



The Franciscan Connection

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



Spring 2019



From The Minister Provincial

From The Chaplain

The Joy Of Lent Is Franciscan

In Lent we are called to open our hearts and minds to God through prayer, fasting, works of mercy and study. But have you ever thought of Lent as a Franciscan Season? Francis and his Brothers were known as the Penitents of Assisi. They took on Penitence as a way of life. It was their spiritual discipline and it was the framework upon which the flowers of their spiritual lives grew.

The Presence Of Jesus

Did you ever read any stories of Francis moping around? The only time you would find Francis in such a state was before his conversion. After he chose to Follow Jesus in his radical Gospel way, his life of Penance became the deep spiritual source of his joy. Francis could see the presence of God in everyone, so he was always in the presence of Jesus.

Inner Spiritual Joy!

Our Third Order Rule of Life calls us to a disciplined life of Penitence, not a life of moping around and feeling sorry for our sins. It beckons for living daily with open hearts and minds to the presence of God's love for us and all Creation. Certainly, there are times of contrition for our sins, but our days must always end in that deep inner spiritual joy that was the keynote of St Francis' life.

True Penance

I think St. Francis would have embraced this teaching from the Westminster Short Catechism (1646-7) which captures the spirit of the open heart of Penitence. Question: What is the chief end of humankind? Answer: Humankind's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. Glorify God, Enjoy God. Amen

*Richard Simpson, Provincial Chaplain, TSSF
Province of the Americas*

Ministry Or Ministries?

As some of you know, I have been traveling. I've been meeting tertiaries for the last two months mainly in the South. And when I travel I like to listen, as those tertiaries can attest. One thing I've heard belongs right here in *The Franciscan Connection*. I want to share it with you. As you know, this publication is about the ministries of the Order. And those of you who've been delightedly reading about all of our ministries can affirm the diversity and plenitude of these ministries. That's the point I'd like to underscore here.

What Do We Do?

The Third Order, Province of the Americas, does not have a single ministry. We don't ascribe to one mission, say, activism although of course, many of our members belong to activist groups. Often, when people ask about the Third Order, they ask, "Well, what do you DO?" implying that we have an overarching goal, or mission.

Mutual Encouragement

For those who may be looking on from the outside, or those who are just joining our ranks, please know that we brothers and sisters are devoted to each other and to supporting all of the ministries and passionate works for God, whatever they may be. What I see throughout the Order in my travels is not only the variety of ministries, but how brilliant they are and how they are growing with the support of each other.

Opportunities For Involvement

That doesn't mean, of course, that we don't have ministries ready to plug into. JPIC (Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation), for example, is accepting new members. We also have a very active Prayer Cells Ministry which currently has over one hundred

active prayer intercessors. And there are other established ministries ready for you to join, many of them represented in the pages of this newsletter. But for more information, don't wait for me to visit. Call!

*Janet Fedders, Minister Provincial, TSSF
Province of the Americas*



Fellowship Focus

Deepening Faith

As I have listened to conveners and Fellowships as we seek to engage the emerging vision for lifelong formation on the Fellowship level, I have heard many good things about our engagement with the primary resources of our Order, in particular the primary source of Scripture which forms us as it did Francis and Clare. Some of our Fellowships report deepening faith and revived energy as they study and contemplate Scripture together.

Trust The Holy Spirit

Some Fellowships find the engagement with Scripture through Abuntu or Lectio Divina difficult. And others have not attempted these studies. It may seem easier to engage Scripture through another author's eyes, and to do book studies about Francis and Clare rather than trusting that the Holy Spirit can open the Scripture to us for instruction, contemplation, and discernment that we might complete the missional action we are being given to do. I encourage all Fellowships to continue the good work of the Spirit in you and experiment with reflection on Scripture in whatever ways fit best for you.

Be Ready At All Times

For us to be effective in our missional action to the world for Francis and Christ it is essential that we know God's story, God's values, God's justice and mercy. With Israel in Deuteronomy Chapter six, we are to be so well prepared that we can tell of God's love to our children and grandchildren, the person we meet on the street or someone we care for in the homeless shelter. We, with Francis, should be ready always to see where structures and concern for the marginalized are in conflict with the purposes of God. There is no real shortcut to learning these things apart from immersion in the primary sources of our faith as well as in our faithful contemplation in the presence of God.



What Is The Holy Spirit Saying?

In our daily obedience, we Franciscans read major portions of the Scriptures, typically in various cycles. So in our daily devotion we make this story our own in the Daily Office. In our communal response to Scripture in Fellowships we seek to hear what the Spirit is saying to each of us today and to our Fellowship regarding what it means to live in community and to serve the common good through missional action.

Points To Ponder

1. The study and meditation on Scripture is a central part of Franciscan common life as noted in our obedience. This is true, I believe, because it is here we learn the "Gospel" that Francis wants us "to simply live." As you read the Franciscan Obedience this month, note just how saturated the Obedience is with Scripture. The Obedience gives us a clue as to how Franciscans contemplate Scripture.
2. One novice suggested that Scripture was no longer relevant because it came from a more static, concrete time. Far from being the product of a single age as might be implied in this, Scripture is a witness to human engagement with God over millennia; through years of slavery and rapid change and through rather short historical moments of stasis. Isaiah wrestles with new realities and ways of

knowing God in the midst of a time when Israel appears to be abandoned by God. The New Testament is written during a time of cataclysm in which the people of God must follow the Spirit in order to survive or go on to glory.

3. Every age has its hubris about how it is superior to what came before and every age has its inspiration that stands the test of time as worthy to lead us to God. God looks for contrite hearts that are willing to open ourselves to the ways the Spirit speaks to us today, ways described throughout the record of God's work with God's people.

4. These examples of faith over so long a time are decidedly important if we are to know how to serve in this moment. We are given clues about how to be with God in times of suffering and joy, betrayal and faithful friendships. We must know the Biblical story so well that we can be led by the Spirit of God to engage our cultures today in ways that are consistent with the vision, values and purposes of God. It is this way of living that is referenced by John the Baptist when he invites us to "live lives worthy of repentance" so that all may come into his justice, mercy and peace through the life of Christ present in us.

5. Lectio is one way of engaging Scripture. Engaging it with poetry or other art forms is certainly a part of our tradition. Francis himself was considered a "Troubadour" who engaged the world through the arts firmly grounded in the Scripture. To use poetry as an enhancement to our contemplation is useful, but probably should not be used in place of knowing the Biblical record. If we are to be the ambassadors of the God who is "in Christ reconciling the world to himself," it is essential that we know God's story, and our own as it intersects with God's story.
*Peter Stube, Fellowship Coordinator, TSSF
Province of the Americas*

"Life is a silent film about snow, with white subtitles." *Joeph Gallagher*

The Saints Wisdom Project



What Is Wisdom Anyway?

Basically, wisdom is the power of making right judgments or decisions by following the best course of action, based on one's knowledge, experience, or

understanding. And to be *wise* implies the employment of prudence and discretion when dealing with people or situations. Typically, this applies to those among us who have been on earth long enough to actually have something to say when we speak.

Essential Truths

Saints Wisdom in our case applies to the sharing of heart, mind, soul, and understanding as it pertains to the long view of life, by you know, cutting to the chase, the skinny, the bottom line or the point. What are the essential truths that have been tested by living them? After all is said and done, what is it that someone might share with those around him who care enough to ask, "What is your story, or tell me about your life?"

Have You Told Your Story?

This is what the Saints Wisdom Project does. It asks the questions and provides space for our mature saints to be honest and vulnerable to share their truths with the rest of us. In this section of *The Franciscan Connection* we share these narratives, and as a direct result, we have become closer to one another. We are more open, more available, and perhaps even listen better than we had been to one another. Have you told your story? Please do. We are asking.

Article submissions are being accepted on an ongoing basis. Please contact the Saints Wisdom Project team at saintswisdom@yahoo.com or [The Saints Wisdom Project](http://TheSaintsWisdomProject.P.O.Box706,Mt.Sinai,NY11766), P.O. Box 706, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766.

The Saints Wisdom Project Team



Making Adjustments

~ A "Saints Wisdom Project" Article ~

Just for starters, you can see one of the changes I have had to make - the larger font! I am learning to adjust to changing things to make many things continue to be possible. I use glasses to read and hearing aids to hear, and I do not climb up on ladders. Now, for the good news!

DOK

First of all, I say thanks to God when I open my eyes each morning. There are so many things I have time to do now. Prayer and observing silence are times I often set aside for writing cards and letters which I enjoy. By doing this I get to touch base with a lot of people I do not see anymore. My women friends are

very important to me, we have walked through this Christian journey together. Also, I am a Daughter of the King, so we are committed to prayer. This December thirteenth I am having a day of silence at my home. I love sharing time with other ladies and talking about Jesus. I always sneak in my Father Francis!

My Rule

I do not drive on Interstates after dark, but feel safe here close to home. This is one area that is a hindrance to me. Getting to fellowship meetings (which I adore) has become a problem. Even though a TSSF Friend can meet me in Kissimmee, I often do not have a way to get over there. I truly miss my Franciscan family, but I am able to keep my Rule that is so important to me. The things I do are a servant's posture, funeral receptions, serve as a lay eucharistic minister, and I am now a TSSF Formation Counselor. I do not dwell on what I can't do, but am thankful for what I can do! I'm fortunate that I have a lot of love in my family and in my Christian Family. I am eighty-six years old and grateful for all my blessings!

*Elsie T. Amos, TSSF (Professed Thirty-Five Years)
San Damiano Fellowship*



Thanks For Caring

~ A "Saints Wisdom Project" Article ~

I am Judith T. Kidd (Judy). I am eighty-four and I was professed in 1998, I am so approaching my twenty-first year in The Society of St. Francis (plus several years before that in formation). I have lived in Oak Ridge, Tennessee sixty years, coming here after graduate school in 1957. I taught junior high English for over twenty-five years. My husband George was a nuclear scientist and we raised three children. We were very active in St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, where I did just about every job possible from lay reader to church school to altar guild, Vestry, DOK, and Outreach Ministries. George died six years ago but I continue with many of these ministries. In addition, I have been very active in the community, serving on charity, music and art boards. At present I am reorganizing the Art Center library. I helped start a craft guild here in Tennessee and will attend its 51st fall show tomorrow. I no longer create jewelry due to arthritis and sight problems, but did all of the shows until six years ago when my husband became ill. As a two-time cancer survivor I have worked visiting others with breast cancer for the Reach For Recovery program.

DOK

For thirty years I have been a Daughter of the King (DOK) attending monthly meetings and managing their prayer list along with my own daily offices. With this group I organize all of the funeral receptions at the church at no charge to the families. This involves everything from food prep to serving, including clean-up. For many years I have run a small church bookshop and still am doing that, though because of Amazon and other internet companies we sell less and less and may phase it out one day.

Sitting Work Is OK Too!

I also help the Rector as needed with adult forums on Sundays and make announcements there. I attend Sunday service every week with the adult Sunday school class. My main emphasis is working with our Outreach Ministry, which gives out four food distributions a year plus gifts and clothes on Christmas to thirty families. In Fall will help give out Thanksgiving food, give each family an Advent calendar, and some books for the children. We also maintain a ministry to Haiti with a school and church and medical clinic in a small village and allocate about \$35,000 a year to area charities. As time has gone by I am doing less of the physical work and more of the sitting chores.



St. Anne's Retreat Center, Covington, Kentucky

My First National Meeting

For several years I was a TSSF Counselor, the world's most rewarding job. Then I was drafted as an AFD which I have done about five years and retired from in January 2018. This ministry was also a joy, especially working with Liz Peacock, our formation director. I have tried to be active in my fellowship, but it has always met two to three hours away from my home, often over mountains, so I have seldom

made it recently. Three of us who live nearby have gotten together several times a year at my house for lunch and study. We seem to have many scheduling problems now. I was blessed to have worked on the revision of *Forming the Life of a Franciscan*, and I attended a meeting in New Jersey. I needed to do a lot of editing at home, as well. I attended my first national meeting during the summer of 2016 in Covington, Kentucky. I loved the experience and enjoyed helping with the bookshop.

Tai Chi

While I am in reasonably good health for my eighty-four years, my knees and legs know my age. My heart acts up occasionally, so I take a bunch of pills and sleep with oxygen at night. Although I have traded in the big house and pool for a one floor town home and love living alone, I am considering retirement home living and will make that decision in a year or so unless something breaks before that. I still do water aerobics which I credit with keeping me alive and flexible and have started Tai Chi for balance with a group at church.

Behind The Scenes Work

My suggestions for staying active in the Order include regular Offices, connecting with other tertiaries if near you or by email, going to Franciscan sites such as Franciscan Action Network and Episcopal News sites. I think many could help in their church offices with telephoning or secretarial help such as folding bulletins. Many of the older ladies at my church maintain a Hospitality Desk, at which they greet visitors, answer phones, and proofread documents, etc. for half-day stints. This work is important because it takes some burdens off of the secretary and rector.

Help With The Daily Office

I know one lady who crochets scarves and hats for us to give away to the families who receive our food baskets, even though she is housebound and is battling memory loss. We even have a "deviled egg lady" who loves to make deviled eggs for families during funeral receptions. When the time comes that these folks can no longer cook, crochet, manage the computer, or do any of these ministries, then hopefully those of us who still can will visit *them!* For instance, we could help with saying the Daily Office. In fact, one of our local tertiaries made an abbreviated big print booklet for morning prayer and goes to various retirement centers once a month to do the Daily Office with some older tertiaries and

then spends time just visiting. Also, I think it is so important for seniors to get out of the house, see others, stay active. And having something useful to do keeps us healthy.

Judy Kidd, TSSF

Tennessee



So Many Blessings

~ A "Saints Wisdom Project" Article ~

I was about thirteen when I went with my mother to the Sunday School supply store (she ran the Sunday School where my father was an American Baptist pastor). As she purchased the supplies she needed, I browsed. I came across an illustrated plaque with a beautiful prayer on it. Something about it caught me, and I could not let it go. I used my allowance and bought it. I still have it. The prayer was the one attributed to Francis, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace..."



My Search And Journey Began

Thus began my Franciscan journey. I had no idea who Francis was (and would not for years). I had no clue as to what a saint was or for that matter, what the Middle Ages or spirituality were. But something about that prayer caught me, and it has never let go. For the next couple of decades, I would continue my

well scripted journey to becoming a minister like my father. There was college with majors in religion and Greek. And then seminary. Seminary was my liberation. My brother-in-law had gone to the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. If he had gone there, then it was all right for me to go there. During my time there, my little world was turned upside down, inside out and every other way that you can imagine. My entire way of thinking and seeing the world was changed. I learned what it meant to be a Baptist, and I came to really value and respect the richness of the tradition. I also saw a much richer history and tradition running through Christianity. And I began to search and journey.

Not Sure What My Calling Will Be

That searching and journey finally took me to the Episcopal Church. That searching and journey also brought me the insight that I might not have been destined to be a minister like my father, at least not at that time. After looking at a number of fields that would have taken many, many more years of graduate work, I decided I wanted to become an adult a little more quickly. I had worked my way through college and graduate school in libraries, and library work was a good field for me. My first position was teaching Theology and running the library at the American Baptist College of the Bible in Nashville, Tennessee where I also attended First Baptist Church, Capital Hill.

Drawn, Circling, And Considering

Eventually I got an M.S. in Library Science and started working for The Free Library of Philadelphia. My wife and I also joined St. Mary's Church in Hamilton Village. The Rev. John Scott was the rector at St. Mary's. He also happened to be the first Guardian and then Minister Provincial of the Third Order Society of St. Francis, Province of America (not Americas yet). And thus began my travels with TSSF. I did not immediately decide to enter formation. That, in fact, took much time and dealing with many personal issues, but from that point on I was drawn to it, circling it, considering it.

Dee Dobson

Finally after nearly ten years, it was time. I applied and entered formation. Although I no longer lived in Philadelphia, I was in the Philadelphia Fellowship. There are lots of interesting stories I could tell from that time, but for the purpose of this essay, just one is important. I had attended two Northeast Regional Convocations and was looking forward to attending and helping out at the next one that Philadelphia

had volunteered to run. As it turned out, during the two weeks before the convocation accidents and illnesses sidelined everyone who was responsible for it and Jean Carr, another novice, and I ended up being totally responsible for it and running it. As it also turned out, nothing had been planned. Talking about Franciscan love and support and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Jean and I basically put that convocation together with each event being planned a few hours before it happened. I will never forget the grace, wisdom and love of Dee Dobson, former Minister Provincial, and Sr. Cecilia, and the creativity of Jean Carr and her friends at Greymoor that weekend. We made it, and I am told that it was a good convocation. This was the beginning of my involvement with TSSF. By the time I was professed (I took forever to get through formation), I had also served as convener of the fellowship.

Woven Into My Life

One of the reasons I took forever to complete formation was that dealing with the issues that opened the way for me to enter formation also opened the way for me to seek ordination again, this time as an Episcopal priest. After I started formation in TSSF, I started the process of becoming a priest and trained as a spiritual director at General Theological Seminary in New York City. Profession and ordination as a deacon and a priest followed each other. All of these have been woven into my life, and have shaped who I am and what I have been able to give. TSSF has been an important part of my life and I have tried to give to it and work for it as I could. At various times, I have been called to serve as fellowship convener, area chaplain, formation counselor, Assistant Formation Director, Formation Director, member of Chapter, archivist and co-leader of three regional convocations. I was also a spiritual director.

A Franciscan Work

My last project for TSSF was to help with the work to revise the 2003 *Forming the Soul of a Franciscan* into the 2011 *Forming the Life of a Franciscan*. The work we did was more than a simple revision. Much consideration went into content, emphasis, and organization. One piece that I personally added was that we are being formed not just as individual Franciscans but as members of a community. Altogether, we went over it sentence by sentence a number of times, I was not surprised that there were close to a dozen different drafts over a period of months. It was a great cooperative effort that felt very Franciscan itself.

What's The Difference?

In my years as a member of TSSF, I have often wondered about what it meant to be a member of the Order. Were we just a collection of individuals seeking to live a life in a Franciscan manner? If we are nothing more than that, why not just join the Associates? Does belonging to TSSF somehow mean that we are “super” Franciscans, more committed than someone who is not a member of the Order? I have lived long enough to know that a fairly long essay can be written on the errors of that assumption.

Cultural Synthesis

A few years ago, I wrote a memo about formation. In it I included the following: I had the great privilege as an incoming Bachelor of Divinity student to participate in a series of informal sessions with Paul Tillich. I have never forgotten the one we had with him the night after he had handed in the final revised manuscript of Volume Three. He said that we would probably not see major systematic theologies like he and Barth had done for the next one hundred years or so. They depended on a cultural synthesis, and we were going into a long period when cultures were going to be broken down and changed. It would be a long time before there would be a new synthesis. He said that our task was to ask questions, honest, probing questions and then to have the courage to follow where they led. I think that we need to be asking questions in that same spirit about TSSF.



2007 TSSF Chapter At Little Portion Friary, NY

Having The Courage

We ask the question of what it means to be a Franciscan over and over again. I personally do not think that we have too many real problems in coming up with answers. I think our problem is having the courage to follow where they lead. From the time I became a counselor under her to the end

of my term as FD, Judith Gillette, constantly asked me what it means to be a member of a religious Order if you were a member of TSSF. For a number of reasons I think that this is a very important question for us to be asking and talking about not only in the Province but in the whole Order. What does it mean to say that we are an Order? What does it say for the Order, for its members?

I Put The Questions This Way

Since I am talking about formation, I will put the questions this way. A person entering formation to be considered for profession is seeking to become a part of a religious Order. What does that mean? When we elect to profession and profess a person, we are not doing so because they are nice people or live a Franciscan life that meets our standards. We do not profess them because we think that they are good enough to become members of an elite club of recognized very good Franciscans. They can be amazing Franciscans without joining anything or becoming Associates. So, I am saying that at least one of the questions we need to be asking as we consider a person for profession is whether a religious Order is the best place for that person to live out his or her Franciscan life? What will being in an Order give to his or her journey and life and what can he or she give by being a member of that Order that no one else can? And with this memo, my active participation in TSSF pretty much came to an end.

Debilitating Illness

Recently, I was asked to write an article for the Saints Wisdom Project from the perspective of a “senior” member of TSSF, and say where I saw my vocation going. As age goes, I am not all that old (seventy-seven recently). About four years ago, my life and health started to unravel. Anyone who has known me has known that I have had serious problems with sleep since I was very young. Those started to get worse and many other things started to fall apart. I do not want to bore everyone with all of the details, but I ended up with a diagnosis of primary and tertiary adrenal insufficiency and acquired thyroid insufficiency, plus other things that complicate my life. The primary adrenal insufficiency is generally known as Addison’s disease. It is now pretty well managed. It presents some significant limitations and dangers. If that was all I had though, I would still be active. What has been much more debilitating for me has been the tertiary adrenal insufficiency. It, along with my sleep problems and other problems, have come together as

a rather perfect storm. It all seems to be based in weaknesses in parts of the brain that regulate and stabilize the body. I do not know from hour to hour, let alone day to day what my condition will be. At this point, medicine cannot even do a real diagnosis, let alone treat it.

I Have Real Hope

The Addison's disease and the thyroid insufficiency are the result of an autoimmune process that has been active for several years and still seems to be attacking my endocrine system. I am extremely blessed to have a creative primary care physician who thinks outside of the box and working with her, we (she has invited me to be and I am a very active member of the process) have gradually found a number of things that are improving my condition. At this point, I have no idea what that means or what I can expect in terms of my health. For now, I am writing this. A few weeks ago, that would not have been possible. Even reading it would have taken a lot of effort and not been likely at various times. But at this point, there are many positive signs. I have real hope that my health is getting better, and I will be more active.

I MUST Give Thanks!

Here are some reflections at this time and thoughts about where my vocation may be going: As I have lived through all of this, I have had a profound sense of thankfulness. As I look back on my life, I have a deep sense of how I have been blessed in so many ways. Even as I have lived through all of these illnesses, I have been blessed. Blessed that I have survived. There have been a couple of times I almost did not make it. Blessed by the love and support of my wife and others around me. Blessed by the doctors I have. Blessed by my connection to TSSF. Blessed by the fact that I am alive at this moment. Some of what is making me better was not known ten years ago. I could go on. But I find that no matter what happens, I must give thanks.

I Remember Conversations

I have been amazed at how quickly one can become isolated and fall from the mainstream when one's health fails. I still have some social contact. I know people care, but we all quickly lose contact. I look back on my own life, and I realize how quickly I have lost contact with people as their health failed. I really think the effort that TSSF is making in overcoming this problem is very important and shows what it means to be a community. We may

be scattered over thousands of miles, but we are members with one another. As I go through the intersessions, I remember conversations and times with members of the Order, especially from my travels as the Formation Director. I often think that I would like to reach out to many of them and see how they are doing and let them know how much our time together meant to me.

Not Comfortable For Me

I have tried Facebook. My apologies to those who have tried to reach out to me and not found me responsive. Part of it has just been health. I have not been up to it. But a real part of it has been that I find I am not comfortable on Facebook. If my health continues to improve and my life becomes more stable, I may give it a try again. I can see some good things about it. I would like to see if I can make it work.

I Am Not Sure How

At one point, I thought that I might get involved again in formation as a counselor. But I realize now that part of my life has probably passed. I am sure the formation process has moved on from where it was when I was last active, and I am not sure I am really there anymore myself. I am not sure how I may be active in the Order in the future. Travel, overnights, even evenings is pretty much out of my life now, so my activities will probably be local or by other means (modern technology can be great). The local also includes my home parish. I would really like to get involved in a number of its ministries again, and preach and preside at the Eucharist, which I have not been able to do for four years.

I Haven't Given Up

So as I look back and forward, I find that I am very much in the moment. I am not really sure what is going to happen or what I am going to be doing. I haven't given up, but I also find planning and committing to be impossible. My vocation at the moment is to do my best to regain my health, to use that health to live as fully as I can, giving thanks and serving and giving in any way I can.

William Otis Breedlove III, TSSF

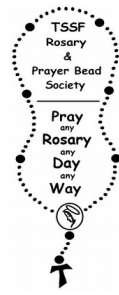
Bread Of Life Fellowship (Professed Thirty Years)

Resting In Peace, March 8, 2019

A Prayer

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of William Breedlove. His contribution to the lives of his brothers and sisters in the Third Order members will be fondly and often recalled. For your mercies' sake.

Amen.



The TSSF Rosary And Prayer Bead Society

Yeah! Spring has finally sprung. With the newness and freshness of this time of year we are excited to provide an update on how the Rosary and Prayer Bead Society is doing. Who knew that in less than a year we would grow from nine members to one hundred and seventy-two (and counting). It is such a large increase that it is hard to fathom. What is even *more* incredible that that is the number of ways in which our members are using their rosaries and prayer beads.

Movement And Other Experiences

From traditional modalities, forms, and prayers, to walking and praying non-verbally with each step, people are using this manipulative to involve more of their beings in prayer. During our religious services we have movement: kneeling, standing, sitting. We have sounds and smells: music, preaching, and incense. The touch of knots or beads adds to our experience of encountering God and entering into holy conversation.

Most Favorite Edition

Some have asked to be added to the surface mail list to receive the newsletter in print (even non-members of the RPBS may request print copies of the *Rhythm and Beads* Newsletter (RAB). Our last edition (Spring 2019) was all about our Lady and actually has been the most popular edition so far! It is with great pleasure that we work to continue to build community *within* our community.

Contact us: Judith at serg1us@aol.com or Joy at joymazzola@me.com or saintswisdom@yahoo.com or The TSSF Rosary And Prayer Bead Society P.O. Box 706, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766.
The TSSF Rosary And Prayer Bead Society Team



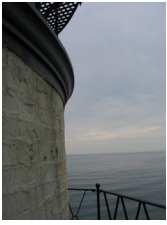
The Emmaus Travelers Program

To all of you who are waiting for an Emmaus Traveler, thank you for your patience. Some of us have been connected for a long time already, but quite a number of you are still waiting for a connection to be made. Be assured we are praying for everyone on the list and will be making more connections very soon. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

If you have not yet become an Emmaus Traveler and would like to do so, please contact the team at saintswisdom@yahoo.com or The Emmaus Travelers Program P.O. Box 706, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766.
The Emmaus Travelers Program Team

"Listening is a very active awareness of the coming together of at least two lives. Listening, as far as I'm concerned is certainly a prerequisite of love. "One of the most essential ways of saying, "I love you," is being a receptive listener." Fred Rogers





Barnabas Ministry Stories

God Hears Us All (No Matter What)!

Talk about encouragement! Thank you to Mrs. Quinn for the following story about her husband Wes. On so many levels, truth about God's intimate connection with His Creation exists in every one of His children. No disability, circumstance, condition, or difficulty could ever get in the way His love. And certainly no language barrier exists between the Father and His children.

TFC

"The supreme greatness of Christianity derives from the fact that it does not seek a supernatural remedy against suffering, but a supernatural use for suffering." Simone Weil

Encouragement Highlight

God Speaks Aphasia

This is a story of prayer . . . My husband was physically attacked and left to die. His diagnosis was Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), which left him unable to walk without help, unable to do the activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, cooking, driving) and worst of all, unable to speak intelligibly. He had something called *Wernicke's Aphasia*, which left him unable to understand language in its written and spoken form. He couldn't understand us, nor we him. He spoke and heard only a jumble of syllables.

Messages From God

It was as if I had taken the English language, cut the words into syllables, put them in a salad bowl, mixed them up, and from there they rolled out across my husband's tongue. He spoke like this for nearly two years. During this time, however, he would turn to me and deliver a perfectly spoken word, phrase, or sentence in English, and then instantly revert to his word salad. I began to look at these sentences as "*messages from God*." These messages from God are another story, but they were short, profound, and clearly God inspired. As my husband's therapy continued, his word salad gradually became organized. A spoken paragraph would have one word recognizable in it, months later, two, until finally many months later he started speaking sentences consistently in English.

God Knows

One of Wes's first sentences to me was, "I'm so glad God answered my prayers." "Me too, honey," I responded. Then I thought, "Wait a second, what *language* was Wes speaking to God?" Oh, how beautiful Our Lord is. This is a perfect example of God knowing what's in our hearts. As the *Book of Common Prayer* reads, "Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid."

God Understands All Languages

I am sharing this story because frequently enough I have heard people wonder if God hears their prayers. Be assured that God does. God understands all languages on the globe, including Aphasia - a language of mixed-up syllables, because the language He's listening for is the language of your heart.

*Stacy Quinn, St. James Church, Taos, NM
(Wife of Wes Patterson, TSSF)
Milagro Fellowship*

Send your Barnabas Ministry submissions to saintswisdom@yahoo.com or write to [Barnabas Ministry](mailto:BarnabasMinistry) P.O. Box 706, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766.

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Livin' The Dream

Renewable Energy

"How Green is Your Dream?," read the headline of the local *Aztec Talon* newspaper article written about our newly occupied "green home" ten years ago. We had grown up following the "back to the land" movement of the 1970's (Helen and Scott Nearing being the moral leaders and *Mother Earth News* being the guidebook). Along with our Franciscan ethics of more than thirty years, it was our goal to live in a straw-bale, off-the-grid, solar home and try to live more sustainably. So after my husband Les completed a degree in renewable energy, he went to work putting his knowledge to use making our goals a reality. It took about fifteen months from putting in the footers to receiving a Certificate of Occupancy. Les directed and/or participated in every facet of the project, except installing the plumbing, hanging the sheetrock, and applying the outside stucco. And, as they said on the old "Shake 'n Bake" commercials, I helped.

A Navajo Artist And Builder

Our home was inspired by two of our friends and elders. Our friend Spencer, encouraged the project for years by sending us every article he could find on straw-bale construction and then left us money for a down payment when he died. Another friend and fellow Franciscan, Deacon Jean Treece, provided the physical inspiration with the beautifully crafted straw-bale home that she built in Bluff, Utah. We were fortunate enough when it was time to put up the bale walls to be able to use the same builder she used, Denny Peterson (a Navajo artist and builder, who was the crew leader and workshop guide).

A Group Project

All along, building this home was a community effort. In spite of our independent “do it myself” nature, it was a team effort that brought everything together. From friends who helped us find experts in fields we didn’t know about, to our local Sustainable San Juan and renewable energy friends who came to help put up the bale wall and the beam holding up the front porch, to old friends who helped with roofing, it was a group project.

Shop Locally!

We tried to use locally sourced inputs when we could. For instance, local adobe clay was used which we dug out of a hillside a couple miles from our home site, and local straw bales came from the Navajo Agricultural Products Inc. We were even able to include a few items from the local Habitat for Humanity Restore.

Open Floor Plan

St. Francis, who lived a radically simple life, was our spiritual guide. How could we make it simple and leave a small footprint on Mother Earth? We chose a site that would require the least cutting of our few, precious Juniper and Pinon trees, which are all at risk from climate-change-influenced drought and insect infestations. In fact, only one small tree had to go. We made the home as small as the covenants would allow. The open floor plan eliminated extra wood for doorways and provided ease of getting around. Use of local adobe clay for interior plaster and for floors eliminated expensive and non-natural products. A friend built the simple knotty pine cabinets. And though we did our share of visits to the big box lumber store, we used local craftsmen whenever we could.

We Must Commute!

Our home is the most comfortable we’ve ever lived in. It’s very warm and cozy in the winter with mostly passive solar heat supplemented by a small wood stove. In our hot, dry New Mexico summers, we cool with solar powered fans and by opening up the house to the cool night air. The adobe floors keep our feet cool in summer and warm in winter and are a more comfortable surface than concrete or tile. Of course, the ideal of sustainability in 21st century America is ever-elusive. In order to pay for ‘lifestyle’ we have to commute to work. And there is no local-Episcopal church, so we commute to surrounding communities for Church.



Hauling Water

Also, here in New Mexico, the sun doesn’t shine every day, so we have a back-up generator to provide electricity on those snowy or rainy days. Sadly, good water is always an issue in the west. Our well provides water for household use for bathing and cleaning, but we have to haul drinking water. We’ve always tried to produce some of our own food, but gardening in the desert is a challenge. We have about 3,000 gallons of rainwater catchment storage, but in drought years like this one has been, hauling water from town to keep plants alive became an almost daily necessity.

The Sustainability Arena

Perhaps Francis would no doubt feel we are living a very luxurious lifestyle with heat, running water, and a roof that doesn't leak! And he would be saddened by the lack of freedom that a mortgage implies, but we continually test ourselves to try and figure out the solution to some of the challenges we face in the sustainability arena. For instance, like how we can have a vehicle that uses less fuel and produces less carbon, but still holds up against the five and a half miles of a gravel wash-boarded and pot-holed road that takes us home. Another issue is how can we grow food in this sandy soil, with so much sunshine and so little water? When I report on my rule of "Simplicity" I sometimes grimace that it doesn't seem simple at all.

It's About The Journey

As we continually try to live our original dream, realizing that a perfectly carbon-free, sustainable existence is impossible, we remind ourselves that it's about the journey. Living in the world as a Franciscan is a work in progress for every one of us "First World Christians." There are no easy, one-solution-fits-all answers on how to do it. Our call is to follow Jesus in the way of St. Francis in our own life situations and, as Paul would put it, we keep on pressing towards the prize of God's heavenly call.

Carol Tookey, TSSF

Four Corners & Milagro Fellowships

"Many eyes go through the meadow, but few see the flowers in it." Ralph Waldo Emerson



I'm Just Saying . . .

Reflections On Patience

Patience is a fleeting virtue in today's world. Everyone seems to be in a big hurry. Whether standing in a long line at Walmart or waiting for a light to change, impatience rules. And no matter if you are exceeding the speed limit on the interstate, someone tailgates you wanting to go even faster, including when your boss looks over your shoulder every five minutes for a report. Teenage procrastination resulting in a late arrival for graduation sparks a certain degree of impatience and anger. The whole world is impatient.

Dad Grew Frustrated

My dad was an impatient man. He walked so fast that my mom couldn't keep up with him, and his

internal motor was on fast forward most of the time. He hated to wait for things. Even when he and mom retired in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia on a small farm, dad grew frustrated every time he went to the hardware store because the clerks were so slow and chatted a lot. Southern ways of living were not his cup of tea.

I Am Not Entirely Cured

I admit to inheriting his impatience. It has caused me no end of grief and mistakes. Impatience is dangerous when making important decisions. And I used to walk fast, too. My wife kept telling me to slow down. My heart condition and painful bone spurs have imposed a brake on my speed demon gate. Sadly, I'm not entirely cured of my impatience. Perhaps I skipped over the Psalms which advised: "Wait patiently for the Lord" (Psalm 27:18). Also, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37:7).

Seventy Times Seven

Impatience implies a lack of faith and a false reliance on one's own attributes and skills. To rely totally on one's own abilities denotes arrogance that one doesn't need God's help. We like to take control, don't we? Life teaches us otherwise. As humans we are mistake prone. Of course, it's difficult to surrender and to relinquish control to God or to admit we have totally messed up! Perhaps we say something like, "Please God, forgive me and HELP!" Yes, I speak from experience, and I never forget that God loves and forgives me no matter how many times I fail. As Jesus said, ". . . Seventy times seven."

Mary Set A Standard

One of the ways I cope with impatience involves remembering the Blessed Virgin Mary, who when faced with an incredible challenge of carrying and birthing the Son of God, patiently and humbly accepted the challenge. She also demonstrated patience when searching for the young Jesus who was missing after a visit to Jerusalem, and was found learning at the feet of scholars. Another example is her waiting patiently for his resurrection after the crucifixion. She set a standard which I look to when I face challenges, disappointments, grief, sorrow, and pain. Patience and endurance.

Faith And Trust Are Needed

Patience depends on faith, the belief that things are in God's hands and He knows what is best for us in the long run. Sometimes it appears God has not answered my prayers after asking for something to be favorably resolved, though later (sometimes much

later) I look back and understand why God did not answer my prayer exactly as I wished. Typically, it was because the result I was asking for would not have turned out well at all! Faith and trust are needed. Patience is engendered by meditation, a deep breathing of the soul, placing everything in God's care and trusting in His Love.

I'm Just Saying . . .

Gary Davis, TSSF

Troubadours Of The Susquehanna Fellowship



“I have found that researching silence, far from lessening my need for it, has made me appreciate quiet to a greater extent . . . More importantly, perhaps, I believe I'm beginning to learn to use silence, even relative silence, on a daily basis . . . When I read to my son in bed, I use longer pauses to emphasize meaning, and this heightens the feeling of disjunction from this world, of being in another time and place. [And is it only in my imagination that he seems to snuggle closer, hold me tighter, when I read this way?] . . . These pockets of peace and the ease they add to my days teach another lesson: That I cannot leave silence to chance. I need to stake out longer periods in my life when I can take refuge in the greatest possible calm.”

Michelson Foy



UPCOMING

The Southwest Convocation 2019

Illuminating Creation

2019 (October 4-6) Friday Through Sunday

The St. John's Hand-Illuminated Bible

This Convocation, "Illuminating Creation" will provide opportunities to learn about the spirituality of the artwork of the Heritage Edition of the St. John's Bible (all seven volumes) and will be an experiential and interactive time of reflection using text and artwork. There are three major sections to the program: Creation, Journey, and Renewal.

Hands-On Experience

Each segment features short meditations based on selected illuminations from this amazing Bible. A "scriptorium" will be available for participants to create their own illuminations or journal entries in response to the experience of Visio Divina (divine way of seeing) meditations.

Contemplation

The retreat center provides many spaces for silence, private prayer, and meditation. There is a labyrinth and walking trails along the beautiful Bosque, a breathtaking open space that runs along the River, as well as the magnificent Rio Grande River itself.

St. John's Cathedral

Our convocation leader is the Very Rev. Mark Goodman, experienced in presenting the Heritage Bible to audiences. He gained his understanding and training at the St. John's Abbey and is the Dean Emeritus of St. John's Cathedral in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He served as Dean from 2007-2017, and was instrumental in securing a gift of the Heritage Edition of St. John's Bible for the Cathedral in 2014. Our event will be held at the Bosque Conference Center in Albuquerque, NM.

Albuquerque International Balloon Festival



This annual event will occur during this weekend as well. Over eight hundred hot air balloons will be on hand along with their owners! For a copy of our flyer with more details about the *Illuminating Creation* Convocation, contact Cece, thetwowhos@gmail.com.

The St. John's Bible

www.saintjohnsbible.org

Albuquerque Balloon Festival

www.balloonfiesta.com

UPCOMING

Franciscan Gathering 2019

Transitus And Feast Day Celebration

2019 (October 3-5) Thursday Through Saturday

Twofold Intention

The Transitus of St. Francis or passing over from this life into new life is celebrated each October 3rd by Franciscans everywhere. By combining this holy day with his feast day, we set the stage for a unique experience of both solemnity and joy. A sacred space will be created for deeper fellowship than is typical for large gatherings.

Open Space

The bulk of our time together will provide multiple venues for tertiaries to interact with one another in an informal, organic way. There will be small and large group activities, but participants will craft their own experiences with the space, time, materials and opportunities available!

Centers

While not painting the *whole* picture or listing *all* of what is planned, we will say that there will be time for music, writing and poetry, art, walking and talking, eating, and uninterrupted conversation! A labyrinth is available as are meditation spaces.



Where?

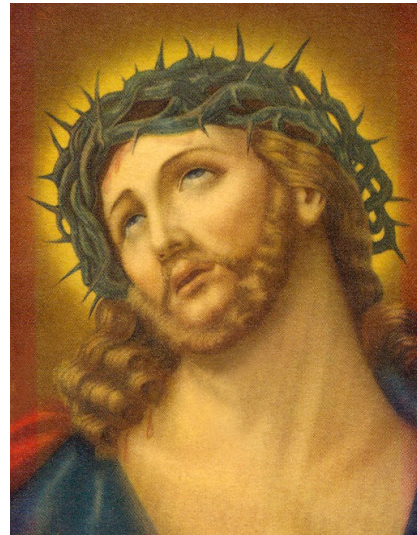
We will meet at The Spiritual Center at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 301 St. Thomas Road, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The church is in Lancaster County and is just outside the city (four miles from the Lancaster train station). Contact the Transitus And Feast Day Celebration Team to learn how to register and book your sleeping accommodations. Write to saintswisdom@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING

Holy Land Pilgrimage 2021

A Journey To The Holy Land

2021 (May 24-June 3) Eleven Days



No Ordinary Cookie-Cutter Tour!

Canon Iyad Qumri is a local Arab Palestinian Christian guide, licensed by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. He has a wealth of biblical, historical, and contemporary cultural

knowledge and enthusiasm to share. Iyad has over twenty years of experience in developing personalized tours that provide a sense of history and connection with the world Jesus inhabited. Some of the places we will visit are Jerusalem, Jericho, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Gethsemane, the Dead Sea, Emmaus, and the Church of the Resurrection!

I Knew I Had To Return!

My name is Lynne Sharp, TSSF, and I am a priest in upstate New York. When I visited the Holy Land the first time, I knew I had to return with a group! Our guide, Iyad Qumri will take us to places of spiritual importance beyond typical tourist destinations. You are invited to join other pilgrims from the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Together, we will visit the places of his birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection. As an added bonus we will be visiting the Sisters of Nazareth Guest House for a three-night stay, which is close to local markets, churches, and cafes.

Already Booked

If your interest is piqued, and you would like to participate in this pilgrimage, please contact me for a detailed brochure outlining our itinerary. The cost is \$2,050 for the eleven days, per person (double occupancy) plus airfare. Some single rooms are available for an extra charge. If you would like to join us, write to Rectorstjames14840@gmail.com.

The Gratefulness Fairy

Tools

This week I've been thinking about Tools and how grateful I am for all the many different kinds of tools. Grateful for the people who invented them, the ones who manufacture them, and for those in my life who've taught me to use them. In my art studio I have dozens of paintbrushes, each with different characteristics that make them good for different things. I have so many tools for cutting things: Exacto knives, a rotary cutter meant for quilting, but also works on paper, scissors of all shapes and sizes, wire cutters, a special gadget for cutting glass, and two big paper cutters.

From Pens To Wooden Spoons

And pens! What an amazing assortment of pens and markers are available, from very fine line pens for writing tiny text, to big bold permanent markers, to some everyday ball-point pens. If I actually take a minute to look at that ball-point pen, it is a pretty remarkable feat of engineering, and it cost less than a dollar. In the garage there's a fifty-year-old table saw that still works just fine, a router, a miter saw. As well as a whole bunch of hand tools. In the kitchen, there's everything from wooden spoons whose design hasn't changed in hundreds of years, to a high-tech pressure cooker. What kinds of tools do you have around you, or use during the day? Can you spend a day thinking about each one as you pick it up, and be grateful for it? Please feel free to reach out to me at thegratefulnessfairy@gmail.com.

Janet Strickler, TSSF

Lilies Of The Field Fellowship



End Notes

Prayer To The Holy Spirit

"O Holy Spirit, Beloved of my soul
I adore you. Enlighten me. Guide me,
Strengthen me. Console me.
Tell me what I ought to do.
Give me your orders.
I promise to submit myself
to all that you desire of me,
and to accept all you permit to happen to me.
Let me only know your will."

Cardinal Mercier

Thank you to our friend Ruth Manson, a tertiary living in Pennsylvania for sharing *Prayer to the Holy Spirit* with us. When she was a young girl, she discovered this prayer in a tract at her church. She memorized it, and it has been with her ever since. She is in her forty-sixth year of profession. Watch for Ruth's *Saints Wisdom Project* article, which will be published in the next issue of *The Franciscan Connection*.

TFC



Poetry Pocket

Requiem For Gus

hearing this old jeep cough
and miss, I think of you
and what you'd say that I
ran out of gas, and plunged
into a ditch, and broke
the right turn signal
against a sapling oak
because I couldn't think
or act, hearing of your
dark coma suddenly and
without warning, and I
lean on this steering
wheel turned away
from that future road
and weep for you who
made me laugh in this
same jeep when both its
signal lights were working

Murray Bodo, OFM

The poem "Requiem For Gus" is from Murray Bodo's book *Sing Pilgrimage And Exile*, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1980, Cincinnati. Used with permission from the author.



Final Words

Welcome Spring!

At this time of year, please consider spending more time outdoors. Perhaps allot a portion of your day to commune with God's Creation. Maybe leave all the electronic gadgets aside and breathe in the real world for a while, and deliberately connect with our Creator in an unhindered way.

Remember, "Stay connected!" **TFC**

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Spring 2019

Come On In!

- Thoughts From Our PC ♦ MP ♦ And FC

Ongoing Ministry

- The Saints Wisdom Project (SWP) *Update & Articles*
 - Making Adjustments ♦ Elsie T. Amos, TSSF
 - Thanks For Caring ♦ Judy Kidd, TSSF
 - So Many Blessings ♦ William Otis Breedlove III, TSSF
- The Emmaus Travelers Program (ETP) *Update & Testimonies*
- The Rosary And Prayer Bead Society (RPBS) *Update*

Barnabas Ministry Story

- God Speaks Aphasia ♦ Stacy A. Quinn (A Tertiary's Wife)

Articles

- Livin' The Dream ♦ Carol Tookey, TSSF
- Reflections On "Patience" ♦ Gary Davis, TSSF
- Southwest Convocation ♦ St. John's Bible
- Franciscan Gathering ♦ Transitus & Feast Day
- 2021 Holy Land Pilgrimage ♦ Lynne Sharp, TSSF

Other Goodies

- Quotes ♦ Fred Rogers & Others
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- Prayer To The Holy Spirit ♦ Cardinal Mercier
- Requeim For Gus ♦ Murray Bodo, OFM
- Upcoming ● End Notes ● Final Words



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