same area.)

There are three parts to our work in Honduras. The first and main part is: training health workers for rural villages where



there is no doctor, and often no access to medicines and facilities. We train 6-15 people in a retreat center for 5 days. At the beginning, there

is a discussion around the scriptural basis for caring for one's neighbor and what it means to be a "Guardiana", and each day starts with devotions. Students leave with experience in giving injections (medications do not require a prescription in Honduras), making dehydration syrup, common diseases and treatments, a book in Spanish titled *Where There Is No Doctor* (with discussion and instructions for treatments, drugs and drug actions, community attitudes, and basic sanitation), and a medical bag (stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, thermometer, antibiotic ointment, bandages, etc), and a diploma. Despite the rigor of the program, the complications of: obtaining cooks, firewood for traditional stoves, malfunctioning plumbing, lack of fans and screens and occasionally water and light, or frogs in the open bathrooms - some of the funniest moments of my life have come from our evenings together, particularly with "Los Locos de Chaguite", or the skit with Señor Bobo (who doesn't want his wife listening to the Guardiana, or taking birth control pills), or the Public Health Nurse (who should have been a stand-up comic) lecturing. And the band! With Bruce on clarinet, Rev. Rafa on fiddle, and some local musicians and homemade instruments playing - may Heaven hold such laughter!

These men, women, boys and young girl graduates go back to their villages prepared to assist their neighbors in varied situations. To give you an idea: one, who lived four hours off the highway, was called to see a man who had been injured by a tree he was felling. She was unable to do much but clean him, stop the bleeding, cover his wounds and send him four hours away to the capital, Tegucigalpa. Three months later, he returned to the village and thanked her for saving his life. Another story: this year, a cook, and Guardiana, recounted how her training had recently helped her save her son, who had been bitten by a poisonous snake, before she could get him to a hospital. And finally, one night, a Guardiana and pastor's wife, was awakened by a knock on her window: a man's wife was in labor and the Guardiana was the only one available. She picked up her book and helped deliver a healthy baby. Not all situations are dramatic, not all outcomes are physical. One woman testified that, because her "Savior thought (her) worthy to be a Guardiana", she was able to leave an abusive relationship. She was not the only one to say or do this after training. ( Psychologists often say that competence, not praise, raises self-esteem, and these individuals feel empowered by their abilities and the encouragement they receive.)

The second emphasis of the program is on community involvement and cooperation. We utilize lecturers from the community or US brigades whenever possible. The priest who is head of the Deanery gives the lecture on Family Planning emphasizing family values and futures – an important challenge in poor and predominantly Catholic areas, where marriage is not common and birth control is controversial. Individuals from the medical team usually give at least one

of the three or four yearly Continuing Education lectures (Reuniones), and the veterinarians have discussed animals and home sanitation. Dinner is supplied at the Reuniones, and the December meeting is usually a party. (Ole!) Interestingly enough, this year Bruce asked the Guardianas to write a bit about what they thought was different about their lives now, compared to ten years ago. Most of the replies indicated they thought there was more unity"; we notice more cooperation and less "rudeness" at our meals and meetings.

Our third project, (muy pequeño ), is in "micro-impressas" or small business, which we started to help the "sustainability" of the program and travel. We began with buying chickens and building pens; however the profit margin or ratio of work/return was too small. We then started loans for pigs and providing sacks of concrete – the wood, roof and labor were the farmer's Guardianas or laico's responsibility. Money is also loaned for small stores, which many people have in their homes in rural areas: soda, maize, toilet paper, chips, etc. Loans are "no interest", but must be paid back in one year; all have been. Now Episcopal Relief and Development is working in the area. In one case, they have given a sow and we have helped with the pen materials. As one farmer/laico said as he and Bruce worked on the pen: "I used to feel I was isolated. Now I know I'm a link in a chain".

That is transformation, as are the changes expressed previously by the Guardianas. And transformation works both ways – WE also are changed - in our beliefs, actions, and spiritual understanding. As part of our ministry, we also attend three or four church services per week: Bruce helps with the music; almost all the hymns are different from the USA. I often assist at Communion: "El Cuerpo de Cristo, pan de cielo; La Sangre de Cristo, caliz de salvacion". People come to us for advice: a pregnant daughter, a marital problem. My sister dies while I am teaching - someone listens. WE are transformed together. We are neither "Haves or Have Nots", Yankees or Hondurans, but One in Christ – a new creation. We will never be the same again.

Marc Nikkel in his book about serving in the Sudan (*Why haven't you left?* Church Publishing Inc., 2005) wrote: "Pray.... for an apprehension of the blood that reconciles tribes and races and religions. Pray for resurrection." That is the final and real transformation.

## **The Trinity and Prayer...and Martin Thornton**

*Terry Rogers*

I spent two years wondering if I had a Third Order vocation, ambivalent about asking to be a postulant. I made my decision after reading a book by an English priest, Martin Thornton, called *Pastoral Theology: a Reorientation*. In one section of the book he relates

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**The Trinity and Prayer (cont.)**

the doctrine of the Trinity to a three-fold rule of prayer; suddenly what had been a laundry list of devotional practices more or less suited to one's personal preferences became a structure of prayer with a shape and design reflecting the very nature of God. Thornton's teaching has been of immeasurable value to me in persevering in prayer, and I would like to share a brief version of it with you.

"The health of the soul depends on the health of its prayer, which in turn depends on the adequacy of its conception of God" is at the heart of Thornton's view of prayer. He asserts that the church's understanding of the Trinity grew out of its corporate experience of God, but that for us as individuals, "theology is always ahead of religion." The religious experience of different people and of the same people at different times makes up a full and balanced idea of God, and the guidance of this idea—theology—helps us "true up" our individual prayer lives.

Our experience of time and space, as well as the variety of personalities and characters, makes it difficult to conceive of and to *experience a fully integrated Trinity*. Thus Thornton identifies the three persons of the Trinity with three types of prayer, and maintains that the structure and balance of these three ways will bring us closer to our own integration, living out our creation in God's image and likeness.

**One way of prayer is to focus on God the Creator** as the transcendent Other, the source of all being and value, with whom we are in a relation of absolute dependence. This prayer emphasizes the intellect, and stresses truth, objectivity and obedience. The Daily Office represents the expression of this prayer, as it is formal, has relatively little room for variation, is the prayer of the Church as a whole rather than of individuals, and is more often offered through obedience than spontaneous devotion.

Over-emphasis on this prayer can lead to legalism, coldness, solitary monotheism, and a spirit of judgment and fear.

**Another way of prayer focuses on God the Holy Spirit** as the immanent divine life in the soul, with whom we are in a relation of absolute intimacy. This prayer emphasizes freedom, emotion, spontaneity, and subjectivity. Personal prayer of all kinds is its expression, as it is infinitely variable, should fit the needs of individuals, and is often the context for expressing one's feelings about God and experiencing the feelings God has for oneself.

Over-emphasis on this sort of prayer can lead to false mysticism, sentimentality, pantheism, self-will (the sense of having one's own private pipeline to the Holy Spirit) and self-indulgence.

**The third way of prayer focuses on God in Christ** as the incarnate lover of the soul, with whom we are in a redemp-

tive and sacramental relationship. Jesus mediates between earth and heaven, the transcendent and the immanent aspects of God. Our will, our choice to love that results in action, is united with and integrates our mind and heart as well. It is the Eucharist that expresses this prayer, uniting the objective and the subjective, nourishing and comforting us, sending us out into the world.

Over-emphasis on the Eucharist can reinforce workaholism and compulsive care-taking, the idea that God may have some trouble taking care of the world without our help.

While the Eucharist as a way of prayer has a special completeness, the unique emphases of the Daily Office and personal prayer are necessary for a full life of prayer.

Because our personalities and the circumstances of our lives are different, the "lived out" balance of the three ways will be different for each of us. As individuals, we are probably more attracted to either the Office, the Eucharist, or our personal prayer, but it is likely that what we find hardest has a particular value for our spiritual health and needs to find a place in our prayer life.

Thornton's vision of the Trinity in the three-fold rule of prayer has had great value for me.

I stopped worrying about not always finding the Office very exciting, and have learned to just rest in it as a simple offering of time in the words of the church. Of course there are times when a moment in the Office just lights up in beauty, but it's my being there day in and day out that makes sure I'm not going to miss those times.

On the other hand, I have given myself permission to be more creative in my personal prayer, using dance and poetry, for example, and risking extremes of emotion and communication in quiet time and meditation. Which is not to say that my personal prayer is always full of emotion—far from it—but I can make choices about how to address and listen to God that follow my own sense of the needs of my heart each day.

And I realize that what I bring to and take from the Eucharist is deepened because the Office has strengthened me in obedience, and personal prayer has awakened in me a livelier sense of God's intimate presence.

The purpose of this way of regarding prayer is not to push us in the direction of tritheism, the separation of the three persons of the Trinity. Thornton's scheme is only one way of mapping the landscape of prayer. *All prayer* is offered to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. All the persons of the Trinity act in perfect loving unity eternally. It is our human limitations that make it necessary for us to think analytically.

The purpose of identifying different emphases in prayer is to

make sure that nothing essential gets left out as we journey toward our integration and our union with God.

While it is important to do the best we can in balancing our own prayer lives, it is in our corporate life in the Body of Christ that the deeper balance is to be found. We pray these prayers on each others' behalf. The faithfulness to the Daily Office in one person or community is a gift to another that rejoices in daily Eucharist, or is called to a commitment to substantial time in contemplation. We pray in and through each other, just as the divine life of the Trinity indwells all three Persons and is shared in complete reciprocal giving and receiving.

### **Francis and Myers-Briggs— a TSSF-I Online Dialogue**

*Rick Bellows and Beverly Hosea*

Though I speak about this topic in terms of Myers-Briggs temperament, I do so only to raise some questions, which I think will make sense even if you know nothing about MBTI.

In their book, *Prayer and Temperament*, Chester Michael and Marie Norrisey, describe Franciscan Prayer and Spirituality as “ideal for the SP (Sensing-Perceiving) temperament” (p. 69), referring to one of eight Myers-Briggs temperaments. This gave me pause when I began to be drawn to Francis as a spiritual mentor, because I do not see Francis as an SP, nor am I an SP. I see Francis as an NF (Intuiton-Feeling). Being an NF myself, I see him basically much as I see myself.

The authors describe why they think Franciscan spirituality fits with the SP temperament:

*“They live very much in the present without concern either for the past or future. Neither yesterday nor tomorrow exists for a thorough going SP. They are always looking for something new, new places to go, new things to do. They dislike practice and want simply to perform and act. They thrive on excitement, adventure, risk, and challenge. They hunger for activity and enjoyment. Optimistic, cheerful, lighthearted, witty, charming, they live life intensively and are capable of unrelenting vigor when challenged and excited”* (p. 79).

All that seems to fit with accounts of the life of Francis. I have no dispute with it (although cheerful seems to me to be a superficial sense of joy, which for me is fare deeper than good cheer.)

Yet when I hear the stories of Francis I picture him as a very intuitive person. Though I see him perceiving creation as nothing more nor less than it is—he takes the world around him at its face value. I see him tuned in to the world around him in terms of its meaning, seeing the character of the Creator reflected in the creation. These are intuitive actions. I see him holding an intuitive connection with the enemy

when he visits the Sultan. I see him intuitively linked with the poor, the lepers, the wolf at Gubbio, and the birds to which he preached. I see his deep love coming from this intuitive link to creation, especially people, around him. I see him having this link with the prisoner scheduled for execution; the expectant mother facing a difficult situation when she finds out she is pregnant, and though hidden from the senses, the baby in her womb. This link raises complex feelings, thoughts, and impossible dilemmas that are faced realistically and practically as well as in tune with meaning and life.

What is the true Francis? Was he an SP or an NF? Or was this simple man more complicated than any model of temperament would suggest?

Another way of looking at the issue, is to look not at Francis, but to ourselves. Do we project our own way of looking at creation and meaning onto our mentor? Or is it a matter of translation: am I translating the SP way of articulating temperament into the NF way of talking about temperament?

Regardless of whether or not you know your Myers-Briggs Temperament, I would be interested in your experience. Do you recognize ways you may be making Francis in your own image? Is he a more perfect you? If he is a more perfect you, then I can see how he would be helpful to you, stretching you to be more perfect, but please share how his is helpful to you if he is not a more perfect you. How is he a mentor to you showing you how to connect to the poor, or nature, or the church, or God, or the enemy? How does Francis tune you into Jesus? How does he make you a better follower of Jesus?

*Rick Bellows*

Your comments really connected with me. I too am an NF on the Myers-Briggs, and I have used this personality inventory as a tool in working with congregations, especially with ministry teams and vestries where diversity of personality is a significant component. So when I read *Prayer and Temperament* some years ago I was a little put off by their connection of Franciscan spirituality with SP types. It is more complex than that. Francis is more complex than that. Francis had a very deep, intuitive (if you want to use that word) experiential understanding of union with Christ and with creation. Other traditions would call this enlightenment. As a mentor for us Franciscans in how to follow Jesus, Francis has so much to offer each of the Myers-Briggs types of individuals. As I recall part of the point of setting out all those different styles of spirituality lined up with the 16 basic types is to give persons ways to foster their predominate types and/or develop the opposite types, usually the weakest areas of their lives. But it's been a long time since I read the book, and I don't recommend it as a substitute for meeting regularly with your spiritual director to explore and discover the spiritual style and practice that fits for you.

Having said that, your question about making Francis in my own image is not an issue for me. I have done my best

*(continued on page 22)*

**Francis and Myers-Briggs (cont.)**

to read and study about him as a historical figure in all his complexity. Some of what I have come to know of Francis draws me in, inspires, energizes and encourages me in my own spiritual practice, and some of it repels me in its expression of the values and mores of his time and culture. I continually have asked myself if I am really a Franciscan, since I do not emulate Francis. I have decided that that doesn't matter. After 30 years I know that I am in a family of fellow Franciscans that share much in common with me and are at the same time all distinct and different from me.

Does Francis make me a better follower of Jesus? Yes, and that is the reason I have stayed with this spiritual life style. Jesus is at the center, and for me Francis was the epitome of a converted, saved and transformed person who loved Jesus with all his heart and wasn't afraid to show that.

Finally for me the word *perfect* in English carries negative connotations, but in the Greek of the New Testament, the word, which most often gets translated into English as *perfect*, also means *complete, mature, filled out, brought to its end point*. As I read the New Testament this puts the word perfect connected with the process of sanctification, which is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. We will be brought to completion through this grace. My efforts at my own perfection are far too narrow and uninformed, so reliance on the Holy Spirit at work in my perfection is the only thing that makes sense to me.

*Beverly Hosea*

**Annual Retreat as Home Retreat**

*David Burgdorf, Assistant Chaplain*

"I didn't make an annual retreat this year- too expensive." This line, or something like it, appears frequently in annual reports from professed sisters and brothers. What people have discovered is that the value of "living simply" and the necessity of paying for a three day retreat at a retreat house may be in conflict. Retreat houses (like all other hospitality facilities) have had to increase their rates over the 40+ years I've been trying to live the rule, which includes the provision for annual retreat.

Not to worry. We can find the most important ingredient of a retreat, silence, at home. If we live alone, all we need to do is turn off a half-dozen or so electronic devices and there it is. And if we live in a desert (I do), just walk outside. "Silence," as the SSF rule says, is not "the imposition of an artificial restraint" but "an opportunity for growing in the sense of the divine presence." Not a bad payoff for spending three days out of a year in silence. The late Fr. Alan Whittemore, OHC, wrote about "Power in repose." That's another advantage from a retreat for those of us who, like Martha of the Gospel, are often distracted and perturbed by our busyness.

For some resources you might want to explore for an at-home retreat, start by reading an article by Sr. Pamela Clare,

CSF in the Winter 2000 "The Franciscan Times" (<http://tssf.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2000FTWinter.pdf>) describing written materials CSF has published. These materials are available for purchase (inexpensively) at: <http://communitystfrancis.org/homeretreats.html>

In case you're willing to let the internet serve as "retreat master," a friend in Cincinnati pointed to a very rich Seven Last Words series preached by Walter Brueggemann. The series is excellent and free. <http://www.sainttimothys.com/recent-news-blog/2014/4/22/the-7-last-words-walter-brueggemann-sermons.html> These make fine retreat meditations. Another option: if you have a favorite modern spiritual writer (Anthony de Mello, Henri Nouwen or Richard Rohr are some of mine), guess what? You may be able to hear and watch them all on YouTube.com. Just type the writer's name in the search space, click and there you are. (Henri Nouwen has eight meditations on "The Life of the Beloved" recorded at The Crystal Cathedral many years ago, to judge from the hairdos, and he died eighteen years ago, but there he is on YouTube.com.)

These are some ways of enriching the silence of a home retreat. And of course, there's always the option of reading a book. If you don't want to buy a book, check the TSSF Directory, p. 88 about the TSSF Library, or check out the excellent listings on the TSSF website: <http://tssf.org/resources-links/the-third-order-library/>

You don't have to be wealthy to "go on a retreat," only willing and inventive.

**The Wilderness Road: Acts8**

*Victoria Logue*

Serapion the Sindonite traveled once on a pilgrimage to Rome. Here he was told of a celebrated recluse, a woman who lived always in one small room, never going out. Skeptical about her way of life—for he himself was a great wanderer—Serapion called on her and asked, "Why are you sitting here?" To which she replied, "I am not sitting. I am on a journey."

I'm not sure why that little piece of desert wisdom appeals to me but I believe it is because the word, *journey*, has always held such strong connotations for me. And, despite the fact that I spent six months backpacking from Georgia to Maine, I can also easily see that a journey can be taken while sitting quietly in one small room.

In the weeks leading up to the 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention, interest arose among three bloggers for The Episcopal Church to experience an Acts 8 moment. The deacon Stephen is martyred at the end of the seventh chapter of Acts. The eighth chapter is what follows as the Holy Spirit thrusts the church-in-crisis forward into mission. It's an in breaking of the Holy Spirit. Those interested in taking time to pray and discern God's will for the church met a couple of times to



toss around some ideas for the types of things that could be done: praying together, Bible studies and dreaming about what the church can be, among other things.

During the second meeting, just before Convention ended, our Bible study centered on Acts 8:26 through the end of the chapter. As Susan Snook began to read, my attention was caught immediately: "Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.)"

Why, I wondered, did Luke find it necessary to point out that Philip was instructed by the angel to travel a wilderness road? My first thought was to compare a wilderness road (or path) to an interstate highway. In the wilderness, one must be constantly alert: the road can be rocky and uneven; snakes, lizards and other wild creatures are often present; there are no clear exit signs to mark where one might need to turn; there are no rest areas with their usual amenities.

Philip, naturally, would have been prepared for this. And perhaps that is why, despite all the obstacles, the early church grew. The Apostles knew they had to be on the lookout for every possible opportunity to spread the Gospel. So, when Philip met an Ethiopian eunuch who happened to be on a spiritual as well as physical journey, and on a wilderness road no less, he gladly accepted the opportunity to share the Gospel.

Have we traded the wilderness road for the interstate highway, breezing by all the "Ethiopian eunuchs" out there just waiting to have scripture explained to them? We've grown so accustomed to the way things are done that we've lost our way on The Way.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible notes that "get up and go toward the south" could also mean "get up and go at noon." I am sure it is not a coincidence that in the very next chapter of Acts that Saul, also on a journey, has his first mystical

experience with Christ. And like Philip, who opens up the Gospel to someone who, prior to Jesus, would not have been allowed to become a proselyte, Saul brings the Gospel to the gentiles.

It is my belief that in order to renew the church, we must return to the wilderness road. It is time to pull ourselves out of the "that is the way it has always been done" rut we have fallen into and actually begin to look at the road ahead of us.

I don't have answers at this point, so much as questions:

How might we leave behind the comfort of well-worn paths for the excitement, energy and promise found on the wilderness road?

How might we put ourselves in a place to once more come in contact with the Ethiopian eunuch of today?

What is preventing us from rising to the challenge of this new Acts 8 Moment?

**Post Script:** This was the first post I wrote for my blog, *The Wilderness Road* ([thewildernessroad.wordpress.com](http://thewildernessroad.wordpress.com)) as well as my first post for the *Acts8 Moment* blog at their website (<http://www.acts8moment.org>). Since that time, *Acts8* has amped up its activity as well as developed both a vision and mission statement. The *Acts8 Moment* is a Missionary Society made of lay and clergy members of the Episcopal Church. Their vision statement is: Proclaiming Resurrection in The Episcopal Church; and their mission statement is: Changing the conversation in The Episcopal Church from death to resurrection; equipping The Episcopal Church to proclaim resurrection to the world.



*Victoria Logue is a graduate of Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. After graduation, Victoria worked as a writer for two daily newspapers in Georgia—the Warner Robins Daily Sun and The Rome News-Tribune. During that time, she garnered awards for her feature writing and personal columns from the Georgia Press Association and the Special Olympics. She and her husband, Frank, also spent two months in Kathmandu, Nepal, documenting daily life and customs.*

*In 1988, the Logues quit their jobs to hike the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail. For six months they backpacked across the backbone of the eastern*

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**The Wilderness Road: Acts8 (cont.)**

*United States from Georgia to Maine. Upon returning home, the Logues wrote their first book, *The Appalachian Trail Backpacker*, which was published in 1991 by Menasha Ridge Press.*

*They went on to write a number of other books related to hiking, the outdoors and travel. The Logues have also supplied writing and photography to a variety of regional, national and international magazines.*

*The Logues have appeared on CNN and numerous local TV and talk radio shows. The Logues were also guests on the Discovery Channel's series, "Go For It." For more than two years, the Logues hosted a weekly online chat on long distance hiking for *Backpacker magazine* on America Online.*

*Victoria has served as the editor of the *Old Dominion Sierran*, *The Brunswick News* lifestyle section and *Georgia's Coastal Illustrated*. She was also a contributing editor for *Outdoor Traveler, Mid-Atlantic Region*.*

*Victoria continues working as an author and writer. She is a Tertiary in the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis, a certified labyrinth facilitator and is involved in promoting spirituality through leading retreats.*

*Her most recent non-fiction work is a thorough revision to the *Guide to the Blue Ridge Parkway*. Her first novel, *Redemption*, was published in 2011 by Low Country Press.*

***This column is the first in a series of columns that Victoria will be offering the readers of the Franciscan Times over the next few years.***

## **Northeast Convocation and Matt Talbot Motivated My Sermon on the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

*John Brockmann (With help from Wikipedia)*

*"Never be too hard on the man who can't give up drink. It's as hard to give up the drink as it is to raise the dead to life again. But both are possible and even easy for Our Lord. We have only to depend on Him." - Matt Talbot*

At our Northeast Convocation in New Jersey, we were using a Jesuit Retreat House in Morristown, and as I walked the grounds that had rose gardens and a fish-pond, I came



across a bronze cast statue of a man kneeling—it seemed very lifelike. At the base I read the man's name, Matt Talbot. I was very surprised to find this statue in a Jesuit retreat house because Matt Talbot was a Third Order Franciscan, and I had even suggested his inclusion in our

*Actual Photograph of Matt Talbot*

*Devotional Calendar* more than 15 years ago.

Matt Talbot was born on the 2nd May 1856, the second eldest of twelve children of a poor family in Dublin. His father and all but the oldest of his brothers were heavy drinkers. Matt left school at the age of twelve and went to work in a wine merchant's store. He very soon began "sampling their wares", and was considered a hopeless alcoholic by age thirteen. He then went to the Port & Docks Board where he worked in the whiskey stores. He frequented pubs in the city with his brothers and friends, spending most or all of his wages and running up debts. When his wages were spent, he borrowed and scrounged for money. He pawned his clothes and boots to get money for alcohol. On one occasion, he stole a fiddle from a street entertainer and sold it to buy drink.

Notice that his father was a heavy drinker—and this bequeathing of addiction from one generation to another happens quite often. The first reading this Sunday begins with a very odd proverb that guides the rest of the readings: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Our reading of this today is from Ezeiel, but Jeremiah has the same proverb.

What that proverb meant in Ezeiel and Jeremiah's day was that the consequences of the evil actions of the parents are visited upon the child and the child's child, etc. For example, at one point when the disciples of Jesus see a crippled man, they ask Jesus: "Who sinned, his parents or him?" However in God's world there is individual moral responsibility: As we heard in the first reading from Ezeiel: "Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die."

No one is doomed to repeat the failures of their family—and by the same token, as we see in the Gospel, no one is automatically saved by their family for the Kingdom of God—it is only by their actions, their own individual actions that they can enter the Kingdom of God.

Back to Matt Talbot. One evening in 1884 Talbot, who was penniless and out of credit, waited outside a pub in the hope that somebody would invite him in for a drink. After several friends had passed him without offering to treat him, he went home in disgust and announced to his mother that he was



*Statue of Matt Talbot*



*Northeast  
Convocation  
Morning Prayer  
Surrounding the  
Statue of Matt  
Talbot*

going to “take the pledge” (renounce drink) for three months. At the end of the three months, he took the pledge for six months, then for life. Having drunk excessively for 16 years, Talbot maintained sobriety for the following forty years of his life. Matt’s first seven years after taking the pledge were especially difficult. He found strength in prayer, and began to attend daily Mass.

He repaid all his debts scrupulously. Having searched for the fiddler whose instrument he had stolen, and failed to find him, he gave the money to the church to have Mass said for him. Six years after beginning sobriety, Matt Talbot became a Third Order Franciscan in 1890. Matt Talbot is quoted as saying:

*“Never be too hard on the man who can’t give up drink. It’s as hard to give up the drink as it is to raise the dead to life again. But both are possible and even easy for Our Lord. We have only to depend on him.”*

In the second reading this morning of Paul to the Philippians there is a famous final line: “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*” Paul’s letter ends with a phrase that has haunted me, followed me, confused me for years. I read Kierkegaard’s book, *Fear and Trembling*, as an undergraduate and thought I had understood what Paul meant by “fear and trembling.”

I thought he meant that since God does not think or operate as we do, that there is naturally, inherently, an ambiguity about how we work out God’s plan for our salvation in our daily actions. I thought it meant, therefore, that we should have a certain tentativeness about claiming that “our way” to God is the only way and to be very wary of claiming that Muslims and Buddhists and any other non-Christian will not get to God because we don’t know all the ways of God. I still hold with this tentativeness...this humility in regards to the ways of God. I think such humility, such tentativeness, such “fear and trembling” is a cornerstone of the Episcopal and Franciscan sensibility.

As good and as true as that all is, after my sermon study this week I have come to understand that it’s not what Paul meant at all in his words: *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling*

*you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.* What I now have come to understand, to believe is that Paul meant when we realize that it is God—God the almighty—God the all good—G O D God who has chosen to work through you and me, enabling us to both will and work for God’s good pleasure. Well, the only way to greet the presence of the divine is with awe—is with *fear and trembling* that the Holy of Holies is in us, with us, surrounding us, directing, perfecting our imperfect actions and intentions.

Jesus—who did not come from a priestly family and thus could never hope to be a priest—became in the Letter to the Hebrews the **Great High Priest**. How was this possible—because *it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.* How was Matt Talbot able to maintain sobriety for all those years—“*It’s as hard to give up the drink as it is to raise the dead to life again. But both are possible and even easy for Our Lord. We have only to depend on him.*

At age 69 Talbot was on his way to Mass on Trinity Sunday, June 7, 1925, when he collapsed and died of heart failure. On 3 October 1975 Pope Paul VI declared him to be *Venerable Matt Talbot*, which is a step on the road to his canonization, and there is a particular devotion to Matt Talbot among North America Roman Catholics among those involved in a ministry to achieve or maintain sobriety. And so all that returns me to the bronze statue in the garden of a Jesuit Retreat House in New Jersey.

Matt Talbot worked as a dockworker in Dublin all his life. He was the Gospel son who at first said No to God, he pawned his clothes and boots to get money for alcohol. He even stole a fiddle from a street entertainer and sold it to buy drink. But then he was raised from the dead and became sober and like the Gospel Son said YES because “*it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Matt Talbot is celebrated around the world today for his struggle to escape the addictiveness bequeathed to him by his father, celebrated by his fight to escape the Old Testament proverb: “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.”

*“Never be too hard on the man who can’t give up drink. It’s as hard to give up the drink as it is to raise the dead to life again. But both are possible and even easy for Our Lord. We have only to depend on him.”* And like Matt Talbot, when we face whatever battles are ours to face—we need to remember *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

**Religious Life and Renewal: Exploring Roots and Shoots****The Archbishop's Day Conference at Lambeth Palace, Friday 28<sup>th</sup>, March 2014***Masud Ibn Syedullah, Officer of External Relations*

*What does Christ's call mean for us today in the midst of a rapidly changing Church and society? How are we Franciscans to respond to the call of Christ to rebuild the Church in our own day? How might Christ use TSSF in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century to help revitalize the church and offer a fresh vision of life to the world around us? These are the questions before us at this time in history.*

*The following two keynote addresses focus our attention on these questions. They were given last March at a conference convened by Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, at Lambeth Palace for representatives of Anglican, Roman Catholic, and ecumenical religious communities in Europe. As you will see, both addresses encourage religious communities to prayerfully discern how we can be effective, faithful witnesses of Christ to the Church and society as we move forward. Representatives of each of the three Orders of the Society of Saint Francis participated in the conference.*

*Both the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NAECC), of which TSSF is a member, and the Conference of Religious Orders in the Americas (COROA) of which our First Order Brothers and Sisters are members, request that all of their member communities read, discuss, and prayerfully consider the implications of these two addresses to discern how we as Anglican communities may be renewed and offer spiritual guidance to both the Church and the world for the days ahead.*

*Please make time in your local fellowships and regional convocations to review and discuss the matters presented in these addresses, and send your thoughts to me at [ibnsyedullah@gmail.com](mailto:ibnsyedullah@gmail.com). I will convey your responses to both our Provincial Chapter and to NAECC/COROA.*

**Archbishop Justin Welby**

It is – or should be – impossible to imagine a church that flourishes without the flourishing of Religious communities as an integral part of the body of Christ.

It is – or should be – impossible because, it is our life in Religion, in contemplation, in prayer and community around a Rule and around worship, that makes us more than an NGO with loads of pointy roofed old buildings. Stanley Hauerwas in one of his sermons comments that the church should always be engaged in doing things that make no sense if God does not exist.

Life in Religion is the ultimate wager on the existence of God. Through it people subject themselves to discipline, to each other in Community, however difficult and odd each other is (and I suspect that you have an internal wry smile at how odd some people can be), and they subject themselves above all to prayer.

In the Rule of St Benedict the heart of the monastic life is obedience, an absence of grumbling, a commonality of goods, a balanced life of work, prayer and study, not in any sense because through these remarkably tough disciplines human beings become self-referentially better, but because they

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**Father Etienne Vetö, Chemin Neuf Community**

Unfortunately, religious life in the Church is in a crisis situation. I will not develop this too much because you know it, because it is worked on quite often. Even in the Anglican Church I read an excellent article from Peta Dunstan<sup>1</sup> and the analysis is very good. If this can be of any comfort to you, the situation in the Roman Catholic Church is the same. At least we share this difficulty. It seems to me though that if we have to say that there is a crisis in religious life it is not only, and not first of all, a crisis in religious life, it is a crisis in the Church. It reflects the crisis of the Church. I do not have numbers for this, but I do not think that the proportion of religious to practising Christians or to church-going Christians is lower than it was twenty, fifty, a hundred years ago. The real question is not religious life, it is evangelisation, it is the Church. But what is true – and I really felt we had a common point this morning with the Archbishop – is that religious life is a spearhead for renewal of the Church. And it is not only crisis, but there is a huge potential. I think we really have to acknowledge that we have a huge potential because there is a huge need – there are so many people in deep financial and material difficulty, so many are lonely, isolated or have emotional or psychological

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**Archbishop Justin Welby (cont.)**

are there to encourage each other in walking more and more deeply into the light that is Christ.

While in lay life we are able to escape each other, especially if one disconnects from Twitter and the web, in Religion, the life of the world is lived out in microcosm, with every problem and challenge that comes with being human, combined with constant presence to each other.

Dan Hardy in the book *Wording a Radiance* cites [Paul] Ricoeur by as comparing two approaches to modern life. One is the economic basis of exchange and equivalence. That is what prevails in our society today, and by it we are all reduced to being *homo financiarius* or *homo economicus*, mere economic units whose purpose is consumption, whose destiny is extinction, and for whom any gain is someone else's loss in a zero sum world. In that context prayer is loss, the blessing of the stranger, the widow and the orphan, the care for the poor, the imprisoned, the hungry and the sick, all are net losses.

The contrast for Ricoeur is the world of abundance and grace, of surplus in the continuing creative power of God. In this world, our generosity leads to our blessing, our self-giving opens the doors to eternity for us and all those around who see and hear the call and light of Christ.

It is an interesting point that John Maynard Keynes, the great 20th century economist, in a book written in the early 1930s took the view of abundance and grace as his world view and forecast that by the early 21st century everybody would be working 15 hour weeks, because of the surplus and abundance that would come from economic and technical development. He was, of course, precisely right, except for leaving out the bit about human beings and sin.

But his view has been discredited and replaced by that of the [Milton] Friedmanite exchange and equivalence which now dominates all of our thinking and even for those in this room too often our instinctive application.

But the Church has as its main task to live in this second world, and in so doing to live so as to convert the stale and barren darkness of the zero sum to the living abundance of grace in Jesus Christ.

Which is where Religion comes in. I am of course using Religion in its technical sense... Let us be clear: it has often, almost always since the beginning of modernity, and especially in the last 100 years, been treated as a side line, Religion. Like train spotting compared to commuting, the mainland of the church has busily gone to and fro, occasionally aware of those who stand on the platform doing something esoteric and different. Even that great and remarkably prophetic document, "Towards the Conversion of England", commissioned by William Temple and published weeks after his death in 1944, even that fails to mention the Religious Life.

But conversion is the fruit of evangelism and witness, yes, but utterly the work of the Holy Spirit.

I was yesterday at Luton meeting the most extraordinary group of people in a youth project in the centre of Luton established some 15, 20 years ago by 43 churches across all denominations, and talking to some of the young people involved. They have a range of activities – everything from teaching those who are completely disconnected from the church about Ignatian spirituality and leading them in the exercises, through to dealing with issues of self-harm and food problems, and all the rest of the issues that come to young people. And they do all that utterly wrapped up in prayer and in evangelism. They do it all in the context of the work of Jesus Christ. And there you saw, yes, evangelism and witness, but most of all the work and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Conversion comes from prayer by a fragile people of Christ who pray to a faithful God who sends us a comforter. In an obedient community of faith, full of love for one another, the Father sends the Spirit in response to the Son. There is a realisation, as Jesus says in John 14, of truth that grows deeper and deeper and lives out in our inner being, and the fruit of that is peace that does not leave us.

Throughout history the lived example of these truths, the engine room of renewal and conversion, has come from Religion, it has been the gift of the religious communities. I cannot easily find an example of a church that since the end of the Roman Empire has found renewal without there being flourishing religious communities.

We start with Benedict, of course, who set out to grow closer to Christ and incidentally saved civilisation, as a collateral benefit. We have Cluny; we have my favourite and great saints of the North-East of England, from the time of Cuthbert through the great communities in Durham, Lindisfarne... . The communities of the North-East that, springing from life in Religion, converted Scandinavia and the whole of Germany and northern Europe, the overflow of grace that reached out across Europe.

And then you get to Francis at a time when the church across Europe was as corrupt as it has probably ever been. In England, we go along a few centuries, we come to the Methodists, who live not in communities in the same form but under a Rule, under a Method, and there again we saw the Great Awakening.

The Oxford Movement, again which led to an awakening of religious life and religious life led to an awakening of the church.

17th century France in places like Bec, and today across Europe, the New Religious Communities, springing up in new and unforeseen and unforeseeable forms and bringing life in the most remarkable ways, and in them I include people like the 24-7 Prayer Movement.

There are both theological or

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**Archbishop Justin Welby (cont.)**

ecclesiological and also sociological or anthropological reasons for this I have no doubt. But it comes back theologically to a wager on the existence of God, to the living of life in communities in which the abundance of grace and the turning away from equivalence and exchange is the oxygen of survival as a community, and where the confronting in the desert of community of the toughest and roughest parts of what it is to be human beings seeking to follow Christ is at the heart of life. Rowan Williams, in an extraordinary address to Roman Catholic Bishops, spoke of Christian faith (and here he was following [Jacques] Maritain) as a true humanism. In Religion we find this truth and this humanism being renewed.

And at its heart it is to do with prayer. Rowan said, in the same address: "To be contemplative as Christ is contemplative is to be open to all the fullness that the Father wishes to pour into our hearts." In prayer we are drawn into the "silent gazing upon God that is the goal of all our discipleship". He carries on: "To put it boldly, contemplation is the only ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world that our financial systems and our advertising culture and our chaotic and unexamined emotions encourage us to inhabit".

To put it less elegantly, through prayer we are moved from the exchange and equivalence to the abundance and grace, from being self-referential to other referential, from eating our supper alone to washing feet in community. Through prayer we are called into partnership with God who in condescension and grace works in answer to prayer.

So we see that in Religion we find the key to what the Church of England has discerned as its goals in this quinquennium. In Religion there is opened the possibility of conversion daily and anew, of spiritual and numerical growth. In Religion there is a fresh opening to the Common Good and not merely the economic General Interest. In Religion we are able to reimagine ministry. As Jesus promises in John 14 and 16, through obedient lives, seen above all in the best Religious Communities, new life emerges, truth is found more deeply and expressed in fresh ways, peace may reign afresh in the church.

And so it has been and so it is. Communities that have grown and served and sometimes died have taught our schools and established our universities. They teach today, scattered in small groups. They heal and serve. They live in the roughest parts of our country and shine light of Christ in the darkness. In the last 60 years they have set the pace to overthrow tyrannies of racism, to stop wars, and to bring reconciliation. They are of every kind and in every place.

Yet we all know also that in recent decades they have declined. That decline is an alarm call to the whole church, not a mere loss of a side-line, as if Asda were to stop selling petrol. There are many reasons for the decline, which mirrors the whole church, and I would argue is deeply linked to

the life of the church. Yet as we face today the mountain to climb of rebuilding our numbers, re-finding confidence in the gospel...

So if we are to find again confidence in the gospel that says it is good news for the poor, not only because it enables social change – the gospel is not a means to an end, it is an end in itself. I was reminded of that forcefully and embarrassingly six weeks ago when Caroline, my wife, and I were in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Goma, we'd been in South Sudan seeing the horrors there, and in Goma it was almost worse. I was in an IDP camp with 25,000 people on volcanic rock, with no food. I would just been for half an hour in a tent for the disabled children who'd been abandoned, who lay on filthy mattresses dying while overstretched doctors tried to mitigate their agony. And in the midst of that, having sat with an elderly woman, blind and without food who'd lost her family, as she came near her death, in the midst of that the Bishop said, as the crowd gathered round: 'Say something to encourage them.' And so I did what I am afraid I tend to do when I can't think of anything to say I talk for a while to see if I've got any ideas. . . And so I started off by saying: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." And I was then going on to say something about bringing practical help or something and the crowd started clapping and cheering. The gospel is good news to the poor in and of itself. Yes, it changes society, yes, it transforms our existence, yes, it does all that. But it is in and of itself, by itself an end in itself, not a means to an end. It is good news for the poor. And that renewal of confidence in the gospel, which will be at the heart of the renewal of our church, is impossible to imagine without renewal in Religion.

[Alasdair] MacIntyre in *After Virtue*, as I am sure most of you know, speaks of new dark age on the last page of that very interesting book, and talks of the need for a new, and, as he puts it, doubtless very different St Benedict. Perhaps that will not be a person but a movement, groups of people, even, because again, in almost all cases Religious renewal starts with groups in prayer, not merely a single charismatic hero figure, although those are often the ones we remember and canonise. We are not looking for a Nietzschean superman, but a collection of fragile disciples who know that they have a tendency to betray and abandon Jesus and who gather in obedience so that they may receive the Paraclete.

What might that look like? I have no idea; it is, after all in the mind of God. But today's gathering is not merely for the pleasure of knowing you, great as that is (and I mean that most sincerely), or to say how essential you are, true as that is, but to suggest that we need a wild burst of fresh and Spirit-fuelled imagination about Religion in the 21st century. It will be embedded in its traditions, but as in all past renewals of Religion it will also be different. Above all it will be spontaneous, not top down and under control.

So what needs doing? What institutional changes are needed? How does the church, how do the churches (we are not all Anglicans here) obstruct you, hinder you when we should celebrate and support? What re-imagination do we need?

Whatever it is, it will be centred in two things that are the call and purpose of the church: worship and drawing deeper into the light of Christ; and speaking and showing the fact that no-one ever makes a better decision in their whole life, in any circumstances, wherever they are, whatever age, whoever they are, they never make a better decision and cannot make a better decision than to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A renewal will in effect, renew that most intangible and most certain of wagers, that Jesus Christ is Lord in truth and reality.

Amen.

### **Father Etienne Vetö (cont.)**

wounds. There is also a deep, deep spiritual search and thirst. So all this means that the treasure we have is the treasure that is expected, that is asked for. And even more positively, it is not only good to consider that people are in great need, it is also good to consider, first of all, that we have a beautiful treasure, that what we have is an extraordinary treasure – the most beautiful thing we can share, union to God, absolute love, Christ as friend and saviour with his healing power, his reconciling power, a life according to the gospel that means a life pervaded with meaning. So many people have a job that does not have any meaning or little meaning. We are so lucky. Every step of our life can have a meaning. And of course we live with a group of, or close to, loving people (at least we should) – it is not always easy to live with them but they are loving people. So with such a treasure renewal is definitely possible. I think that is the first thing that we have to start off with.

Renewal is definitely possible - and the good news is that there is a lot happening in the world. Of course, when we speak about growth we have to know what we are speaking about. The Archbishop this morning quoted *From Anecdote to Evidence: findings from the Church growth research programme* – which I read, after you handed it to me last month – and it is really excellent. And just one thing I will recall is, three expressions of growth: growth in depth, growth in numbers, growth in outreach and we will be speaking about all three right now.

There are no recipes but I would like to reflect on three ingredients to religious life that may help us so that we realise the treasure we have and nurture it. The general idea could be expressed by a verse in 2 Tim 1:6: “Fan the flame into the gift of God which is in you”. The first thing would be, ‘fan into flame the gift of God which is in you’. In a crisis situation, it is important to go back to what gave life at first, to what is essential. But at the same time we are going to put

new wood into it. So go back to the essential, fan the flames of coals that are already there, but at the same time find the right new wood to put into it. The perspective is clear: fan the flames and find new ways.

And often we speak about knowing our charism in this situation. It will help us to know our charism. This is true because we often forget the clear focus and purpose we have. We are often dispersed. I think this is a constant in religious life. I often travel to Asia for our community and in the Philippines I was very struck by the Salesian community there. You do not have Salesians in the Church of England, but Salesians are devoted to education of ten to twenty year olds, and especially poorer children. But what happens in the Philippines is that they set up a structure – big schools – and of course they were the best schools in the Philippines. So what happens when the best schools come up? Well, all the rich people send their children. And since they pay and that helps the school help the poorer children, all the rich children were accepted until they came up some years ago with a situation where there are only children of rich families in Salesian schools. So they really had to go back and now they have created new schools and mixed schools, because it is quite a delicate situation – differences of lifestyles are huge in countries like the Philippines. But that is an interesting example of a charism that was lost slowly but through dispersion. So we have to focus back on our charism but there is a risk when we speak about going back to the charism. At least two risks. First of all: we may be reduced to our mission because in the mind of many people charism is a mission. It is not wrong to think in terms of activity, apostolic mission, but it should not be reduced to it. And the second thing is that if you speak too quickly about rediscovering a charism, you may reduce the sap of religious life to a series of formulas or definitions or words. So before going back to the charism, I think we should simply reconsider the centre of our religious life, which is to follow Christ and live the gospel.

So the general outline of the talk will be: first follow Christ and live the gospel, then rediscover your charism, and finally learn to renew this charism.

### **1. Simply put: follow Christ and live the Gospel**

You will tell me, this is normal Christian life, and it is. I think that the paradox we have as religious is that what is the most important to us and for us is common to all Christians. The most important – the centre of our lives is common to all Christians. Anthony and Benedict did not decide to become religious. Anthony did not say, ‘Oh, on hearing the gospel, as the story goes, sell all your belongings and follow me (Matt 19:21) I think I have to become a religious or a monk.’ He said, ‘I am just going to set the gospel into practice. I am going to follow the gospel’. Being a religious, being a Christian is, as Paul says, ‘Christ took hold of me’ (Philippians 3:12), to fall in love with him and feel      *(continued on page 30)*

**Father Etienne Vetö (cont.)**

the impervious urge to follow him and conform our lives to his. That is because Christ asks for everything. God claims for himself the whole of our being. You can consider other aspects of religious life. What is specific to religious life? Following Christ, conversion, living in community like in the Acts of the Apostles (you often see this, when a community starts, older or newer communities, it is often a reference to the Acts of the Apostles), and witnessing. But what I have just said – I will say it again – following Christ, and setting the gospel into practice, conversion, changing lifestyle, third of all community life like in the Acts of the Apostles, witnessing. What Christian is not called to this? I really want to stress this point. It has been made by a lot of theologians of religious life over the past thirty/forty years. If you want references for example, this is a bit old but it is really excellent, it is Jean-Marie Tillard – who is a Canadian Dominican.<sup>2</sup>

So what is specific about religious life? Well simply put, there are a lot of good explanations and I will give a general one that more or less synthesizes all of these. Simply put: *some* are called to leave *everything* for Christ as a prophetic sign to Christians that *all* are to let Him be the *centre and priority*. I will say it again: some are called to let go of everything to show prophetically to all that they are to put Christ in the centre or to let Christ be the centre. The play of words, or of concepts, would be: Christ is a priority for all and for some he is everything. It is not the same thing. It is sometimes a question of urgency of a situation; it is sometimes a question of, even, character – some are more passionate than others. There are certainly married people here. Some passionate lovers will say ‘You are everything in my life’ and others would say ‘You are the centre of my life’. Who is right? Both. Centre is really a lot already, but some need to say everything, and that is one way of expressing what is religious life.

But why am I saying all this? What are the consequences for the renewal of religious life? The best way and only way to renew religious life is to become better Christians, better Disciples of Christ. The advantage is that it is very simple. Very, very simple, but so difficult to act out. So we spend a lot of time trying to find other things that will help and that is what I am going to do now! That is the most important though. How would religious life be renewed and transformed in the Church of England if each one of us here was a saint, was truly holy? Simply put, nothing else really works and nothing else really counts. For example, if I consider monasteries in France, one of the only traditional monastery that is really thriving right now, in the sense that it is growing in numbers (some monasteries are growing in outreach, radiance – you have a lot of monasteries that are growing in this sense – in depth and outreach) is called Sept-Fons. It is a Cistercian monastery. What happened with Sept-Fons? If you try to analyse the situation, it is something that cannot

always be reproduced, even though unfortunately it is often important: there was a Father Jerome, who was the Abbot at one point and he was a very, very charismatic man, very deep, he wrote a lot and of course he attracted a lot. I am saying ‘unfortunately’ because it cannot be reproduced and it puts a lot of pressure on people who say ‘well the best way to renew religious life is to be a very charismatic and deep Abbot or Abbess’. But that is not all. What happened is that it is also a very radical, very, very radical monastery. They live in dormitories. They have really worked on liturgy again; they have just put a lot of energy working on liturgy. They live very, very simple lives. They have really worked on silence also which is part of the Cistercian tradition but you can go out of focus. So basically said, places where things really work or thrive are often radical places with a radical spirituality, a radical relation to God or to Christ. And in a way I think that the success of newer communities – I am from Chemin Neuf Community so I feel I am allowed to say so, but I hope I will not shock those here who are from newer groups here, the fresh expression, new monasticism – the success of newer forms of religious life may not come first and foremost from the new aspects they introduce. I think probably what really attracts is the fact that we are at the beginning – we are just so close to the spiritual experience that made us start. And that is why we have so much radiance; it is not because we have a lot of new inventions, a lot of new things. Creativity may count, but at the centre what makes communities like this attractive is simply the fact that we are just at the beginning of the spiritual experience. And I am speaking about this aspect of spirituality, community life and so on but it is same thing for witnessing and evangelisation.

Communities who really rediscover this aspect of religious life are also often thriving. You have probably heard of the Franciscans of the Renewal in the Bronx in New York. But what are they doing? They have two principles: direct work with the poor, and evangelisation. For them, working with the poor is, to a certain extent, an end in itself and to another extent it is not to help the poor, it is also to help them encounter the only one who can help them. All service, all apostolate has this dynamic which is encountering Jesus, encountering Christ, and they are really thriving.

A few final observations before I come to the second part. Simply put, follow Christ and the gospel as all Christians. That means that the renewal of religious life will not always happen through traditional religious expressions and not even through new religious expressions. There are people who are not even in this room today who are part of the renewal of religious life, who really try to live the gospel to the end and who will testify to others. I do not know the situation well enough but while Holy Trinity Brompton is not a religious community (or maybe it is), in what I am saying it would be part of this movement, and it can help us – it can

help the traditionally religious to really remember what their vocation is.

Maybe two concluding points on this. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits (*Chemin Neuf is of Jesuit spirituality*), used to say, ‘When you are in a crisis situation...’ and this is for an individual but I am going to adapt it for a group, ‘When you are in a crisis situation, do not start by changing your environment, change yourself with determination and then see what you have to do.’ Change yourself with determination. This is still the same idea: become holy, and then we can think about the rest. Or to put it in a more theological way, Yves Congar wrote a beautiful book called *True and False Reform in the Church*, and it is a reflection on how to reform the Church. And he says there are two models. The usual human model is: we change the institutions because this is where we see the difficulties, then we change theology, and then we change our spiritual life. And Congar says, ‘No, first of all you renew spiritual life. When spiritual life is renewed, then you can think out theology in a more lively way, and then you can set this out in institutions that will really correspond, if not they will not correspond.’ I think theology is not the first, but not the last. It would be a central mediating point between spirituality and institutions.

## 2. Know your charism

Now we can finally get to the point: to know your charism. Because now we know what the centre is. And what would the charism be in that case? It is simply that when you follow Christ and try to put the gospel into practice, you can only do this if you have a special gift of God, because God always gives the strength to answer to His calling. And this special gift is a gift of the Holy Spirit and it is specific to each and every one of us but sometimes – and actually all the time – it has a dimension that is beneficial for the whole Church, and that is the definition of a charism. As we receive a gift of God for ourselves, it will make us live the gospel in a certain way, which will be beneficial for the whole Church. And in the past 40 years in theology of religious life, the idea of a ‘collective charism’ has been developed. You will not find the word in the gospel or in the Bible. A collective charism, that means that it is not only an individual but also a group that receives a specific charism that will be the same for all the members of the group and that will help others. And that is what happens in religious life – that is what we hope happens in religious life. A God-given gift and capacity that will help others live the same life. And let us just reflect on what the components of this charism are once again so that we are not stuck with the priority of apostolate and mission even if it is absolutely important.

If we consider the charism in religious life as an inverted triangle, the centre is spirituality. Now what is the definition of spirituality? Spirituality is a way of understanding the whole of our relation to God from a certain point of view. Or the

whole of the gospel from a certain point of view. From the point of view of the poor, from the point of view of contemplative union with God, and so on. And it has consequences, practical consequences in the way we pray – liturgical prayer, personal prayer will be marked by this overall point of view on our relation to God and understanding the gospel. And I think that even when an order was born from an urgent social situation – and I know many Anglican orders started this way – even in that case the root is a spiritual intuition I think. The root is a spiritual intuition and answer to God’s calling. And you can probably fill the dots and find what kind of spirituality is there. It can be a popular spiritual current or stream; it can be the vision of faith of the founders; it can be an attachment to one of the mysteries of the life of Jesus – the washing the feet for example. A second thing we also have to consider is that sometimes it is rooted in one of the main, traditional, old spiritualities. It does not have to be innovative every time. And third of all, it is also a specific way of living out the three vows: of those who do take these vows, nobody ever lives them out in the same way when you compare different orders. It is not a monolithic aspect of religious life. You can live chastity and celibacy with a very rich intense community life or in solitude. You can live poverty in a very radical way or in a way that seeks to be as balanced as possible – as the Benedictines try to do it. Same thing for obedience: there are different ways of living obedience according to the orders. It can be lived as military style obedience or in very proactive and processual ways.

The second aspect is a certain balance between prayer and action. Every community, every order has both but there is a certain balance to find between prayer and action which will be the specificity of our community. And it is not only a question of quantity. It is not ‘contemplatives have much less action than others’. It really is a question of the way we understand the deep relation between these two aspects. I will give two or three examples. Dominicans for example, their way of understanding the relation between prayer and action is *contemplata aliis tradere*. I do not know if you know the expression, it is, what we have contemplated will be transmitted to others. So the idea is life has two moments: you start by praying and contemplating in the morning more or less, and in the afternoon you go to preach, and then you come back and then you go to preach. Jesuits have a completely different way of doing things. For them, it is seeing God in all things, which means that we will not really separate two moments. Of course, I do hope they sometimes pray but it is not separating two moments and explicitly saying I am fuelling up for something else, but as I preach, as I listen in spiritual direction or accompaniment, as I go work with the poor, I am praying, I am encountering God. And when I pray I am also praying for all these people. It is another way of seeing things. Another way is the Benedictine way, where liturgy itself is action. Even etymologically speaking liturgy (continued on page 32)

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is service, it is a common service that we are doing. So it is action. So be careful – it is not a question of quantity only but this is a way of understanding what the charism of our order is.

The third aspect is community life. It can be very intense, very dispersed, very transparent – when I say transparent I mean a lot of speaking and sharing – or a lot in silence but a lot of communication happens in silence, a lot of communication. So I am not saying there is more or less communication. It is not the same way of communicating. That is the third aspect. (Of course there is a question of size here for community also. Some orders need large communities. I think that I am not mistaken when I say traditionally speaking Benedictines and Cistercians have community lives that are built for larger groups but then Franciscans do not have to be. They could be two or three in a slum just working with others or something. So there are really different sizes of community that will match the spirituality and the balance between prayer and action.)

And the fourth aspect is: finality and purpose of the mission, which can be work for the poor, hospitals, education, family, unity of Christians, theology, anything.

Basically I think that you can say that every order has all these ingredients, the differences are just a question of balance. It is a bit like when you take flowers and you ask 12 different people to make a bouquet with the same flowers, the result will be 12 different bouquets. Some closer to one another, others much different (and actually this is bad example because my bouquets are absolutely terrible – nobody ever asks me any more to prepare a bouquet!) But the idea here is we have all these elements but the balance between them is different. Of course the whole thing comes out as a spirit, which is almost impossible to define.

Maybe the best way to convey differences of “spirit” would be a joke on three orders. I am going to try a Jesuit/Franciscan/Dominican joke on you. It works in the Roman Catholic Church because we know the Jesuits and Dominicans but that will help you know them maybe! A Jesuit, a Dominican and a Franciscan were at the shore of the lake of Galilee and the Jesuit goes, ‘Can you imagine this is where Jesus and then Peter walked on the water? Isn’t this impressive? If we had faith, we would do the same thing’. And the Franciscan says, ‘Well, let’s do it! We have faith, let’s do it!’ The Jesuit goes, ‘I will start’ and sets one foot, another foot, and incredibly he is really walking on the water and he walks a bit – 50 metres – comes back and he falls on his knees on the shore, on the sand and says, ‘Thank you Lord!’. The Franciscan goes, ‘Okay, this is my turn. Brother Wind will calm down for a bit!’ So he walks and same thing – incredible! – he’s walking on the water and he comes back and he’s just – even more than the Jesuit because he’s Franciscan – he’s prais-

ing Sister water and praising everything and everything and everything! The Dominican: one foot, two feet, and splash! He’s underwater! So he comes out and says, ‘This is terrible; I am a sinner; I do not have faith. I am going to go become a hermit – that is all that is left of my life.’ And he leaves. At that moment the Jesuit turns towards the Franciscan and says, ‘Shouldn’t we have maybe told him about the stepping stones?’ And the Franciscan goes, ‘Stepping stones?! What stepping stones?!’

So far we have explored what a charism is and is composed of, but how to know our charism? I would say two preambles. First: the first thing is to know we have a charism. Before even trying to find out what it is, know we have a gift of God, realise that we have a God-given gift, a treasure that has the capacity to do something we cannot do by ourselves. Religious life: it is not possible; evangelising, living community life, praying: it is not possible. Following Christ and the gospel, it is not possible. So we really have to realise we have this gift, before even considering what it is, because often we go to the next step. And the second thing is: probably not trying to figure out what our charism is by comparing ourselves to others and trying to find what is different because, as we saw, often the most important is what is common. So do not do it that way. Do not say, ‘What is my specificity?’, but what is the centre.

To know our charism, we must know *where* to look. We are searching for a charism – a gift of God – and God gives things in history, to concrete people; God intervenes, He breaks into a life when He gives a charism. But how do we know what God is giving? Well, we have to look back at the history. What happened? At some point in my life, the life of our community, the life of our order? And the concrete people who receive the gifts – the founder or the founders or the founding group, and then all those who deepened it and carried it out through history. Which means, the concrete consequence is not to start scratching our heads and say ‘Okay what is the concept?’ but reading the history or better, the story, reading the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius – because that is where all his spiritual experience is concentrated – reading the spiritual writings of Teresa of Avila or John of the Cross. Not looking at the rules, not thinking in terms of one concept but ‘What did God do? How did He do it? And with whom did He do it?’ That is where to look for it.

Now, the next question is: *what* to look for? Follow the different dimensions of the triangle - this is what we should look for. Just what is our spirituality? What is the correct way of relating prayer and action? (Correct for us, not in general.) What is our way of living community life? What is our mission? And as far as spirituality is concerned what counts is experiencing it again. One of the ways the Jesuits were really rejuvenated in the second third of the twentieth century was the fact that a few young Jesuits – like the Rahner brothers or Balthasar and others – had a very strong

experience doing the Spiritual Exercises. They did not just try to understand them, they had a punch in the face, because when you are speaking about spirituality, what are you trying to go back to except experience, to the founding experience? And I do not know what has been done in the Church of England, but in the Roman Catholic Church we have had experiments in the past 20-30 years of congregations or orders trying to discover their charism, and what did they do? What they did was spend a week praying together, reading the Bible together and trying to find what aspect of Christ's life or of the mysteries of Christ or what verse gave them the most nourishment and life and experience of why they entered the religious life. So once again, concepts are absolutely essential but here it is about reliving the founding experience once again.

An example for all three: spirituality, a balance between prayer and action, and community. A community of Poor Clare Sisters in Cormontreuil near Reims in France changed monasteries, from a huge, very, very dark monastery with small windows, to a new place with a lot of light, which does change things. But especially they took a lot of time to rewrite the customary. And how did they rewrite the customary? It was very interesting because they took a few hours every week for a community meeting for two years and every sister could say what she had to say, from the youngest to the oldest, the least educated to the most educated. And every Monday evening they had an evening of – they called it 'forgiveness', which is that at the end of Vespers they would stop and say, 'Okay, go speak with every person you have a problem with right now. Ask for forgiveness. If you want to you can even do it in front of the community.' And this way, what happened to this community is, first of all, they chose poverty in a much more radical sense than before, which is back to their charism. 90% of their livelihood is from donations and they also have a small garden but what is really interesting – and I think this is really part of poverty – is that 90% of their livelihood is from donations but they share a lot, they give out a lot. That is real poverty – receiving, but not saying, 'Oh, we are poor, we receive everything so we do not share'. And they told me, the more they shared, the more they received. And the other thing is they have kept these community meetings, not three hours, but every Monday they have this moment of forgiveness, and every Thursday they have a community meeting where any sister can speak. It is really a beautiful community. It is not growing in numbers – they have not had a novice in four years – but there is huge outreach because so many people are coming and they have founded in Africa two new communities, but since Poor Clare Sisters communities are very independent they are other communities.

### **3. Renewing your charism**

So how can we renew our charism? Because so far the idea was more, 'How to rediscover the original charism; fan the

flames.' But, as I said at first, you have to put new wood. And to put new wood you have to adapt. You have to change. I would like to say four things. First of all: it has to be faithful creativity. For example, if you were founded for hospital work, do not try to become contemplative. Or if you were founded for schools, if you do not keep schools because often states have taken over this part of religious activities, go into education, try to stay faithful to some of the original idea.

The second aspect is: collaboration and unity. First of all, sharing among leaders. This – especially for the newer movements – is something that has really helped us in France for example: all the leaders of the new communities, new movements gather twice a year to share and pray for a long weekend. Jean Vanier is the one who initiated this and he has the authority to do it. What was really interesting was the two rules are that, first of all, we share and pray; and the second thing, the most important is we say what is not going well in our community. Usually, our tendency is to want to convince others – not that everything is going well because we know it is not – but convince others that things are going well. But he says, you say what is not going well. The second aspect is: common projects. For example, Archbishop Justin spoke this morning about philosophical training for ordinands, and Chemin Neuf is actually working with the Jesuits on this because they have a much longer, richer tradition than we do and we add the importance of a more intense community life. These common projects are, I think, the future of religious life.

And also sometimes inter-community life – which means communities that are old and new communities living together, or older communities living together or newer communities living together – often with a project in mind. The Sisters of St Andrew – maybe some of you know them – have really been rejuvenated by the fact that Brother Roger asked them to come and set up a small community in Taizé. At first, the idea was simply to help the brothers in welcoming the young people, serving food, a bit of accompaniment, especially for the girls who would be coming there – the brothers taking more care of the boys, or young men. But actually what happened is that they both helped each other enormously. The brothers say that they learned a lot about accompaniment and Spiritual Exercises through the presence of the St Andrews Sisters who are of Ignatian spirituality and of course for the St Andrews Sisters it is fantastic to have thousands and thousands of young people passing by all the time. For them it has really been a great experience.

Then there is unions – are you trying this in the Anglican Church or not? Fusing communities – some that work and some that do not work? We have been trying in the past 30 years to do this in the Roman Catholic Church. It is difficult to say if this has been successful.

We have also done it in the past (continued on page 34)

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– 200 years ago, 400 years ago. Very often there are moments in which a Pope or someone decides that there are just too many orders around and that some are much too small to be viable and so we regroup and fuse and all that. Often it is more a bit of damage control in the good sense of the word than renewal. You sometimes really need it for some older communities that are really disappearing but it rarely leads to real growth.

Another aspect of collaboration is to handle the situation by passing the baton to others. Sometimes you really have to accept, I think, that your community is not going to live. I think we have to say it and not wait until the last moment to see it because when you wait until the last moment you do not have the strength and energy and creativity to know really what to do about it.

And sometimes it is good just to say: well we are going to pass on our monastery, our house to another order or to a newer order – sometimes living with them, the older community, knowing it is dying out and the newer community helping them go to the end of their life basically, and sometimes there are absolutely beautiful things that happen. There is a Benedictine Abbey in the Netherlands that gave their monastery to a new movement, a new community, and they moved to another place which is a nursing home where there were other religious communities and the beautiful thing that happened is that this was for five years, and then after five years they said, ‘Well this new community – we are happy about what they are doing – it is a good thing. They are really making the monastery thrive so we are going to give them the monastery’ because they were just lending it. But they realised that according to the law in the Netherlands, when you give something to a group, they have to pay something like five or ten per cent of taxes to the state and this was something like 250,000 euros. Except if you give not only the house but you entrust all your belongings – which is all the money and so on – to the one who receives the donation. So they gave 2.5 million Euros plus the monastery to this community. Which means that the community is now taking care of the Benedictines and so they are giving the money back concretely. This is the gospel; this is the Kingdom of God on earth. And I have had a beautiful experience personally because I was there – this is a Clare Sister monastery in Italy, and it is just to say that God’s logic is not ours. What happened is that they decided they also had to give their monastery to a new community which was Chemin Neuf, and we helped them start a new monastery elsewhere. I am not saying it always happens this way, but as soon as they signed the act of donation, novices started entering. This is not automatic! My reading of it is simply, when you make a great leap of faith, you are really living religious life to the end and something happens. You do not know what happens. I do not think that the Benedictines in the Netherlands

will start again – they are actually really decided not to in a certain way. But the Sisters in Trevi are really starting again in this new place which is even more adapted for them and something has happened. Something you cannot plan, cannot decide on and so on.

The third aspect that one could reflect on in order to put new wood into the fire we have fanned into flames again is networking and integrating. Which means going outside of our boundaries, lay people, men and women together. But I think you are more advanced in the Church of England than we are in the Roman Catholic Church. Maybe I am mistaken, but for these aspects I would say I probably do not have very much to teach. I am not teaching you now I am sharing! Collaboration with other realities like parish life. This is not good for every community. But every parish practically would benefit from having a small or a large religious community in its midst, either as those who are the centre of the parish or inside the parish but as an example, as a place where you can go and pray with people. Because mission burnout is the main problem for lay people in the Church, at least in the Catholic Church – why? I do not know if it is the same thing for you, but it is always the same people who are in charge of everything and doing everything in every parish. But what they do not have that religious have, they do not have the spiritual and community nourishment, and they really need it.

Finally, the fourth aspect is acknowledging a new continent, which is the youth. There will not be any renewal of religious life without the youth. The difficulty is not, first of all, outreach, but the first thing is to acknowledge that it is really another culture. There is a cultural gap with the young that is bigger sometimes than with another continent, than with Africans or Asians. And when you say a culture gap – I do not know how many of us have lived outside our country or continent – when you say there is a culture gap, what that means is that you will not understand. There is a moment in which you have to admit you do not understand, but we are brothers and sisters in Christ. We have to know this with the young people because we think, ‘Yes we are from the UK, we are from the same culture.’ No, and if they are doing something differently it is not because they are uneducated, it is not because they do not know how to do things.

How to reach out to them? First of all, be ready to change. I remember a sister who entered our community because she wanted to be member of another kind of traditional women’s order and after a week she was just so saturated by the fact that the Mother Superior – the only thing she ever had to tell her was, ‘You put the fork on the left side of the plate and the knife on the right side. It has always been done this way.’ And this ‘It has always been done this way’ is something we really have to be prepared to change.

The second thing is: be relational. I think that one of the

cultural gaps is that emotions are important. And it is not just 'Oh, they are so emotional' it is 'They are so emotional, it is beautiful'. That is really a part of a human being. But of course they do not have reserve and monastic reserve. So you have to be relational in the sense that community life with a lot of time for sharing is part of your charism. Keep one-to-one contact. Do not only say, 'Please come back', call. With a young person, it is much better if you call, or if you write an e-mail... This is very simple. And it is the same thing as exercising authority. Two of the main cultural gaps are emotions and relational aspects, and relation to authority. They do not have the same relation to authority, at least in the Roman Catholic Church. I do not know how authority is lived out in the Church of England. Older people like me are very surprised, when I tell the young that come in, 'You cannot do this' and they say 'Why?' But they are immersed in a culture where you are supposed to try to understand the reasons and you have access to so much information. I teach philosophy at the Jesuit University in Paris. When I used to say, 'Hegel says this' people would just write it down. Now they are with their computer during the class and they say, 'But actually it is not really that way'. Because they have just looked it up in the encyclopaedia. So do not be afraid of a new kind of authority which is with dialogue and with personal relations.

Third thing: do not be wishy-washy. The Charlie Brown syndrome. Often our reaction will be, 'Okay, we are going to adapt' but adapting means 'Okay do what you want, you tell us what we have to do', and so on. Young people need even more radical things than what we are usually ready to suggest. Something that is very radical. Basically the idea is there is a loss of image of religious life right now – that is one of the difficulties I think, one of the crisis problems is that fifty or a hundred years ago being a religious was an adventure, it was something that people looked up to, something that impressed. But there is a potential because so many young people who would consider a classical religious as almost mad, at least bizarre, still dream without really knowing it about religious life. Take for instance the figure of Jedi Knights. Jedi Knights have a real aura. It is a kind of monk in the science fiction film Star Wars that has super powers because they have a very deep concentration and they tap on the source of cosmic energy. But this actually really should be the Holy Spirit, which we are doing. We are more than Jedi Knights! We meditate and pray and tap into the Holy Spirit, which is much more than cosmic energy. Actually Jedi Knights have habits that could look a bit like traditional religious but they also have laser sabres, which we do not have! Anyhow, we have to be able to present religious life as an adventure, to make them think this a fantastic adventure I am entering into.

And the last thing is, do not drown out the younger members. This is a very delicate thing and it is more something

to reflect on than an advice. I know that some orders are experimenting with the fact of trying to regroup most of the young members in the same communities so that they are not alone with twenty 70-90 year olds. But of course that is difficult – it is something that you have to do with caution, but Carmelites are doing this now in different countries. Thank you very much for your attention.

#### (Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Peta Dunstan, "Some thoughts on Identity in Anglican Religious Life", 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Marie Tillard, *Devant Dieu et pour le monde*, Cerf, Paris, 1974.

## Endnote: Thank You, Caroline Benjamin, For All Your Years of Work

*John Brockmann*

If there is a TSSFer who better illustrates how one can be both a follower of Francis, a professor, and a Texan, I have yet to meet a better one than Caroline! She would bring me Prickly Pear Cactus Jelly when she came to Chapter up north as well as stories about checking her boots for scorpions before she put them on. If someone hurt his or her leg or arm she could rattle off all the Latin names for the bone or muscle.

For many, many years, Caroline was our Provincial Secretary coordinating all the comings and goings of Chapter members on Long Island, and for creating that modern-day *Hot News* that she kept insisting had nothing to do with hot flashes.

After we exhausted all the terms of service we could ask of her, she seemed to quietly settle on her Bandera Texas ranch visiting with her sons.

Yet in his hour of need when Paddy Kennington resigned as Formation Director, Ken Norian as Minister Provincial, turned again to Caroline asking her to take on a whole new task! She has handled her job as Formation Director for the last three years ably assisted by Terry Rogers and Bill Breedlove. Yet now they have all handed their work to Liz Peacock (see page 3).

Thus, once again, Caroline checks her boots for scorpions, mounts her horse, and rides joyfully into God's Texas sunset.

*Caroline at Chapter 2014*



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