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HUG A LEPER

"Have you hugged your kid today?" bumper stickers from the Kentucky Department of Human Resources query us. Deviants or aspiring humorists have twisted it to, "Have you slugged your kid today?", while my neighbor has come up with, "Have you hugged your dad today?". I'm fantasizing about, "Have you hugged a leper today?"

"Hug a leper;" I borrowed the slogan from my parish priest. It's an absurd thought, isn't it? In a world where parents need to be reminded to hug their own children, what would make a person hug a leper? I think the answer is: joy. Francis' first leper turned into Christ; so each affectionate encounter with another person (it need not be a literal hug, of course) shows us the Christ in that person, and the best in us. Even if the contact itself does not satisfy - we all have days when all we do seems to turn out poorly - there remains the joy of trying to serve God and to follow the example of St. Francis.

There seems to be no question that Francis was absurd. On more than one occasion he stripped off all his clothes in public. He often ate scraps of food he begged, when other food was available. Before he died he was judged incompetent to govern the huge order that had encircled his nucleus. The name "Franciscan" may today be more readily associated with fine china or birdbaths than with the ideals its founder embraced. But Francis followed the absurdity of a God who, when He became man, was born in a stable, chose as followers fishermen, tax collectors, and women of questionable reputation, and who was crucified for His trouble.

Joy comes with the resurrection. In a sense the resurrection comes with each little kindness in every moment of every day, whether to man or to beast. Joy comes from finding Christ in crossed twigs, sunrises, or snow crystals - or unlovely neighbors. Joy comes from sharing as much as each of us is able in Christ's suffering, patience, humility, and love. Joy is the absurdity that in losing all gains all. Joy comes from hugging lepers.

- Peg Shull

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ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY IN THE ATTIC

A few copies of the 1926 "Princess, Pauper and Penitent", written by one of our Poor Clare Sisters about the great tertiary, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, have been discovered in the attic at Maryhill.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Poor Clares on Long Island, their furnace has broken down. The first 200 (approximately how many copies remain) generous friends contributing \$10.00 or more, will receive a copy of this scarce book. This is a numbered and limited edition, in mint condition.

God bless you for your help. Respond to: Memorial Book Fund, The Poor Clares, Maryhill, Box 342, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766.

18 April 1978

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

After consultation with the First Order Brothers' Chapter Council and the Third Order Guardian, I am writing to all brothers and sisters of our three Orders to our Associates, and to all friends of the Society of St. Francis.

Where does the Society of St. Francis stand on the various issues which have so exercised the Episcopal Church in recent years and especially since the 1976 General Convention? From letters I have received, it is clear that many misapprehensions exist; at various times, people have supposed that we have declared both for and against just about every issue.

In reality our only declaration has been one of continuing loyalty to Jesus Christ in the pattern of the discipleship of St. Francis, within the canonical church order and discipline of the Episcopal Church (and, worldwide, of the Anglican Communion). Within the membership of our three Orders we reflect the whole spectrum of views to be found among the members of the Episcopal Church today on such issues as forms of worship, ordination, and human sexuality. We acknowledge the reality of the decisions made at Minneapolis by the due process of the Episcopal Church, and recognize the appropriateness of each of our members continuing to give expression to his or her understanding and future course of action within that process. We also acknowledge for our members the same prerogative of conscience as has been claimed by the House of Bishops for the whole membership of the Episcopal Church.

Sadly, some Episcopalians have felt unable to give adequate expression to their conscientious differences within the order and discipline of the Episcopal Church, and so have separated themselves from our Communion in setting up alternatives, such as the Anglican Church of North America. A very few former tertiaries, and other friends of our Society, have taken this step.

We grieve deeply at this separation and acknowledge the pain that is felt on both sides. We want to do all we can to keep open the door to ultimate reconciliation. But we cannot in conscience give any formal recognition to that ecclesiastical body, and those who would establish within it the Franciscan life would be doing so in what is effectively another denomination.

I ask you to join us in continuing prayer for the healing of wounds and the restoration of unity.

Your brother,

Luke, S.S.F.

Minister Provincial, American Province

EDITORIAL CHANGE

The job of editing and publishing the Third Order Newsletter is changing hands. New Editor is Peg Shull. Please send Peg news, essays, notes of joy, humor or absurdity you think might interest fellow Franciscans. We hope soon to include line cuts as well. Address these to: Ms. Margaret Wyse Shull, TSF (that gives her a clue that it's Third Order business), 242 Glendover Road, Lexington, KY 40503.

FELLOWSHIPS - a report based on information sheets filled in by Convenors or their representatives.

Does your Fellowship comprise 3 professed members, 3 or 4 novices, and 2 postulants? If so, you are a typical Fellowship in the American Province of the Third Order. So often, Convenors comment to me, "Of course, remember that we are a small group." Be assured that small groups are normal and that size need not hamper a fruitful community life. The usual range in our fellowships is 6 to 10 members.

Most fellowships meet 8 to 10 times a year, with about half the meetings for tertiaries only. Four fellowships sponsor retreats; seven sponsor quiet days. Retreats and quiet days are usually open to all interested Episcopalians. Thus far, only the Chicago area (where the Fellowship is quite large) has reported having "tertiaries only" retreats.

For those of you in small fellowships who may be wondering why "tertiaries only" meetings are ever necessary, I can cite the experience of the Arizona group. In six years we have grown from three members to ten. Our open meetings have become a little unwieldy; we may have eight or ten members present, plus almost as many visitors. Delighted as we are to be attracting so many inquirers, we have discovered that being "on display" for visitors is not the way to build community life. We have resorted to a "closed" meeting once every three months (usually an overnight meeting from 6:00 p.m. Friday to 10:00 a.m. or noon on Saturday). At our closed meetings our program is informal, our business limited. We are there primarily to pray much together, to discuss the things we have in common as Franciscans, to get to know each other, to have an opportunity to share joys and sorrows, to be supported or to offer support. Our community life has been much strengthened by these opportunities to be together as a Franciscan family. Our family cohesiveness (despite great diversity) is one of the attractions we have for other seekers.

The majority of fellowships use Franciscan material of one sort or another as a basis of study and discussion. Many use material that I supply. Others use The Way of St. Francis, Peter Funk's letters, or communications from the Chaplain or Guardian. In Arizona we have studied and discussed some of the Franciscan saints. The possibilities for good discussion material are endless. I think, whatever we use, we need to be sure that we are relating it to our vocation as Franciscans. Only thus can our life as a Franciscan community be served.

With small groups being the norm, most fellowships do not undertake service projects. A small fellowship is a focus for the strengthening of individuals who find means of service in their individual parishes or communities. Some of the larger fellowships have projects that represent Franciscan "outreach", and I shall ask them to report on those projects later.

Almost without exception, Fellowships are conscientious about contacting absent members and bringing some community support to shut-ins.

Few Fellowships include any Associates. Since the call to a community is one of the ways in which a tertiary is distinct from an associate, this result is hardly surprising.

We have a number of Fellowships willing to "adopt" isolated tertiaries - that is: to try to make a tertiary who is not in a Fellowship part of their own community of concern. Now we have another problem:

WILL ISOLATED TERTIARIES INTERESTED IN BEING ADOPTED,
PLEASE CONTACT ME. I WILL ARRANGE IT.

Fellowships constitute the local family of the Third Order. They represent

FELLOWSHIPS (continued)

our effort to build a community life in the Third Order. Only by learning to love our brothers and sisters in the Order can we learn to bring love to our more distant brothers and sisters. We need to be thankful for the Fellowships, to pray for them, and to support them with our time and our talents.

- Marie L. Webner, TSF, Fellowship Coordinator

FOOT-WASHING AND SOCIAL ACTION

A tertiary has expressed distress at Christina Clancy's statement in the January 1978 Newsletter: "...the Church is strongest, not when involved in social or political controversies, but when ministering to the needs of God's suffering and oppressed children, not disdaining to wash the feet of the poor and to be the servant of all."

The tertiary asks, "How are we to best serve the poor and oppressed if we do not work to change the very social and political systems that keep them in their oppression? ... It seems to me that the work of the Church at its best includes working for constructive political and social change, which of necessity involves it in controversies, which in turn are part of the growth process, often painful, of any changing, viable institution or individual, and without which we stagnate and die. Are we not called in the Society of St. Francis, and therefore the Church, to both foot-washing, and political and social action?"

NEW BURSAR

Miss Jane Ellen Traugott has been appointed as the new Bursar of the Third Order, under the direction of John Scott, who is Treasurer (as well as President of the Corporation). Although her address is listed in the directory, she hopes to move within 1978. Because of this, it is asked that contributions to the Third Order be sent to Helen Webb, Secretary, who will forward them to Jane Ellen.

Checks, made out to - Third Order, Society of St. Francis - should be sent to:

The Bursar
c/o Mrs. Edward Webb, 4008 Buckingham Road, Baltimore, MD 21207

We thank Richard Hohlfield for his work as Bursar. He has moved from Philadelphia, and is trying his vocation in the First Order, at Little Portion.

CONVOCATION

April 18-22, 1979

Put the dates in your book, and start planning to attend the general Third Order Convocation, to be held in Miami, Florida. At the June meeting of the Standing Committee, it was suggested that we plan a schedule of Wednesday to Sunday, with the first and last days for arrivals and departures, and the middle three days for program. The location would be the Dominican House, not far from the airport.

LOCAL NEWSLETTER

"The Franciscan Flyer" continues to be published about once a month by the San Francisco area with news of all three Orders, events, poetry, meditations, etc. If you would like a subscription, write to Mrs. James (Joyce) Hacke, 330-C Ravenswood Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025, including a contribution to cover costs.

PERSONAL NOTES

Congratulations and welcome to recently professed tertiaries:

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| Jan. 31 | Mary Cannon | April 8 | Bob Whitaker |
| Feb. 9 | Adrienne Dillon | May 13 | Jane Ellen Traugott |
| Feb. 25 | Patricia Ann Drake | May 21 | Bea Evans |

We also rejoice with Emily Gardiner Neal, who has been ordained to the Diaconate.

The Rev. Joseph P. Miller, of Torrance, California has recently "come back". He was professed in 1960, then inactive for a time, but was reinstated this spring by our Chaplain and Chapter.

Two tertiaries are returning to the States from England in July. They are the Rev. Arnold Klukas and his wife, Carol. Arnie was in England to do his Ph.D. in Church Architecture. Carol, a biochemist, will be working with White Blood Cells at the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts. Brother Edward, Third Order Chaplain in England, wrote an enthusiastic letter of recommendation.

For tertiaries who may be traveling in Germany, Joan Knipple's mailing address there is: Frau Johann Knippel, Dresdenerstrs 38, 6832 Hockenheim, Deutschland. She expects to be there for a couple of years yet. Check the Directory for other United States tertiaries who are abroad. Fr. John Walker, in the Philippines is hoping to be restationed here on the West Coast this fall.

A Third Order novice is interested in living in "a specifically Third Order community", and would like to hear from others who have thoughts in that direction. Send ideas to Stephen Gross, 345 Meyran Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15215.

After action by both the Third Order and First Order Chapters, Brother Juniper, Ob.SSF, has been relieved from vows in the Society of St. Francis. He has been listed in the Third Order Directory for many years, and is known to many of us; we will miss him. (Father Liebler is still with us.)

We express sympathy to Robert Walden, whose wife died recently. We also learned of the deaths of Dorothy Stirling on January 21; and Phyllis Lee on April 29. There was a very nice article in "The Benedictus" about Phyllis, who served as directress for many years of the St. Benedict's Guild, saying it was mostly through her efforts that the fledgling organization became an active force in sponsoring retreats and quiet days, and developing an interest in the Religious Orders and their associates.

More cheerful news is a reprint from the April 25th Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, with the headline: "He's outrun Cancer; so what's a mazathon?" This is about our own Peter Funk, who ran the full distance in the Penn Relays Marathon on April 24th. He told the reporter, "At my age (57), having had cancer and not expected to live...I think it's encouraging to people to know you can do it. ..I usually run seven, eight miles a day at eight-minute pace. Today, I wanted to run nine-minute pace. I wanted to beat four hours." Peter completed the standard marathon distance of 26+ miles - in 3 hours 48 minutes!

Christ House announces a record album of religious folk music, "Chanticleer Chants to the Sun," which includes songs from the film, "Brother Sun, Sister Moon". For further information contact - Chanticleer, Christ House, Lafayette, NJ 07848.

NOTE:-TSF Retreat at Bishop's Ranch, October 6-7-8. Contact Ron Smith for details.
-Sat. June 17 - all available tertiaries meet at the Little Portion Festival.