

Approved as corrected, January 22, 2019

THIRD ORDER, SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS, PROVINCE OF THE AMERICAS

Minutes of the Conference Call of December 11, 2018

(9:30 pm Newfoundland, 11 pm Brazil, 9 pm Atlantic, 8 pm Eastern, 7 pm Central, 6 pm Mountain, 5 pm Pacific).

Members on the Call, Tracey Fiore Carroll, Janet Fedders, Celso Franco De Oliveira, Phil Geliebter, Jeff Gollither, Verleah Kosloske, Josiah (Jotie) Noel, Liz Peacock, Millicent Ramcharan, Alison Saichek, Rick Simpson, Peter Stube and Masud Syedullah.

Excused: Joan Verret

Janet Fedders, Minister Provincial, greeted everyone on the call while members gathered. There being a quorum, she called the meeting to order at 8:01 pm EST.

Janet opened the meeting with prayer.

1. Approval of minutes from November Zoom Meeting (these will then be posted on the website). Approved by CONSENSUS
2. Companions: Update on their progress. Do we want the Companions listed in the back of our Directory? This would be the 2020 directory obviously, as this year's Directory is all but complete. Thirteen people are working on Companions. The funds from the Companions account were sent to Bursar. Nancy Dobson is to be the director of Companions with several assistants. The only other question we have is whether to put their names in the directory which will make the 2020 Directory bigger and more expensive. Also Brazil is asking for copies of directory in order to pray for us so the cost of the directory will be increasing. There are fewer than 100 Companions, but there have been four new Companions since we started. We would put Companions in a section in the back of the directory. Rick suggests we wait until 2020 for our directory, but we share the current Companions directory with conveners so they can reach out to Companions. CONSENSUS
4. Moving monthly Zoom meetings to the third Tuesday of the month? One of our members has a new conflict with second Tuesdays. Two have standing meetings on third Tuesday. What about 4th Tuesday? The 4th Tuesday would generally okay with the exception of those months that we take a break. Meeting on the 4th Tuesday of the month will start on January 22. CONSENSUS The time will be the same unless we hear from Dom Celso that this time needs to be adjusted.
5. Results of comment on the Incarcerateds Discussion and Proposal for moving forward The proposal is as follows:

Proposed:

Spreading Franciscan love and harmony motivates our actions as members of The Third Order, Society of St. Francis. Forgiveness and reconciliation are part of our Gospel command. Where our brothers and sisters in prison are concerned, we have a community (called The Perugian Community) to serve those among them who are looking to St. Francis and wanting more. While it is not possible to admit a person to formation in the Third Order who is currently incarcerated, any such person who makes inquiry to us will be directed to the Perugian Fellowship in order to foster their connection with Francis.

- A. Acknowledge and use the Perugian Community as a way to share our Franciscan expression with those in prison. Give the newsletter the support it needs to be a viable presence.
- B. Organize a ministry sub-group of tertiaries who desire to work with the incarcerated. (Writing letters, sharing in the newsletter, telephoning, advising in developing a Rule of Life and living it)
- C. Adapt the ideas from the Companions to this group:
 - *Prisoners might be invited to write a Rule of Life
 - *Prisoners would be coached in developing and living by a Rule of Life
 - *TSSF would minister to individuals right where they are, even if they never move into any other kind of affiliation with TSSF.
- D. Appoint a designated area chaplain for this ministry.
- E. The Fellowship Coordinator has and will continue to fold the Perugian Community into the group of Fellowships
- F. Prepare for the eventuality of a tri-lingual Perugian Community.

All got a copy of the proposal which was a result of comments being offered by all. Masud thinks more should be said about Perugian Community. Peter says it is slightly in transition because Steve Skinner has moved to Virgin Islands. Presently it works by sending letters to each other because the prisoners cannot communicate otherwise. Currently there are four tertiaries in addition to Steve plus only three inmates at the present time. Janet said we felt that after consulting other Ministers Provincial that great caution should be taken with taking incarcerated persons into formation. Godfrey Fryar recommended against taking incarcerated persons into formation. We suggest that they write a rule if they feel called, sort of like the Companions.

Masud says he thinks it is a good idea. Rick thinks it solves a lot of problems. At Chapter Rick talked to one of our visitors who said there are lots of ways to embrace a Franciscan way of life other than our formation process. Phil thinks it is a good way to involve them in Franciscan community. Jotie thinks we should move forward with this. We have good intentions.

At this point Dom Celso joined us and was warmly welcomed. We introduced ourselves. Dom Celso spoke with John Sapiuha who does pastoral care with foreign incarcerated there in Brazil. He would like to be in touch with Perugian Community. Plan agreed to by CONSENSUS minus one who will not stand in the way. Peter Stube will have oversight.

Dom Celso spoke to us about Brazil as follows:

The fraternities of the diocese of Rio de Janeiro are currently present in the States of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro. We hope in the near future we will reach the Holy Spirit State.

In Minas we have 3 professed, 2 Novices and 5 Postulants. Associates are 3 -- all young people between 14 and 25 years old.

In the region of the State of Rio we have 7 professed, 1 novice and 1 postulant, with possibility of expansion for the mountain region.

We have some challenges for next year

1- To establish periodic celebrations and training schedules;

2- to define training program for beginners (postulants and novices) and permanent formation for those who are professed.

3- Resources to accompany and train the fraternities in their localities with program to encourage the life of prayer, study and social commitment among the most socially excluded.

4 - Better use of parish spaces for the dissemination and implementation of new fraternities, especially with the youth.

In Rio de Janeiro the Rev Antonio Terto, is mobilizing the youth of his parish for the first Franciscan retreat next year with our support.

During our Retreat in September 2017, it was decided in a missionary gesture to hold the retreat in 2018 in the Northeast Region of Brazil in order to welcome and bring the brothers and sisters of that region closer together. There were several moments of prayer and meditation, both group and individual, that enabled us to reflect on our true Christian and Franciscan vocation on the theme: Return to origins. This theme was included in the title of the retreat: "Our Convent is the World". The theme provoked us to reflect on the current challenges of the Order. We continue to reorganize our fraternal provincial life with a better distribution of functions in order to collaborate with the provincial minister and better agility in accompanying the fraternity in their regions. One of the highlights of our retreat this year was the presence of Reverendo Armando Delgado from Cuba. My wife and I had the privilege of hosting him with us. We know, however, that Brazil-Cuba relationship from now on with the new Government will not be easy.

Our next Provincial Retreat is scheduled for September next year, in Porto Alegre, South of Brazil.

We would be glad if we could have someone from this chapter with us at that occasion. Who knows?

In addition of that, the Rev Luiz Sirtoli our provincial minister, reports:

- We are in the preparation of the 13th Lesson of the Training Notes.

- A team, led by Barbara Bennett, is arranging the update of the Devotional Companion.

- We will continue to cover the training of the Cuban TSSF, as long as it is necessary.

- We have good expectations to increase the number of members of TSSF-Brazil

Janet Fedders thanked Dom Celso and told him that she hopes to attend the 2019 Brazilian retreat.

6. Is it Time? This is a follow-up to the November discussion regarding saying something, establishing a protocol, given the political climate and varied nations represented in the Province of the Americas. Peter said that we are about a month away from having recommendations. Janet put together flags for Province of the Americas. There will be flags for all of the TSSF world at the ministers meeting in August 2019.

7. Bursar's report Alison discovered that Urban Partnership Bank gives affordable loans to distressed neighborhoods in Chicago and Detroit and recommends that we leave our funds there rather than moving to the Bank of America account. It was felt that it was not necessary to rescind the permission she had been given to close that account. Alison received and deposited the Companions funds and set up another restricted account in QuickBooks for the funds. We are getting lots of end-of-year donations. Alison is trying to get the tax letters ready to go as soon as possible in 2019. She gets inquiries asking "How am I doing on my pledge?" She will do a 2019 Excel spreadsheet so that she can send quarterly statements to track it for those who want that information.

7. No Plan B (Introducing Jeff Gollither in his new role as Assisting Minister Provincial for Sacred Ecology); a preliminary timeline for moving this forward is as follows:

Schedule for NO PLAN B

December 2018

Peter Stube has said he is ready to introduce this with Conveners in a Zoom with Jeff Gollither (hereinafter JG) when we are all set.

Jim Hagen likes what we are doing (in terms of Hispanic ministry); I contacted Barbara Bennet too and have yet to hear re Brazil

Get the logo where it needs to be, and in formats that JG and I can readily use.

12.7 Include NO PLAN B in the agenda being sent out for the Zoom meeting

12.11. Chapter Zoom meeting: introduce Jeff. Give them our Draft thinking and a timeline.

Use the rest of December for (1) JG to write a reflection that will be disseminated to the brothers and sisters (tri-lingual) and (2) both JG and JF to unpack the Draft of implementing our plans. Bring the News Service in on this.

January 2019

Announce to the Province Jeff's appointment and follow up with his reflection. Begin to implement Plan B as determined in December.

The No Plan B document is as follows:

NO PLAN B

Ubuntu: I am me because of we.

1. Individual Level. Tertiaries are called to:

Discern out of contemplation; go deep on this one in fasting and prayer

Educate themselves with materials sent to their fellowships
Make a list of recommended reading
Watch Jeff Gollhofer's video on our website
Talk to and engage those affected: farmers, energy producers
Write and call representatives in Congress
Join the Union of Concerned Scientists and get their blogs.

2. Fellowship Level.

Be truly open to one another, as Francis would, and move deeply into this together
Identify the "vulnerable" people, as brothers and sisters have done in the Province of Asia and the Pacific
Invite the involvement of young people as catalysts and honest voices
Watch Jeff Gollhofer's video on our website as a group
Ask local churches to use the "Season of Creation" materials from ACEN; reference: Masud ibn Syedullah
Identify a fellowship point person to receive bulletins and articles for dissemination
Encourage involvement with the Union of Concerned Scientists

3. Provincial Level.

Speak to Michael Curry (Masud, Bishop David)
Bishop-level involvement starting with our own Bishop David
Mark MacDonald (Bishop for Indigenous Peoples in Canada) input
Send out info to fellowships for motivating their actions and keeping them current; speaking points
Find access to all of the Anglican Provinces with connections to TSSF to bring them the "Franciscan Way" as well, somehow
Use the TSSF Province of the Americas News Service to publicize and alert

4. Order Level.

Global coordination
Some action involving all Franciscan Bishops, starting with our own Bishop David
Cooperation with Franciscans International

Jeff said he is very happy that we are doing this. In the next months and years this whole climate and environmental issue is going to be a huge thing. We don't need to convert Franciscans but we need to express who we are and live out our Franciscan calling. We just need to be Franciscan in the world right now. It's so obvious it may be easy to miss, but it is important. Jeff encourages us all to talk about these things and act on these things in our own way. He would like to help us all find our voices. Fellowships will be crucial. He will talk to Peter about this. There is no one way; there are various forms of expression. People know that St. Francis had something to say about this. The way the world is organized right now we are not likely to hear St. Francis. We need to carve out a space where people can hear, see, and remember things that they probably already know. This is not a program, that sounds pretty gimmicky to Jeff. Janet said the fellowships will be seminal in developing where we are on this. She asked Jeff to work with Peter to feed the fellowships. Jeff will write a reflection as a catalyst after the first of the year. He doesn't want people to copy him. We don't want to "hire

someone to do it.” It’s an agreement that we all will start doing what needs to be done wherever we live and I can help. It will be different in Brazil or other parts of the province, for instance. From Jeff’s work in the Anglican Communion he has found that in some places they talk more in the language of Jesus movement– it’s not less spirit-filled, but the language is different. We have no time to waste. We are in deep trouble. Change must come about quickly. The question is “How bad will it be?” We need to look at what Francis and Jesus said. The time of Francis was different but similar – plague, the political system coming undone, economic inequality, and structures were not working well on behalf of the people. Jeff and Janet will be talking this month. We don’t want to make it rigid or hierarchical, but we do need to say what needs to be said. What would be helpful? Jeff asks about communication. Does TSSF have ability to communicate among itself globally? It would have to be social media, Facebook. We need to do something to make it easier for all of us to have a better idea of what our neighbors are doing and thinking. We do share our newsletters. Rick said maybe we need to have a digest of newsletters. Tracey asked whether we can communicate through ministers. Janet wrote about that in Franciscan Connection. What about a centralized website with all the newsletters. Jeff said the letter that the Minister General wrote was human and hopeful and from the heart. Janet said John Heberton is very invested in all this. We need a way to frame it so that there’s a focus, so that people can see what TSSF is doing. Jeff said that a young Swedish teenager in Stockholm yesterday said to world climate leaders that we have to change the rules, the rules aren’t working. A young Canadian First Person had told Jeff the same thing. Jeff says new movements are encouraging. The teenagers are clear-minded and courageous. Janet says there is more to come on this. Jeff and Masud will be meeting, too.

Janet asked Masud how to let people know what you are doing during Advent. He will upload it to the Dropbox, TSSF Chapter Notes, Chapter 2018.

8. New Business Alison said she is now the sole convener for the New Umbrian Fellowship. Linda Wood has moved to Salem, OR. The New Umbrian retreat invited an OEF member and will continue to invite OEF to their meetings. Peter said we are continuing to work on lifelong formation for IPTOC. Ideas that work in our province don’t necessarily work in others. We hope to have more ready for the Ministers before they meet.

Rick closed with prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 EST

Action Items – Janet will arrange for November minutes to be posted on the TSSF website. The 2020 TSSF Directory will include a Companions Directory in the back. In the meantime the Companions Directory will be distributed to all conveners so that they can reach out to Companions in their area. Monthly Zoom Chapter meetings will move to the fourth Tuesday of each month beginning January 22. The time will remain unchanged. The proposed plan for the role of incarcerated persons was accepted and will be implemented. The 2018 Norms will be edited to reflect the changed policy on incarcerated persons and Janet will have it posted on the website. Peter Stube and Jeff Gollither will introduce No Plan B to Conveners. Work on No Plan B will continue. Global TSSF communication will be explored. Masud will upload his

Advent materials to Dropbox/TSSF Chapter Notes/Chapter 2018. Team working on the Is it Time? Protocol will continue with the goal of having a proposal for January 22, 2019 Chapter meeting.