



# The Franciscan Times

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

*Pace e bene*

Summer 2019

## JUSTICE

### We Walk Because They Walk

*The Rt. Rev. David Rice, Bishop Protector of the Third Order*

On May 20 the Pilgrimage of Hope in The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin gathered with 1,000 people at our state capital in Sacramento. This gathering, which took place on the statewide Day of the Immigrant, was the conclusion of a 17-day pilgrimage from our See in Fresno to Sacramento. And walk we did, and these are the reasons why.

We walked to raise awareness regarding the status and plight of our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers. We walked to raise money for legal defense funds when and where that is warranted. We walked to engage with legislators and lawmakers at our capital on this important statewide day and to ensure that they heard our concerns regarding policies, which need to be challenged and amended. We walked because we believe we were and are following the way of Jesus, the way of love, the way of Francis. Throughout our pilgrimage as we walked



*Bishop Rice along with other clergy and justice-seekers, holding aloft beautifully designed posters proclaiming, "Families Belong Together" during the Pilgrimage of Hope walk.*

by and amid groves and paddocks and orchards, we encountered and heard the stories of our sisters and brothers working in those groves, paddocks and orchards. Each night as we received hospitality from ecumenical friends—Roman Catholics, United Methodists, Lutherans and our own Episcopal Communities—we shared our own immigrant stories. And of course, we walked. We walked over 220 miles through vast agricultural stretches, in suburban and urban areas, under the hot sun and through thundershowers accompanied by hail. We walked for justice. We walked for love. We walked to ensure that the voices of those who are so often voiceless could be heard. We walked, as we said each and every day, because they walk. *We walk because they walk.*

*We Walk, cont. on page 4*



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is a magazine  
of the Third Order  
Province of the Americas  
Society of Saint Francis

### Editor

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

### Editorial Staff

Alice Baird, Asst. Ed.  
James Alexander  
Victoria Logue  
Dennis McLeavey  
Anita Catron Miner

### Layout & Design

Alice Baird

### Where to Send

Name & Address Changes  
Convocation Dates  
Profession & Novicing Dates:

### Verleah Kosloske

Secretary of the Province  
3765 Keller Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
[mt.alverna@gmail.com](mailto:mt.alverna@gmail.com)

### For Chaplaincy Matters:

#### Rick Simpson

Provincial Chaplain  
16 St. Mark's Lane  
Islip, NY 11751  
[frsimpson@yahoo.com](mailto:frsimpson@yahoo.com)

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## From the Editor

R. John Brockmann

### *Give us this day our daily bread...*

Obviously, this daily request we make of Abba is for sustenance, but I think we also intend: Please Abba, show me the work you want me to do today, and please Abba, give me the time and space to pray and be open to you amid the trials and tribulations of my life.

And for editors of the *Franciscan Times*, the prayer becomes: Please Abba, give us articles and photos from our brothers and sisters that will allow us to tell the stories of our Province. Once more, Abba has not only responded to our prayers but has overwhelmed us with a largess of stories, pictures, and poems.

This largess is not only God's bounty for the *Times*, but represents for our Province and Order "a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over..."

Consider how our work-for-justice stories go from Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, DC to California's Pilgrimage of Hope, to the Catholic Worker Wallyhouse in Hawaii.

Consider how the reflections in this issue range from Anton's interstellar space and dark matter to Cathleen's *Grandmother Tree* in South Carolina.

God is actively using the skills of our Province in providing new leadership to the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NAECC) in the person of Masud Ibn Syedullah. These skills extend to pioneering online Fellowship meetings on Zoom, to providing spiritual leadership in Guatemala, and to knocking on the

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doors of Washington legislators with our JPIC members.

God is asking us to give thanks for the long journey of Nancy Chiafulio who has died, and for the brand new journey of "Young Franciscans" in the European Province.

Thank you, Abba, for the sustenance of stories, work, songs, and pictures you gift us with in this issue.

*R. John Brockmann TSSF*



*We Walk Because They Walk, cont. from p. 1*

Several times during our pilgrimage, I recounted the words of Pope Francis when he said, “We pray for the hungry, and we feed them, and that’s how prayer works.” When we pray, particularly when we pray for change in our world, specifically for positive change for people’s lives, if we do not acknowledge and challenge those systems, which contribute to the very reasons we pray for change, then we are complicit. Complicit we must not be. Jesus, and Francis after him, modeled for us a way of praying with our hands and feet and hearts and minds. May we continue to pray and may we continue to act. Because the pilgrimage of hope and love and justice and peace must continue...

*We walk because they walk.* ♦

*Right: At the conclusion of the 220-mile Pilgrimage of Hope walk, Bishop David Rice spoke outside the state capital to hundreds of people gathered there to support the rights of immigrants and refugees.*



*Left: Bishop Rice, wearing the red scarf, converses with other pilgrims during the walk.*

*Jesus, and Francis after him, modeled for us a way of praying with our hands and feet and hearts and minds.*

## Sidebar

## Walking the Pilgrimage of Hope

By Terrance Goodpasture

**W**e spent four months planning every detail of this Pilgrimage, but the Holy Spirit always has her way. What we didn't expect was the hospitality we received. All of it was extraordinary, but there were special moments that we couldn't have planned for.

When we arrived in Chowchilla, the Ramos family from Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church welcomed us into their home. Reuben shared with us that when the priest announced we were coming through town and needed places to sleep, he and his wife decided immediately to host us...despite having moved into their house only the week before (and still unpacking boxes).

In Livingston we heard from two of our dinner companions who would tell us their stories of crossing the border as children. Now in their 40s, they have yet to return to Mexico. They left brothers and parents and other family behind. With tears in her eyes, one of the ladies shared that her brothers think she has forgotten them because it's been over 30 years since she's seen them.

We have said at every stop "we walk because they walk" and this is totally true. We are following in the footsteps of those who have walked this valley seeking a better life for their families, and there will be those who will walk after us. ♦



*Deacon Terrance Goodpasture, right, one of the organizers of the Pilgrimage of Hope walk, with Bishop Rice on the Day of the Immigrant in Sacramento.*

## SJ Raise Aims to Continue the Pilgrimage Online

From the SJ Raise Website ([www.sjraise.org](http://www.sjraise.org))

In keeping with our Baptismal Covenant as Christians, the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin is working with others to support the refugees and immigrants who live among us as our neighbors.

These pages are intended as a tool to help with education about the policies and laws that impact refugees and immigrants. These pages also provide resources for assisting our neighbors as they continue to live their lives, often in fear of what will come next.

We recognize that our stories today often parallel stories throughout human history. We recognize especially the story of Jesus who was born homeless and became a refugee at an early age in his life.



## Wallyhouse:

## A TSSF Franciscan Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in Honolulu

barbara d. bennett

A TSSF Franciscan Catholic Worker house of hospitality opened in the former rectory at St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, Honolulu, Hawaii in March 2018. It has long been the dream of Wally Inglis, after whom the house is named, to be part of a Catholic Worker community. As the first Catholic Worker (CW) house to take root in Hawaii (an earlier effort, St. Damian, failed), we look to our roots in the Great Depression of the 1930s. During that era our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, launched a movement that practiced the works of mercy by embracing the virtues of nonviolence, voluntary poverty, and caring for the land. They opened a house of hospitality in a poor neighborhood of New York City, published a newspaper which they sold for a penny a copy on the city's streets, and started a farm in the country. The seeds they planted almost a century ago, both in the earth and in the hearts of many, have taken root and flourished through hundreds of Catholic Worker communities throughout the world.



*Wallyhouse's live-in volunteers, from left, David Catron, TSSF; barbara bennett, TSSF; and Niambi Mercado, postulant.*

*you come to realize it is not going to be changed just by words or demonstrations ... It's a question of living your life in drastically different ways.* In Clare Hanrahan, *Dissenting Opinions: Public Addresses on Justice, Peace and the Consequences of Dissent*. Lulu.com, 2009, p. 81.

As for Peter Maurin, he worked and prayed for a society "where it is easier for people to be good." At Wallyhouse, we are a core community of Third Order Franciscans that invites the parish, neighbors (housed and unhoused), and friends (near and far) to join us as we try to live our lives "in a different way."

The current rector at St. Elizabeth's, David J. Gierlach, joined Wally Inglis in the dream of opening a Catholic Worker house of hospitality. He had the vision to rehabilitate the crumbling former rectory into a livable worker home and to invite Franciscans to come, open, and carry on the CW tradition of looking after the least, the lost and the tired among us. Why Franciscans? "Because they are the only ones who come close to living the Gospel life," Fr. David claims.

*cont. on page 7*

***St. Elizabeth's multiple ministries range from "feeding the belly" to trying to change society's unjust structures. Hosting a house of hospitality in the spirit of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin on campus is a natural fit.***

The following quote gives some idea of Dorothy's commitment:

*As you come to know the seriousness of our situation—the war, the racism, the poverty—*

## Wallyhouse, cont. from p. 6

Public housing and houseless\* encampments in downtown Palama, the immigrant district of Honolulu, surround St. Elizabeth's and Wallyhouse. It is a tough neighborhood consisting of Hawaiian, Micronesian, Marshallese, Tongan, Samoan, Taiwanese, Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, and African-American communities struggling to find their place on this small island and in the American culture. St. Elizabeth's, originally built to serve newly arrived immigrants from China, has long ties to our inner-city community. St. Elizabeth's multiple ministries range from "feeding the belly" to trying to change society's unjust structures. Hosting a house of hospitality in the spirit of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin on campus is a natural fit.

The Catholic Worker spirit is summarized by Dorothy Day:

*Slowly, I began to understand what Peter Maurin wanted: We were to reach the people by practicing the works of mercy, which meant feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner, sheltering the harborless, and so on. We were to do this by being poor ourselves, giving everything we had; then others would give too. Voluntary poverty and the works of mercy were*

*the things he stressed above all. This was the core of his message. It had such an appeal that it inspired us to action—action which certainly kept us busy and got us into all kinds of trouble besides. In J. Milburn Thompson, Introducing Catholic Social Thought. Orbis Books, 2015.*

The CW vision is based on the radical Gospel message and the life of Christ. Today there are over 200 Catholic Worker communities in cities throughout the world. The Honolulu

CW was founded in January 2018 by professed members David Catron and Barbara D. Bennett. Eight months later, Niambi Mercado, currently a Third Order postulant, joined us. The three of us live in community at Wallyhouse where we are committed to nurturing the poor in body, mind and spirit, non-violent resistance of oppression, and practicing radical acts of kindness.

We began our ministries by making friends among the houseless neighbors—welcoming them, sharing food, and providing laundry services. Over time, by listening to the needs of the houseless community, Wallyhouse developed daily ministries that begin each day with the prayer of the Daily Office in our chapel. Prayer carries us through the day and keeps us grounded as we encounter the variety of needs that come to our door. At our door, we have a prayer wall where anyone can tuck his or her written intentions into its crevices.



*Community members, gathered for one of the monthly meetings at the Catholic Worker house. Discussions at these meetings have spawned several new ministries, as Wallyhouse attempts to meet the community's expressed needs.*

Most of our ministry takes place at the front door. Around 50 people each day come for non-perishable food. In addition, we take in electronic devices for charging and laundry to wash, dry, and fold.

Many of our local houseless use our address for mail and our internet for their phones. We have emergency clothing, blankets, and towels to distribute as well as hygiene products such as soap, shampoo, toothbrushes and paste, feminine products, and first aid kits. On Tuesdays, Kay and Wally Inglis come with a group of volunteers to serve a hot lunch. Called Kay's Cafe, it is designed to be a more intimate experience where folks are served good food while sitting at outdoor tables and telling stories.

*\*Being classified as homeless truly means you do not have a home, while 'houselessness' is simply a state of being."*



*Wallyhouse, cont. from p. 7*

On the third Friday of each month, we host a community meeting with our houseless population where we all express our needs and concerns and together we seek solutions. Out of these meetings we have begun to distribute trash bags so our friends can keep their encampments clean.

*Prayer carries us through the day and keeps us grounded as we encounter the variety of needs that come to our door. At our door, we have a prayer wall where anyone can tuck his or her written intentions into its crevices.*

We have also obtained small lockers for the storing of documents. An ongoing problem among the houseless is theft or the loss of documents during the weekly sweeps (when all encampments have to be taken down so the city can sweep the street). But the most important development out of these monthly meetings is community. We are discovering that our neighbors, encamped along our fence line on Kanoa Street, are coming together and finding ways to cooperate with one another for the community's safety, sustainment, and personal growth.

On the first business day of each month, when the warning sirens are tested by the state, the Catholic Worker volunteers join other peace activists in Honolulu to stand in vigil in front of the state capital to promote peace and to protest nuclear arms. On the last Monday of each month, the Catholic Worker volunteers and friends enjoy a potluck meal and talk in what Peter Maurin called "Clarification of Thought." Our discussions range over a variety of topics, from asking if we are enabling or empowering the houseless to how we keep ourselves nurtured.

Finally, we have a number of budding ministries. We have an art studio available to our houseless and at-risk youth, and we have sewing machines ready to be put into active use over the next year. We have tried to be careful not to take on too much at a time. When we have a few more

day volunteers, we will open several programs. We are in the process of putting in a shower. We are asking the houseless community to take responsibility for its use (who may use it and when) and its maintenance. And we have written a number of grants asking for funding to install a peace garden. We see this as a manifestation of our Franciscan vocation to care for creation and promote peace. Our Peace Garden aims to practice *aloha* by welcoming its diverse population, housed and unhoused, to work side-by-side to grow food and to share its bounty. We aim to replace the "misguided warrior energy" of protecting turf with a safe place to restore relationships with the earth and with one another.

Third Order members and companions are welcome to come join us for a while to practice hospitality and respond to whatever needs come to our door.

*Aloha!* ◆

*Angelica, Wallyhouse's live-in Labrador, joins the peace vigils held at the state capital the first business day of every month, when Hawaii tests its warning sirens.*





## Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

By Dianne Aid



**A**n important part of our Franciscan prayer, study, and action in our own lives and of our prophetic witness as an Order is in the work of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. In the early spring of this year Linda Watkins (JPIC chairperson) gathered some of us who have expressed an interest and passion for this work into a JPIC team.

If you have an interest and passion for this JPIC work, please join us as we focus on JPIC concerns.

Our Daily Principles address JPIC issues on several days:

- *On Day 7* we are asked to spread the spirit of love and harmony fighting against ignorance of pride and prejudice which breed injustice.
- *On Day 8* in the name of Christ we are to fight against injustice of any kind seeing others as belonging to God, not as a means of self-fulfillment, and where divisions disappear, where there are no longer Greek or Jew, male or female, slave nor free.
- *On Day 9* once again we are asked to speak for social justice and international peace, putting these practices into our own lives, gladly accepting any criticism that may bring us.
- *Day 10* calls us as our Third Aim to live simply, breaking down barriers set up by wealth.
- *Day 11* calls us to avoid luxury and waste and understand our possessions as being held in trust for God.
- *On Day 12* we are called to limit our personal spending to what is needed to care for our dependents. We are to be aware of poverty in the world and its claim on us, and to be more concerned for the generosity that gives all rather than the value of poverty itself.

These principles highlight part of our overall fabric of Franciscan life and spirit carried out with prayer and joy loving all. As you reflect on the principles highlighted in this article during these summer months, consider these “JPIC days” as a topic of conversation for fellowship conversations and retreats, and look for opportunities in local communities to pray for and work in solidarity with local organizations, especially interfaith organizations dedicated to peace-building, justice and care for creation.

Please let us know what you are doing so we can build our own network of JPIC in our Order.

To share information about your own JPIC ministries and what is happening in your local communities and to engage in JPIC work for TSSF, please contact JPIC chair Linda Watkins at her listing in the Directory.

Be blessed under the warmth of Brother Sun during these summer days. ♦

## REFLECTIONS

### Hope and Fidelity

*By Janet Fedders  
Minister Provincial*

*One of the caves at Eremo delle Carceri.*

*Your elected body, Chapter, will be “in the cave” this October. We are turning two of our precious four days into prayer and reflection time. Christ will meet us there. Francis will pull up his chair, along with Clare. Please pull up your chair too, and pray with and for us that we may live into our Fidelity and Hope.*



***Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. Vaclav Havel***

**T**he National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NAECC)\* meetings recently ended. A Benedictine brother asked former Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold what Religious Orders meant to him. Bishop Griswold stopped in his tracks, thought for a long moment, then teared up and replied, “Fidelity! Your fidelity!”

A few years ago, Pope Francis built on the concept of fidelity and further explained: “Fidelity is a self-fulfilling promise, a faith which wants to be truly shared and a hope which wants to be nurtured together.” (Pope Francis, October 21, 2015)

Fidelity and hope...are these defining features of our Order? Do fidelity and hope provide nourishment for whatever prophetic voice we have? Surely we are faithful. We have our disciplines, and we are faithful to them. We have our Principles, and we are faithful to them, each of us in our own way. Does that stream of discipline, that river of daily obedience, bring us to hope?

These are times in which hope may be in short supply. And we may be called upon to provide hope for those who don’t have Christ, or Francis, or Clare.

From deep within our Franciscan hearts, and out of our fidelity, will come the prophetic voice. And action. But it starts with prayer. We begin with that daily miracle—that time when we sit in and of God. The personal prayer part of our Rule opens us and empties us to hear God fill us. We start with God and Francis and Clare. We go to the cave—as Francis frequently did when he went to the Eremo delle Carceri in the steep forest gorge four kilometers above Assisi. ♦

*\* A coalition of Christian Communities recognized under the canons of The Episcopal Church working with communities in formation, dedicated to sharing and communicating the fruits of the Gospel -- realized in community -- with the church and the world. This is the group we pray for on the 31<sup>st</sup> of each month from our Directory and Intercession List.*



## The Heart of Matter, A Matter of the Heart

By Anton Armbruster



One of my favorite carols is the folk hymn by John Jacob Niles, “I wonder as I wander out under the sky.” Such wandering wonder has been a feature of my life since a very early age. I fell in love with astronomy as a young boy and, later, cosmology and mathematical physics. These passions developed alongside my professional work as a psychologist exploring the universe of mind (neuroscience, depth psychology, comparative and mathematical psychology). Inner and outer universes converged in my search for the *Sacred in Creation*, a conjoined set of passions that sealed my sense of calling to the life of a Franciscan.

Whether looking through the lens of a telescope, excavating the meaning of dreams, studying the workings of the brain, or pondering what physicist Eugene Wigner called the “unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics,” profound mysteries present themselves. At the telescope, we quite literally experience time travel as we observe distant points of light that, in some instances, have been traveling billions of years before entering our eyes. What Einstein characterized as the “persistent illusion” that there is a past, present, and future collapses in that moment. In an instant, we project our attention light years out from where we stand.

My scientific imagination aroused my correlated passion for theological research, especially natural theology. Having one foot squarely in observational science and another in theological pursuits sharpened my sense of being and belonging in the arms of the Beloved—listening for His footsteps everywhere. Today, the revelations of the New Cosmology are swiftly realizing a resurgence of theology as the Queen of Sciences. New disciplines are forming, such as *neurotheology*, which examines the neurological correlates of religious experiences, and *quantum theology*, which works to remove the wedge between science and religion that a mechanical and materialistic worldview created.

***My scientific imagination aroused my correlated passion for theological research, especially natural theology. Having one foot squarely in observational science and another in theological pursuits sharpened my sense of being and belonging in the arms of the Beloved—listening for His footsteps everywhere.***

The clockwork Newtonian model is at last giving way to a more nuanced one that renders theology intellectually more satisfying as it embraces new empirical findings. At the same time, natural theology is enriching the import of scientific

projects. We celebrate the contemporary choir of scholarly and prayerful poets of the heart of science: Ilia Delio (*The Emergent Christ*), Richard Rohr (*The Universal Christ*), Sr. Judy Canato, (*Radical Amazement*), and Diarmuid O’Murchu (*Quantum Theology*), to name a few.

These post-modern writers weave a tapestry of empirical evidence that deepens our sense of divine mystery. Their narratives break

*cont. on page 12*

*Heart of Matter, Matter of Heart, cont. from p. 11*

*"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" Psalm 8*

though old ways of thinking. They are joined by a vibrant cadre of new "Christo-physicists": prayerful scientists examining the intersections between their science and their faith.

### The Science-Faith Marriage

I have long mused about the power of the science-faith marriage. For me, it begins with the inarguable fact that the evolution of the cosmos produced consciousness (the so called "anthropic principle"). It was in the nature of our universe to move inexorably toward becoming conscious of itself. Our invention of the scientific method is an answer to God's call to examine ourselves and all that is. We study interconnections and patterns, searching for similarities while also paying attention to the finer differences. We label phenomena and describe them with as much precision as possible. The qualities we discern with our scientific tools reveal the mind and heart of God. This is profoundly Franciscan!

This discernment has led us deeper into the mysteries at the heart of the universe. Creative tensions exist at the very foundations of the cosmos. Beyond the paradox of the individual and the universal, the finite and the infinite, we have a critical disjunction between the worlds of the observable (the world well defined by Newtonian physics) and that of the infinitesimal (the surprising, "weird" and quite mysterious world of quantum mechanics).

While science continues to seek a Grand Unifying Theory, a way to make the Newtonian and the quantum worlds congruent (a so-called "Theory of Everything"), that goal continues to be profoundly elusive. This conflict of phenomena at the large scale versus the very small is a contemporary paradox that invites us to enter more deeply into the unfolding heart of cosmic mystery.

We are left reeling as we spend time thinking about the collision of quantum mechanical phenomena with Newtonian physics. Attempts to find a way to bridge these two worlds fuels the ongoing debate about "superstring theory," suggesting an 11 or, more recently, 12-dimensional space. (Most of us struggle with the idea of four). Add to this the contemporary speculation about multiple universes and the possibility that ours was born out of the collision between prior universes, and we find ourselves in a mind-boggling puzzle palace.

In the face of these fascinating conundrums, we recall the song of the Psalmist:

*"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor." Psalm 8:3-8*

*cont. on page 13*



*Heart of Matter, Matter of Heart, cont. from p. 12*

***A theology divorced from science is insufficiently incarnational.***

## The Franciscan Heart and Prayerful Science

One thinker who shaped much of my own youthful reflection (and continues to do so) is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Jesuit paleontologist/geologist, discoverer of Peking Man, and author of the *Future of Man*, *The Divine Milieu*, and other extraordinary works. Teilhard saw love as a fundamental force. He saw the universe moving toward a hypothetical consummation in Christ that he called the “Omega Point.” Teilhard referred to the evolutionary process as moving inexorably toward ever greater fullness, and he argued that Christ was the matrix on which the entire universe rests. He went so far as to say: *“Matter is Spirit moving slowly enough that it can be seen.”*

To the space-time reframing of Albert Einstein we add *spirit-matter*: a union culminating in the moment of Incarnation. Teilhard wrote: *“By virtue of the Creation, and still more the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see.”*

The supposed irreconcilability of faith and science is an anachronism. We are well beyond the either/or mindset, though some still harbor a sense that faith and science are somehow incompatible. On the contrary, they are inseparable. The groundbreaking findings from contemporary physics are fueling the scientific-mystical imagination.

Science without faith is dry and uninspired, and a theology without science is an abstract exercise without empirical grounding. A theology divorced from science is insufficiently incarnational. The Holy Spirit is surely on the move in forging a new integration, which may amount to a second Renaissance.

## Paradoxes to Ponder

Today, we delight in mind-bending invitations to prayer prompted by tantalizing findings that raise fresh questions and meditations, such as:

- Given the unimaginably large size of the cosmos, light is the smallest part of it. Only 4% of what exists is observable. ***We are called to be bearers of light in a world defined predominantly by darkness.***
- “Dark matter” is thought to comprise 23% of the universe, and it is not at all like the matter we know. Some theorize that at the level of the large-scale structure of the universe, this dark matter is the stuff of a filamentary matrix that connects everything (i.e., the cosmic web). ***So, at the grandest scale, are all things interconnected, forming a conscious neuroverse?***
- Combining visible light (4%) with dark matter (23%), still only gives us 27%. That leaves 73%, or the lion’s share of what

*cont. on page 14*

*Heart of Matter, Matter of Heart, cont. from p. 13*

*And so, my dear  
Brothers and Sisters,  
I keep wondering as I  
wander out under the  
sky, buoyed by the faith  
that the heart of all  
matter is and always will  
be a matter of the heart.*

makes up the cosmos, as mystery. Cosmologists today are referring to what remains as “dark energy”: an enigmatic force moving in all directions, causing an accelerated expansion of the universe such that all observable features are quickly moving away from each other. *How does this resonate with Teilhard’s notion of the Omega Point?*

- We may be small against the scale of the cosmos but there is an infinite immensity inside! We are mostly empty space. Remove all the space between the molecules that make up humanity and all humanity would fit into a space the size of a sugar cube. *So, emptiness is something! Kenosis (or self-emptying) is an invitation to become better attuned with the pulse of the heavens.*
- While we delight in the many examples of beautiful symmetries in nature, we owe our existence in fact to asymmetries, otherwise this universe wouldn’t exist. Theoretically, matter and its opposite, antimatter, should be produced in equal quantities. However, the universe didn’t get that memo and clearly prefers matter. Praise God! *Imbalances and asymmetries make everything possible.*

These questions and meditations are just a small sampling of what challenges the scientific and theological imagination in our times. The New Cosmology is shedding light and meaning on perennial wisdom. Whenever I consider such things, I am ever reminded of Matthew 18:3: *“Unless you are converted and become little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”* (New American Standard Bible).

The soul of science is the soul of a little child. Play is prayer and praise, and wonder is the crucible of perfect joy. Love is what powers the child to grow and reach out. Teilhard expressed himself beautifully on this point:

*“Driven by the forces of love, the fragments of the world seek each other so that the world may come into being.”*

And so, my dear Brothers and Sisters, I keep wondering as I wander out under the sky, buoyed by the faith that the heart of all matter is and always will be a matter of the heart. ♦

*In the next issue: In what ways can the new physics inform our interior prayer? The natural world is a window into the heart and mind of the Great Artist. The revelations of 21<sup>st</sup> century cosmology invite contemplation in a new key on what St. Bonaventure called the “Vestigia Dei,” the imprint of God in everything.*



## The Meaning of Our Third Order Vows

By Rick Simpson  
Provincial Chaplain

*We can promise to give of the fruits of our lives to God, but in making a vow we are giving God the whole tree, and not merely its fruit.*

**I**t is no small thing to make religious vows in any Order in the Church. Therefore, in our Franciscan Third Order, all are required to go through a time of testing and formation. Contrary to what you might think, this time of Formation is not to see if you are good enough to join the Order; rather, Formation is a time to learn about the charisms and discipline necessary to live life as a member of the Third Order Society of St Francis. If we are vowing to God to follow in the way of St. Francis, we need to be aware of what that truly means. Our vows to God are significant and must be taken very seriously.

As Christians we do make a lot of promises to God. Look over the promises we make at a Baptism:

**Celebrant:** "Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?"

**People:** "I will, with God's help."

**Celebrant:** "Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?"

**People:** "I will, with God's help."

**Celebrant:** "Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?"

**People:** "I will, with God's help."

**Celebrant:** "Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?"

**People:** "I will, with God's help."

**Celebrant:** "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?"

**People:** "I will, with God's help."

*Book of Common Prayer, pp. 304-5*

We also make promises at Confirmation, and we make vows in marriage, as do ordinands in ordination. Some make vows to God at special times of giving or performing good works in the world.

These vows are made to God and are an expression of our intention to follow Jesus and to put that love of God into action. They can inform and become a part of our personal devotion and promised action that we know will be pleasing to God.

### Moral Weight and Measure

Taking on a vow is a much greater promise because it carries moral weight and measure. When we take on a religious vow, we are binding ourselves to God and to the Order in a unique and special way. We can promise to give of the fruits of our lives to God, but in making a vow we are giving God the whole tree, and not merely its fruit. The purpose of taking on a vow is to seek that divine grace

*cont. on page 16*

*Meaning of Third Order Vows,  
cont. from p. 15*



*The Rev. David Bowring, TSSF, blesses Jeff Bonner as he takes his profession vows on April 9, 2019 in the Trinity College Chapel on the campus of the University of Toronto.*

that will sustain our resolution until the vow expires or, in the case of a lifetime vow, until our death. Our vows are not easily taken and are not easily set aside.

When we take our vows in the Third Order, they are a lifetime commitment that we renew annually. What we are vowing to do is live our life following Jesus as St Francis followed our Lord, as we have discerned and written in our Rule of Life during our time of formation. Thus, we cannot set them aside lightly since they are public vows that we have freely made to God and that have been received by the Third Order.

### Falling Short

When we begin to fall short in keeping our Rule of Life and break our vows, we need to dig more deeply into our spiritual center for clear discernment and direction. Talk to your spiritual director, your priest, your confidant or confessor, your area chaplain or mentor in the Order. Is it time to refresh your Rule? Is it time to renew your dedication? Is it time to ask to be relieved of your Rule and vows?

We know that everyone will at some time fail to keep their own Rule of Life. This is not cause for dismissal but for prayer and more spiritual conversations. Also remember that

the Order has room for special dispensation, for example, for an older member who can no longer fulfill his or her Rule. We don't quit going to Mass when we are no longer able to kneel. We just stop kneeling.

***When we begin to fall short in keeping our Rule of Life and break our vows, we need to dig more deeply into our spiritual center for clear discernment and direction....We don't quit going to Mass when we are no longer able to kneel. We just stop kneeling.***

We do have a path for those who wish to be released from their vows. Since Chapter gave us permission to take our vows and then received them, Chapter can give us permission to be released from our vows.

You must ask Chapter for a release, and this is done through the Provincial Chaplain. We do hope, however, that you will be willing to have some serious conversation before you ask for your release and that you will be patient with yourself and God. ♦



## A Conversation with Grandmother Tree at Springbank Retreat, SC

by Cathleen Reynolds

### Editor's Note:

*This is the first of an occasional series on retreat locations that our tertiaries have found to be fruitful and prayerful. Please send us your retreat location reviews along with pictures for future articles.*

*Right: Grandmother Tree, estimated to be between eight and eleven centuries old.*



*Wilding Osha tells crippled Bran to listen to the gods speak in the weirwood forest. Game of Thrones, Season 1*

**Amidst all the *Game of Thrones* mania this spring, the character Osha speaks truth.**

I experienced this truth during an icon writing retreat at Springbank Retreat Center in rural South Carolina. Verdant azaleas, pungent swamps, and massive live oak trees dripping with Spanish moss share space with gentle Dominican sisters who practice intentional, eco-spiritual living.

### God as Mother

My image of God as Mother imbued this space as we wrote the icon of Mary of the Cosmos, recited liturgy honoring a Cosmic Christ and God as Mother. In this space I also read Richard Rohr's new book, *Universal Christ*. It all seemed to coalesce in my soul, affirming that God is everywhere, God appears to us differently, and all we have to do is listen.

One afternoon after an intense morning with gold leaf application, I wandered into a green sanctuary guarded by a stately live oak. This was Grandmother Oak, a wondrous live oak who has blessed her sanctuary for 800 years...or more. A statue of Mary nestled beneath Grandmother, and a bench welcomed me. I lay on the bench gazing up to the lofty branches and blue sky above, lulled into a meditation with birdsong.

As I lay there looking through Grandmother's leaves, I began a silent conversation with her describing my sorrows, hopes, and dreams. I stopped and listened.



*Mary of the Cosmos icon.*

*cont. on page 18*



*Grandmother Tree,  
cont. from p. 17*



*An angel at prayer in the Slave Cemetery.*



*Steps over a fallen tree on the Cosmic Walk.*



*A stone on the 1.7-mi. Cosmic Walk.*

[Click here for more  
information about Springbank.](#)

A gentle breeze blew over me....and leaves scattered from those lofty branches and rested upon me. This was Grandmother's answer. I knew that Mother had heard me and had given me her peace and her love.

### About Springbank

Springbank Retreat Center occupies sacred space with a history of sorrow, but also redemption. Granted 5,000 acres by George III in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, John Burgess built his rice and cotton plantation on ancient Indian burial grounds. Hundreds of enslaved people labored and died here; a slave cemetery still exists on the grounds. The plantation changed owners several times until Agnes and Howard Hadden purchased it in 1930 and lovingly turned the land into a garden sanctuary. Although the Burgess's mansion house burned in 1947, the Haddens rebuilt following the original floor plan.

Agnes, a widow, willed the property to the Dominican Order of men in 1955. Under the brothers' guidance Springbank evolved into a community center offering health care, literacy, and education. The Dominican Order reorganized in the 1970s, and Springbank Christian Center closed. However, in 1986, Springbank sprang to life once more as an ecumenical, eco-spirituality retreat center under the care of several Dominican sisters.

Springbank offers programs every fall and spring providing retreats and programs in art, ecology, and spiritual renewal. One may write icons, weave baskets, learn Native American drumming and flute, explore cosmic theology with Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry, or simply revive one's soul with a private retreat.

Lodging ranges from private rooms in small houses with a shared bathroom and kitchen to rooms in the main house. Retreatants may cook their own meals or partake of a communal dinner at the mansion house. Two dedicated art spaces, a hermitage, a library, chapel, parlor, and dining rooms also provide space for contemplation or group sharing.

The grounds are beautiful. One may walk the 1.7-mile Cosmic Walk where stones tell the story of Creation from its beginning 13.7 billion years ago to the emergence of the internet in the 1990s. And, yes, a stone mentions our Father Francis! Wanderers on the Walk also pass a poignant slave cemetery marked with crosses and angel statuary, a Celtic Circle of Trees, Native American Medicine Wheel, and the haunting Wilderness Swamp Sanctuary that is home to bald cypress, alligators, raccoons, egrets, frogs, and other creatures. Retreatants may also find renewal in the labyrinth and a replica of the Lourdes Grotto, both located near the mansion house.

Springbank lies in rural South Carolina, about 30 miles from Florence and an hour-and-a-half from Charleston. So plan on driving or flying and renting a car. The small town of Kingstree features a grocery store and drug store, while Florence has all the comforts of urban living. But really, why would one escape the serenity and sacredness of Springbank? ♦

## Truth Be Told

By James Alexander



**I** have been on my Franciscan journey for almost six months. One thing is certain, as I have focused on creating and following a Rule, I have become much more intentional about my thoughts and deeds. It seems to me that the Franciscan Way is a way of paradox. Let go to find. The greatest is the servant of all. In possessing we lose. In giving we receive. In dying we find our true life. Looking at my thoughts and deeds through my “Franciscan eyes” has given me pause. How much have I been willing to “decrease that Jesus might increase?” Sometimes, as I have been reframing my view of my world, I have thought about this present and my past and what it would mean to really be hidden in Christ—hidden so that Christ might be seen. And in the midst of it, I think that Jesus and Francis are indeed Holy Fools, and yet, if we have eyes to see, the wisest of the wise.

Thinking about this has reminded me of a couple of stories.

### Salvation Army Bell Ringers

Some years back, my friend Brucie, volunteered to find bell ringers for the Salvation Army at Christmastime. The Salvation Army had bell ringers stationed at numerous stores throughout the area. Some ringers were volunteers. Some were unemployed folks hired to ring bells while being stationed at the red kettles throughout town.

Brucie was having a difficult time snagging ringers from among her friends and acquaintances in town, and, although I didn’t really know her well at that point, she decided to ask me. It was cold, and it didn’t seem like a very illustrious job, so I was a little hesitant. Then the guilt began to set in. I was always spouting off about justice for the poor and the need to reach out to those who went without, so, after a couple of days, I called Brucie, and that is why I found myself ringing the bell in front of Kroger on a very cold December night.

***“Oh, no! I have a house. I’m married. I’m a professor. I attend the Episcopal Church.”...Why had I reacted so quickly and strongly to the notion that I could be homeless? Hadn’t I always said, ‘There but for the grace of God go I?’”***

Really though, it wasn’t that bad. I saw some folks I knew and talked with a lot of folks I didn’t. A lot of people gave money. Actually, I was sort of enjoying myself, until I hit a little snag.

A guy came by and tossed some money in the pot and began to talk with me about how desperately cold it was. I agreed with him. He was kindly and seemed concerned about me being outside on that night. Then, he said, *“Where do you guys go on cold nights like this? Can you find somewhere to sleep?”* I was bowled over. He thought I was homeless! I quickly said, *“Oh no! I have a house. I’m married. I’m a professor. I attend the Episcopal Church.”*

When my shift ended, I drove home. My car was warm, and my wife Irene was waiting at home for me with some hot-spiced wine. But inside I was prickly. Why had I reacted so quickly and strongly to the notion that I could be homeless? Hadn’t I always said, *“There, but for the grace of God go I?”* I felt embarrassed, like when someone caught me in a little white lie one time. Why should the issue even matter? But I guess it mattered to me.

*cont. on page 20*

*Truth Be Told, cont.  
from p. 19*

*I realized I wanted to be somebody too. Maybe I was actually like the very kind of folks that bugged me. I felt ashamed of myself...but I had to admit, somewhere inside, being respectable mattered to me.*

## Another Story: Dinner Conversation

Not long ago I attended a dinner with Irene. We were sitting at a table with three other people. Somehow, the topic of attending college came up. One person said that she had started college but had to drop out for a while, then go back to earn her bachelor's degree. Another commented on how she had gone straight through and been a great student. The third let us all know that she had a master's degree, and that her son was a professor at a university. She said that when he was in school, he had an almost perfect academic record. Another person also chimed in. Her son also had a doctorate degree and was a professor. In this conversation, they largely ignored Irene and me. Somewhere in the conversation, it came out, through Irene, that I had earned a doctorate and had taught college for many years.

When I was teaching at the college, there were a few faculty members who seemed to always want to be called "doctor," and use a lot of two-dollar words. It seemed to me that those folks were just a bit cocky, and that I judged them as being stuck on themselves. Yet, *um...* I had to admit that I liked it when Irene told some folks, that I thought were a bit haughty, that I had a doctorate and was a professor. I felt more respected. Maybe even a bit vindicated.

Later, when I got home, I didn't feel respected or vindicated. I realized that I wanted to be somebody too. Maybe I was actually like the very kind of folks that bugged me. I felt ashamed of myself—like when I flunked my first driver's test, and I was angry that I really wasn't all that I wanted to be. I knew in my heart that no degrees or jobs really mattered, but I had to admit, somewhere inside, being respectable mattered to me.

## Keeping Up Appearances

Am I alone in this stuff? I don't think so! In some measure, "*keeping up appearances*" is pretty important to all of us. Something inside tells us that we need to be important. We need to be respectable. We want to be cool. You may say, "*No Way!*" Ah, but I say, "*Way!*" Somewhere along the line it hit me that we all want to be cool. We just have different definitions of what cool really means. When you were a teenager, maybe cool meant being the number one (or two) best football player. Or dancer. Or (back in my teenage years) hippie. Or good kid. As a young adult, it might have meant being the best student. Or having the most friends. Or being rebellious. Later on it might have meant having a perfect house. Or an important job.

None of these things may be objectionable on one level. But when we start to crave to be the best, or totally respectable, or highly significant, the problem is that we start to measure ourselves by comparing ourselves to others. Sadly, everyone can't really be a winner. Almost by definition, for someone to be a winner, someone must be a loser.

So, why do we do this? Is it because we are hardheartedly narcissistic? Some are. They deserve our pity. Always craving, but never satisfied.

*cont. on page 21*



Truth Be Told,  
cont. from p. 20

*So, why do we do this? Is it because we are hardheartedly narcissistic? Some are....For most of us, though, I think the problem is a basic wound in the heart.*

## A Wound in the Heart

For most of us though, I think the problem is a basic wound in the heart. The wound gets back to three very basic human needs.

*First, we all have a need for security.* We need to know that we are loved and safe. If we grow up in a family where our needs are basically met, and we are appreciated and loved by significant others, we develop a view of the world as basically a safe place.

But that security can be frustrated. Maybe as a child you didn't feel valued or esteemed. Or maybe along the way you failed at important life tasks and developed an orientation that life is generally unfair and conspiring against you. Or perhaps you have been in a relationship where you are put down or unappreciated. For whatever reason, your security is shot.

*A second basic need that we all have is to be appreciated and accepted by others.* We all need somebody in our lives who will accept us no matter what. We sense that we are treasured by others. We know others value our friendship. We see this very clearly in adolescents when they want to conform to the group to be accepted by their peers. And we all need friends! We never get too old to need to have others want our company.

But the need for acceptance and approval can be frustrated as well. Many things can leave us feeling unappreciated. The loss of a friend can do it. Tensions with parents or children can leave us feeling undervalued. A divorce could surely do it—as could any broken romantic relationship at any age in our lives. One reason that we need to be so careful about what we say to others is that some things can never be taken back. They hurt too much. We really need to treasure others and make sure they know we care.

*Finally, we all have a desire for control.* We need to feel that we are in control of our lives. But many things can leave us feeling out of control. A sickness that we can't shake. Financial calamity that threatens disaster. Certainly, for most of us, if we live long enough, our choices may get seriously curtailed. We've all felt it. Our lives feel out of control—like the floor has collapsed and we are falling into Who Knows What?

Most of us aren't pathologically narcissistic. But we are wounded and broken. That is why we are so fixated on ourselves. We feel insecure, so we can't think about the needs of others. We are too busy trying to feel safe ourselves. We feel unappreciated and that others disapprove of us, so we think we are better than others to compensate for the lack of esteem of other folks. We feel out of control, so we overcompensate by trying to take over and run the show—thinking that our way is always best.

## Children of God

There is an answer to our dilemma. The apostle writes, *"Look at the love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of*

*cont. on page 22*

*Truth Be Told,  
cont. from p. 21*

*I have heard it said that real humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.*

*In this releasing of my desire to be somebody, and my handing the question of my worth over to Jesus, I am embracing true poverty of spirit. I know that in letting go of my desire for pride and place, my true worth is found. Surely, my formation process has brought this home to me time and again.*

God!" No matter what has happened in your life, you can be secure in this: God loves you. No matter how little you think others esteem you: You are treasured by God. And, no matter how out of control your life is, there is one firm anchor in life's storm: The God who holds your life in God's hands.

All of this may be too difficult to believe—that God really cares. What can you do? How can you accept it? This is a sneaky answer. *The more you focus on yourself, the more you think mostly about yourself, the more you expend all your energies in trying to prove your worth, the more insecure, unaccepted, and out of control you will feel.* How else could it work? You are focused full-time on your problems.

*But the more you reach out to others, meet their needs, work to heal others' hurts, the more whole you will become.* It is a paradox: Seek your own fulfillment, and you come away from life empty. Seek to serve others and you will never need to worry about being somebody. True humility... I've heard it said that real humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less. We don't need houses or degrees to be valuable, we just are.

I have been a postulant in the Order for six months, and I hope that, by the time this is published, I might be a novice. I have an urgency about the topic of this article. When I created my Rule, I wrote of how I needed to serve others and how I needed to see the value of others. As our Principles state, "*Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus*" and "*that all barriers set up by privilege based on wealth should be overcome by love.*" When I consider the source of pride and position and the primacy of humility, I feel myself stirred to action. In that stirring, I feel a call to love. When we learn to say with all our hearts, *My God and my all*, and fall deeply in love with Jesus, we will discover that our security, our values, and our desire to keep our lives from spinning out of control are held in safe keeping by the Lord. Only in letting go can we securely possess. In this releasing of my desire to be somebody, and my handing the question of my worth over to Jesus, I am embracing true poverty of spirit. I know that in letting go of my desire for pride and place, my true worth is found. Surely, my formation process has brought this home to me time and again.

To sum up with the words of the Master (as expressed in Day 1 of the Community Obedience) "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor."

May we all let go of our desperate desire to be somebody important or special, and just be what we really are, *special somebodies forever in the heart of God.* ♦

## Poem

## The Water Cycle

By Alice Baird

*The Lord makes the same rain  
to fall upon the just and unjust alike.*

Ancient rains, cover me.  
Dowse me with waters  
that half a world away,  
millennia ago,  
baptized my Lord,  
and even now,  
cycled endlessly  
from earth to heaven,  
fall down as holy rain  
upon my head.

Perhaps this very rain  
once drenched the killing fields  
in bleak forgetting,  
or swept away the poor  
like so much detritus  
before cyclone and flood.  
Or did this water quench  
consuming blazes, slake  
unmitigated thirsts,  
or burst in trembling joy  
before life's miracle?

Born of the Big Bang,  
we are made of stardust,  
born of the Spirit,  
we are made of water  
so ancient that the rain



*Icon depicted on Ancient Faith Ministries blog:  
<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2014/01/06/baptism-and-the-final-destruction-of-demons/>*

coursing down my cheeks  
has already coursed through  
history, touched both just  
and unjust, God and man:  
so what we drink distilled  
in one small cup is all  
the world, all time, at once.

Arise, oceans, to the sun,  
leave your salty dregs behind,  
shed acid, dust and all impurities  
as vapors rise, arise  
above the atmosphere,  
and then return to us  
new waters, dazzlingly  
cleansed, absolved, and  
permeated through and through  
with particles of God:  
rain on this sullied earth  
uncontaminated  
justice, blessing, peace. ◆



## NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

### *Zoom In & Connect!* Changing the Nature of Fellowship in TSSF

By Alice Baird



*Tracey Carroll went from being a totally disconnected member of TSSF to a prime connector of tertiaries throughout the U.S. and Canada.*

**“I** was thinking of becoming disaffiliated from TSSF,” said Tracey Carroll, explaining to me the origins of the new Zoom fellowships.

“Leaving?” I asked somewhat incredulously.

“Yes,” she said. “What was the point of continuing my membership in total isolation? For years I had been living my Franciscan life completely on my own in Oklahoma and in other places where I had lived. I had young children, and traveling several hours to get to a fellowship meeting was difficult.”

So, sometime in 2014 she wrote to Chapter recommending that the Order consider establishing “virtual fellowships” for people like herself who lived in geographic isolation from other tertiaries. No response. A year later she tried again with another note to Chapter. She thought, “This was my last lifesaver. It was over. In order to live a Franciscan life, I don’t have to be a part of a group that I never see.”

This time, to her surprise, then-Provincial Minister Tom Johnson called her and told her to “go for it.”

“I had *no clue* how to go about doing this,” she said, “but he was okay with that. I had opened my big mouth, and now I had to figure out how to make this idea work!”

Fortunately for TSSF she persevered through a period of trial-and-error and with the help of others who shared her enthusiasm for the notion of virtual fellowships. It began with queries on the listserv and Facebook questionnaires and progressed with email fellowships (which soon petered out) and experiments with Skype, Facebook Messenger, and Google Hangouts. But these technologies didn’t prove reliable and flexible enough to make virtual fellowships work.

“Sometimes we could spend 20 minutes just getting everyone connected,” Cloud Convener Steve Eubanks explained. And, added Formation Director Liz Peacock, “Once you got past about six or seven participants, the visual and audio quality was so bad as to be intolerable.”

Then Zoom came along. The basic subscription price for the software was relatively cheap, the sound and video quality were better and more reliable, and Zoom could comfortably accommodate far more people in a single meeting.

The Zoom fellowships were born.

### **Prime Connector**

So Tracey went from being a totally disconnected member of TSSF to a *prime connector* of tertiaries throughout the U.S. and Canada.

*cont. on page 25*

*Zoom In and Connect,  
cont. from p. 24*

"This has now become a passion of mine," Tracey commented. "I am so honored that Tom asked me to lead this effort."

Enter Jeff Bonner of Ontario, then a novice in eastern Canada. His fellowship, the Little Sparrows, was in a period of relative dormancy because of the huge geographic distances among members. Knowing of his interest in information technology, Tracey recruited his assistance, and he set up what became the *beta* version virtual fellowship. Creatively he dubbed it the Cloud Fellowship in allusion not only to the ubiquitous technological cloud hovering out there in cyberspace but also to the blessed "cloud of witnesses" who have preceded us in the Christian life. Ironically, members participating in Cloud renewed their interest in Little Sparrows and have since spurred it to new activity! When Jeff temporarily left formation, Martha Knight stepped up as Cloud fellowship leader and has since been succeeded by Steve Eubanks, a former NASA computer communications engineer whose past professional and current TSSF roles could both be described as "evangelizer for collaborative technologies."



*Steve Eubanks, top row center, convening a Cloud Fellowship meeting. Participants join by computer (with or without video) or by phone. Folks look rather serious in this screenshot as they set up for their meeting, but after the opening prayer, they communed in earnestness and joy.*

Other virtual groups were also formed and began to experiment. Tracey, who now has general responsibility for all the Zoom fellowships, leads the Brother Mouse Fellowship with members as far-flung as Oklahoma, Arizona, Hawaii, Canada, and even international members in Guatemala and Ireland. Neal Dunnigan, the Irish member, is temporarily in Cork, Ireland, on Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) assignment, and he is an Ecumenical Franciscan. "I knew him from Oklahoma City," Tracey commented. "So these efforts have had the added bonus of helping us connect with Franciscans from other traditions."

A third virtual fellowship, Il Poverello, is led by Chris Ledyard from his home in Tucson, Arizona. Chris is also a member of the St. Mary of the Angels Fellowship. "Both groups are diverse," he says, "St. Mary's group in that we were from different parts of the state, and Poverello from different parts of the country. Yet, we're all the same—united with St. Francis and TSSF.... Personally, I like the diversity of the [Zoom] group, including those who are new to TSSF, the old-timers, and our Companions. To say it is an honor and a privilege to serve this group would be an understatement."

Chris considers his role of Convener as being a "Servant Leader." For him, part of his challenge has been learning the technology together with the other members:

*cont. on page 26*

*Zoom In and Connect,  
cont. from p. 25*

*“We started with the idea that these fellowships would ideally serve people like myself who were isolated by virtue of geography. But it’s not simply a matter of mileage,” noted Tracey.*

“Stay on mute unless you’re talking....LOL! If we are doing something as a group, there can only be one person talking for the group, e.g., in a liturgy—otherwise, it becomes jumbled and the spiritual effect of vocalized/verbal unison is hindered. We’re figuring out that part. Also, we have a few members of the group who have figured out Zoom, which helps those of us who are techno-challenged.”

### **Virtual Fellowships Have Wide and Varied Appeal**

So, what is the underlying logic of connecting people as widely distanced as eastern Canada and Hawaii in the same fellowship? After all, they are unlikely ever to attend the same convocations or actually engage face to face. And common mission projects are also probably out of the question.

The distribution of members is strictly pragmatic, explained Tracey. “Our vision is to make pathways for people to connect.” For example, Liz refers new people in formation who do not live close to an active fellowship. “I email them,” said Tracey, “and tell them the available times when the Zoom fellowships meet and they choose one that suits them.” (*See chart, p. 28.*) Because these fellowships span time zones, it can be a bit tricky finding the most convenient one. And although Zoom can accommodate meetings of up to 100 people (!), Liz noted that once the virtual fellowships reach about a dozen in regular attendance, “we will probably need to think about splitting—not because of any technical issue, but just to preserve that sense of intimacy that comes with a small group.”

“We started with the idea that these fellowships would ideally serve people like myself who were isolated by virtue of geography. But it’s not simply a matter of mileage,” noted Tracey. For those who drive long distances to their fellowship meetings, bad weather need no longer deter their attendance. Those who are sick or living in nursing facilities may be isolated from their physical fellowships by virtue of their health, age or lack of mobility. Parents with small children still at home may find it difficult to get to meetings. “The Zoom fellowships can prove useful to all these groups and could wind up helping TSSF attract more young members,” she pointed out.

Another unexpected benefit Tracey mentioned is that “interaction at the Zoom fellowship meetings has been very good and deep.” Initially it was decided that meetings should be restricted to one hour because, as Liz said somewhat tongue-in-cheek, “that’s about as long as anybody can pay close attention to anything.” She believes that the condensed meeting time “encourages in-depth sharing. There are no meals during these meetings, so the mindset tends to be that we are only coming together to talk about the Franciscan life. These sessions remind me of a Quaker meeting—they are very Spirit-filled. People tend to share from the heart; there are wonderful theological insights.” Il Poverello started with a one-hour limitation, but when members asked for a longer meeting, they experimented, and recent meetings have run 75 to 90 minutes.

*cont. on page 27*



*Zoom In and Connect,  
cont. from p. 26*

***“These sessions remind me of a Quaker meeting—they are very Spirit-filled. People tend to share from the heart; there are wonderful theological insights,” noted Liz Peacock.***

My own experience of participating in a Cloud fellowship meeting bore out these observations. As we discussed Principles 10, 11, and 12 together online, I enjoyed the interchange of ideas about our personal struggles to define Franciscan simplicity in our lives. And since I was unable to attend my own Land of the Sky fellowship meeting a few weeks later, I was grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in a virtual meeting with other tertiaries, even though I had never met most of them in person. Tracey indicated that this is beginning to happen more often as tertiaries who miss their regular fellowship meeting pop into a Zoom fellowship for monthly Franciscan sustenance.

Tom Mariconda of Shelton, Connecticut is an active member of the New York City Fellowship, but his duties as a deacon sometimes prevent him from attending their meetings, which can consume two-and-a-half hours of commuting time each way. Having met Tracey over lunch at the Centennial Convocation in 2017, he said he became intrigued with the idea of online meetings with a broader cross-section of TSSF members. He soon began supplementing his New York City Fellowship meetings by participating in Brother Mouse sessions as well. This broader availability of Franciscan connection suits his outgoing, sociable nature.

As a regional deacon, Tom serves three parishes. “It’s natural for me to meet people in many different groups. And I believe in cross-fertilization. The more TSSF folks we can meet, the more we can learn from each other, the more we will begin to feel like a true community.” Tom believes so strongly in Franciscan connection that when he can, he attends a local OSF (Roman Catholic Order of Secular Franciscans) prayer meeting, which includes lay Roman Catholics who have made their Cursillo retreats. “When you get right down to it, we are all part of one community,” he says.

### **What’s Next?**

What’s next? Conveners have already enlisted Zoom technology in an online profession and novicing. (*See related story by Dianne Lowe, “A Far-Flung Fellowship.”*) Chapter has begun holding some monthly meetings online through Zoom, thus reducing travel time and expense. In January Fellowship Coordinator Peter Stube gathered a group of conveners using Zoom, and Liz has held Zoom meetings with 20 people or more to train counselors. Steve Eubanks told us that some physical fellowships are exploring the idea of joining in on virtual meetings. Other creative ideas bubbling up: what about conducting yearly renewals on Zoom? Prayer or worship services? Inspired by Latin American tertiaries’ success using What’s App, Tracy is also thinking about trying another type of fellowship using a messenger app. If her mission is to find pathways for people to connect, who knows in future where this will lead?

We are already connected by our Franciscan charism and by our “special love and affection for members of the Third Order” (*Day Twenty-six, Second Note*). Surely as TSSF continues to innovate, Zoom will be just one of many tools connecting us more strongly to our roots in Christ and in Francis— and to each other. ♦

## Sidebar

## A Far-Flung Fellowship

By Dianne Lowe

Virtual Fellowship  
Meeting Times

*If you are interested in attending or joining an online fellowship, please contact Tracey Carroll at mothertracey@gmail.com. Zoom Fellowships meet as follows:*

**Cloud Fellowship:**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month,  
5 p.m. EDT*

**Brother Mouse Fellowship:**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, 2 p.m. EDT*

**Il Poverello Fellowship:**  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 3 p.m. MTZ*

*Our conversations are deep, authentic, and we freely speak our hearts to one another.... I can only imagine that if we were ever together in front of a fireplace, we would talk well into the night.*

**T**here is a fellowship for everyone—even if it involves the use of video-conferencing technology. I asked for help locating a virtual fellowship because I live in a remote part of southeastern Washington State. The nearest traditional fellowship was 110 miles north, and during snowy winters, the travel is either not recommended, or a wise person would simply stay off the snow and ice-covered roads. I consulted with Carol Tookey, of formation counselor fame, who put me in touch with Deacon Chris Ledyard. Next thing I knew, there was an email invite from him to join them by Zoom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 3 p.m. Arizona time. Little did I know that at my first meeting, I would become the resident tech support for all things Zoom and help others navigate the system.

This fellowship is so amazing. We are in at least four time zones from Hawaii to Illinois. When I joined, we were six members, I think: two professed, one novice, two postulants, and one transfer (me); two deacons, one priest, three laypersons; four of us retired, two still working. Already we have added another postulant and admitted a novice. We have a broad expanse of education, life experience, and no matter our differences in age or experience, we all love the Franciscan life, and we support one another in living it daily. At the heart of our fellowship is our love for one another. Whoever conceived of a virtual fellowship was dreaming a Holy Spirit dream.

If anyone is wondering how to welcome postulants, admit novices, or make a profession in virtual fellowship, I am here to tell you all you have to do is Zoom in. Of course, when it came time for my profession, I wanted to do it with the sisters and brothers in my fellowship. That took a little planning. Liz Peacock zoomed in along with eight of my closest friends along with the members of the fellowship. We pushed the technology to its limits, but oh what joy we had with the group that gathered! Our conversations are deep, authentic, and we freely speak our hearts to one another. Our one-hour time allotted is never enough, and we frequently want to continue our discussions. I can only imagine that if we were ever

together in front of a fireplace, we would talk well into the night.

Many thanks to those who first proposed the possibility of a virtual fellowship, and to Chapter, which consented to give it a try. Bless those who

are willing to embrace technology to maintain connection in a world where there would be no connection without this capability.

I think Blessed Francis would approve and probably write a canticle about the value and holiness of fellowships that meet over the air. ♦

## Tremendous Response to Stewardship Letter

*By Alison Saichek, Provincial Bursar*

**F**irst of all, a heartfelt thank you for the tremendous response to the “stewardship letter” and new membership cards sent by our Minister Provincial, Janet Fedders. The boost in our fund balances will allow us, among other things, to prepare for Provincial Convocation 2022, now only three years away!

The chart on this page shows our income and expenses for the first eight months of our current fiscal year, which runs from October 2018 through September 2019. It shows we were almost on track for donations, and expenses were also within budget targets.

I still very much enjoy the cards and kind notes you send along with your contributions, and I look forward to my weekly trips to the post office box. Here are just a few “housekeeping” reminders: The mailing address is TSSF, P. O. Box 92, Fremont, CA 94537, and checks should be made out to TSSF, or write the words out. Please do not write my name on the “Pay To” line, since that means I then have to personally endorse the check before depositing.

Contributions to our “restricted funds” are always welcome as well. The Medical Mission Fund supports education and medical work, the Tom Johnson Hispanic Mission Fund supports development of our programs in Spanish-speaking countries, and contributions made in honor of a person or occasion go into the Memorials Fund. If you wish to make a contribution to one of these funds, please make the check out to TSSF as usual, but write the fund name or memorial information on the memo line. ♦

### TSSF Province of the Americas

#### Financial Update: 2018 – 2019, First 2/3's

<b>Fund Balances</b>	<b>9/30/2018</b>	<b>5/31/2019</b>
Operating Fund	\$62,302.00	\$41,405.00
Savings Accounts-Bank of Amer. & Urban P'Shp Bank	30,207.00	55,505.00
Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity Account	2,617.00	4,609.00
Medical Mission Fund	8,550.00	9,426.00
Tom Johnson Mission Fund	775.00	1,300.00
Companions	-	1,808.00
Memorials	\$2,794.00	\$2,794.00
<b>Income Statement</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Fiscal Year 2018 – 2019 First 2/3rds</b>		<b>5/31/2019</b>
<b>Contributions</b>	\$65,000.00	\$48,338.00
<b>Other Income (Amazon Smile, etc.)</b>	100.00	30.00
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	65,100.00	48,368.00
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Servants (Ministers, Chaplains, Officers)	21,850.00	8,866.00
Formation	3,400.00	1,203.00
Outreach (Support for other Orders & Organizations)	16,334.00	8,445.00
Communications		
Meetings	4,450.00	411.00
Overhead (Insurance, bank charges, website)	12,500.00	2,759.00
	1,900.00	3,069.00
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		
<b>Income less Expenses</b>	\$60,434.00	\$24,753.00
	<b>\$4,666.00</b>	<b>\$23,615.00</b>

*Peace and all good,*

*Alison Saichek*



## Masud Ibn Syedullah Elected President of NAECC

By R. John Brockmann

Right: You might observe a number of brown Franciscan habits among the larger NAECC. Pictured here are our brother and sister Episcopal Franciscan Orders: Third Order, Society of St. Francis (TSSF); The Little Sisters of St. Clare (LSSC); The Society of St. Francis (SSF); and The Community of Saints Francis and Clare (CFC). New NAECC President Masud Ibn Syedullah is seated front row, center.



**O**n May 31, as I was praying with my *Directory & Intercessions* List, I found myself praying for the members of the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NAECC) ([www.naecc.net](http://www.naecc.net)). According to their website:

NAECC is a network of religious communities within the Episcopal Church, which requires member communities within the Episcopal Church to follow a rule of life and to be under appropriate ecclesial authority. While some of the communities practice a lifestyle similar to that of monastics in terms of prayer life and the wearing of monastic habits, most follow their community rule while supporting ourselves and living in their own homes, known as dispersed communities [like us]. NAECC offers assistance to newly forming communities, including models of organization and formation which other communities have found helpful, friendship and mentoring, and, when appropriate, assistance with applying for canonical recognition.



Above: Frank Griswold, Former Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, blessing Bill Farra, Community of the Gospel, outgoing President of NAECC, left, and Masud Ibn Syedullah, right, as the incoming President.

Well, I just discovered that I have a whole new reason for ensuring I don't forget to pray for the NAECC each January, March, May, July, August, October, and December (maybe I can even combine 30 and 31 on the other four months). Our own former Minister Provincial and long-term Chapter leader, Masud Ibn Syedullah, was elected president of the NAECC on May 2. This occurred at the joint meetings of the NAECC and Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) at the Siena Retreat Center, Racine, Wisconsin. ♦

## Elements of Franciscan Unity Conference Held in May

*By Masud Ibn Syedullah*

*Right: Representatives of five Franciscan Orders from various denominations participated in the Elements of Franciscan Unity Conference held in May in Florissant, Missouri.*



**T**he tenth Elements of Franciscan Unity Conference led by the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity was held May 9-10 at the Pallotine Retreat Center in Florissant, Missouri.

The conferences led by the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity strive to promote increased understanding, relationship, mutual respect, and cooperation among the various members of the Franciscan family by emphasizing the Franciscan elements of Christian spirituality we share in common. The conferences include presentations on the common elements of Franciscan spirituality, worship, faith-sharing, and fellowship.

Twenty-three representatives from five Franciscan Orders participated, representing the Third Order, Society of St. Francis (TSSF); the Order of Secular Franciscans (OFS); the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF); the Order of Lutheran Franciscans (OLF); and the Order of Franciscans of Reconciliation (OFR).

TSSF participants this year were our Minister Provincial Janet Fedders, Adrienne Dillon, John Dotson, and Ralph (Rafael) Shower. TSSF members of the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity are Masud Ibn Syedullah and Joyce Wilding. ♦

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days National Gathering, April 5-8, 2019

*By Francesca Wigle*

**I**t is always an honor to be one of the TSSF representatives at Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD)! This year's theme was "Troubling the Waters for the Healing of the World: #Good Trouble." This theme was chosen because at this pivotal time in our nation and the world we are troubled by issues of racism, poverty, climate change, violence and other manifestations of injustice that harm us all, especially the most vulnerable in our society. We also embrace the imperative for us to get into #GoodTrouble advocating for justice.

Linda Watkins, Verleah Kosloske, and I attended EAD this year to chart a future course for how to address the injustices confronting us now. The conference this year drew on the legacy of #GoodTrouble pioneers from the Civil Rights era and recent social

*cont. on page 32*



*Ecumenical Advocacy Days,  
cont. from p. 31*

justice movements to inspire and empower the next generation of movement leaders and champions for justice and peace, including Black Lives Matter, the Women's March, March for Our Lives, People's Climate March, and the Poor People's Campaign. An array of 44 different workshops called participants to action.

The workshops that "called" me were: "Faith-Rooted Direct Action and Community Organizing," "The Devastating Environmental Impacts of Border Walls" (since I live on the border with Mexico in El Paso, Texas), and "Advocating for Peace in a Violent World: The Global Fragility Act."

Besides workshops, there were incredible speakers, inter-denominational worship services, denominational gatherings, young adult gatherings, exhibitors devoted to working to improve the world, and meetings with other TSSF tertiaries and various other groups.

With people from our home states we gathered to prepare for lobby visits to the offices of our State Senators and Representatives in D.C. on April 8. It was a way to begin action on issues that would continue to engage us when we returned home. It was also wonderful to get together with people who were activists from our home states and build personal networks for the work of social justice. ♦

*Below: Troublemakers all: Francesca Wigle, second from right, participated with other Texas women in the annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days National Gathering in Washington, D.C. where they met with their state Senators and Representatives concerning issues of peace, social justice, and integrity of creation.*

*To experience the energy and excitement of various panel discussions, speeches, and worship at the EAD website plenary videos page, go to <https://advocacydays.org/2019-troubling-the-waters/plenary-videos/>*





# *First Order Invitations*

100th Anniversary Celebrations

First Order, Society of St. Francis

Province of the Americas

## **East Coast**

Saturday, September 14, 2019

(Actual First Order 100th Anniversary Foundation Day)

Church of St. Luke in the Fields\*

487 Hudson Street

New York, New York 10014

11 am Mass

*Celebrant and Preacher:*

The Most Reverend Michael Curry,

Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA

1:30 pm Luncheon

Keynote Speaker Ilia Delio, OSF:

“Franciscan Religious Life in the Light of the Theology of  
Blessed John Duns Scotus”



## **West Coast**

Saturday, October 5, 2019

11 am Festal Mass

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco.

*Celebrant:* Bishop Robert Fitzpatrick of Hawaii

*Preacher:* The Very Revd. Alan Jones

Dean Emeritus of Grace Cathedral

Followed by Lunch

RSVP for catering purposes by August 5 to: [ssfcentenary2019@gmail.com](mailto:ssfcentenary2019@gmail.com)

For further details please contact Jude on 415-861-7951 or [judehillssf@aol.com](mailto:judehillssf@aol.com)

*\* St. Luke was the site of the original prayer group that included Father Joseph Crookston, who began interceding for God to establish a Franciscan presence in the Episcopal Church. The Order of St. Francis, First Order, was founded by Father Joseph Crookston on September 14, 1919, in Merrill, Wisconsin.*

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Young Franciscan Activity in the European Province

by Paul Alexander

#### Editor's Note:

*Paul Alexander. European Province, is the director, screenwriter, and actor in Finding Saint Francis (2015, Little Portion Films); and actor and writer of a one-man show, Francis of Assisi.*

**Y**oung people have an inspiring capacity to work joyfully for justice. Just look at the Greta Thunberg movement ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greta\\_Thunberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greta_Thunberg)), which has propelled the 16-year-old to international prominence as a climate activist. Look at the way young people are concerned with “Living Simply so that others can Live.” Look at their enormous capacity for joy and for being involved with the marginalized.

What do young people seek? I think the answer lies in their desire for a deeper contemplative prayer life, community with like-minded people, a concern for the planet, and for justice, peace, and service.

Young Franciscan activity in the European Province started some years ago when our small London Riverside Group realized we needed to start working to encourage young people to join us. We had three unsuccessful attempts, all highly valuable on the learning curve.

#### Too Young

The first was to invite school children to a day in London where we had three speakers and group discussions. I performed the story of Francis, a young artist talked about giving away everything he owned, and the third talked about Franciscan involvement in Palestine/Israel. All very well received, but the children were too young to think of taking things further.

#### Still Not Old Enough

On the second attempt we invited a group of children and university students to walk across Dartmoor, camping on route with two adult Franciscans and then staying at the Bullaven Franciscan hermitage that I run. Also amazingly good, but the age group for those becoming interested in Franciscanism really starts after university and the beginnings of finding one's way in the world.

The third enterprise involved trying to set up a young Franciscan house in the London diocese. For various reasons beyond our control, this didn't materialize.

#### Just the Right Age

Then a young priest approached me and asked if I would become his Franciscan novice guardian. I realized he wouldn't survive the novitiate if he had to attend local meetings with Franciscans three times his age. So as part of his novitiate training, I encouraged him to gather other young people around him to join on a one-year basis leaving it up to them to organize their Franciscan lifestyle with a group of tertiaries in the background to act as encouragers and guidance.

*cont. on page 35*

*Young Franciscan Activity,  
cont. from p. 34*

Thus, the Young Franciscans finally began with twelve followers, which has now grown to fifteen with a live-in community of three, soon to become four, who are currently in Assisi visiting all the places with which Francis was associated.

### How Can We Help?

One thing I am planning is to set up a meal meeting between Young Franciscans and older tertiaries to discuss, among other things, just this question of what they are seeking spiritually and how we can help them.



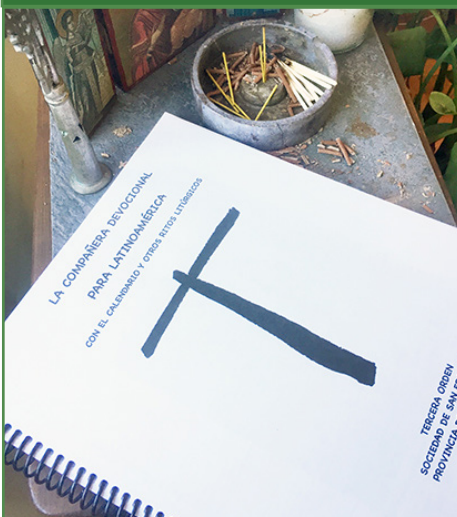
*Young Franciscans on retreat at Bullaven Franciscan Retreat in Dartmoor, England.*

We are also now looking into how we can develop a virtual media webinar site where people can join in worship, talks, and discussions on Franciscan themes. This will be backed up by invitations for anyone interested in coming to spring, summer or autumn camps where they can meet those with whom they have started to form an online community.

Let us all help to encourage our Young Franciscan seekers. Let us help them to find people of their own generation to coalesce into their own society alongside the Tertiary movement. ♦

### Spanish Language Devotional Companion Now Available

#### *Tercera Orden Ministerio Hispano*



**A**fter one year of preparation, The TSSF Devotional Companion is now available in electronic form. It will soon be available in hard copy form too. The project was initiated by Raciell Prat of Cuba. Using both the English Companion and the Brazilian Companhia as models, the Spanish version has several features unique to itself.

Here is the link for the Spanish book: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P2Apo16AWvAVjbdw3cue0CrKnPQ4AU7/view?usp=sharing>. And here is the plan for the paper version:

- We will print a limited number of copies and have them available to mail to addresses in the United States, including Puerto Rico. Books for addresses in Northern Mexico will be mailed to a USA address.
- Estimated costs for mailing one book to Latin America is around \$25, so we are asking leaders in each country to take an electronic copy to a print shop and print the 220-

*cont. on page 36*



*Spanish Language Devotional,  
cont. from p. 35*

page book there. The Third Order will pay the expenses. To make arrangements for local printing, write to [terceraordenministeriohispano@gmail.com](mailto:terceraordenministeriohispano@gmail.com).

- The Devotional in the picture is 8.5 x 11 inches. The format to be sent will be booklet size, 5.5 x 8.5 inches.

We want to thank Raciél Prat for initiating this project and for spending countless hours developing the material. We thank David Catron for his work on editing and translating, and thanks to Barbara Bennett for her editing work. ♦

## Latin America: Guatemala Plans Spiritual Renewal Events

### *Tercera Orden Ministerio Hispano*

**B**ishop Silvester Romero of Guatemala invited the Third Order to help develop a program of spiritual renewal for the diocese. The first planning meeting took place on May 21 in Guatemala City with members of the Third Order and others from the diocese, especially the Education Committee. The Rev. Hugo Padilla, The Rev. Laurel McMartin, and others from the Third Order are leading this effort.

“This is an important development,” said The Rev. Jim Hagen, Coordinator of Hispanic Ministry for the Third Order. “Instead of looking to the diocese to offer us new members—which they have done—here is a chance for Franciscans to join with others in offering something to the diocese: a framework for spiritual renewal that can open all of us to the movement of the Spirit.

Events are planned for the regions of the Diocese starting Sunday, September 1, through Sunday, September 8.

The first draft of a booklet, “Five Steps to a New Life,” includes a brief description of each step, discussion questions, group exercises, biblical study with questions, a specific spiritual practice, and a prayer. The booklet also includes an outline for establishing small group gatherings to be used in congregations, along with an outline for a local strategy for setting up the program. ([Click here for the booklet’s first draft in Spanish and English.](#)) The booklet attempts to point towards an Anglican approach to personal, community, national, and worldwide renewal and conversion, with a Franciscan emphasis on God’s love that is expressed in Creation and especially in Jesus. The first step in renewal is taken by God. God reaches out to us, and as we enjoy the warmth of God’s love, we can grow, change, and reach out to others.

If the booklet serves as a useful tool, it will be revised to reflect the experience in Guatemala and then can be used in other dioceses. ♦

## NEWLY PROFESSED

Dennis Fish



*Civil Rights Advocate, Foster Parent, Healing Minister, Eucharistic Visitor*

**H**ello from Arlington, Virginia! I'm a dutiful civil servant at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, DC, where I work on civil rights issues. I was born in New York, grew up in Georgia, went to college in Missouri, went back to New York for law school, and ended up in this area in 2002. I'm happily married to Adam, and we currently have two foster sons and three small dogs.

When I started this journey, I was looking for a spiritual outlet to supplement my regular worship practices, and I wanted to do some good. I contacted TSSF for information and was thrilled when the information package arrived in the mail. Unfortunately, my excitement, was short-lived as tragedy struck shortly thereafter. My 6-month-old goddaughter died on April 23, 2016 after four days in the hospital with injuries sustained at the hands of her daycare provider. Her death almost destroyed me. I felt confused and doubted the good in humanity. And then I attended my first fellowship meeting....and I knew that TSSF was going to become a big part of my life. I immediately felt a connection and quickly learned that "being Franciscan" was something I'd been doing for a while without even knowing it.

I am a member of St. George's Episcopal Church in Arlington, Virginia, where I am a healing minister and a lay Eucharistic minister. I am a former Vestry member and do my best to remain involved, though not as much as I once was or as much as I wish I had the time to be. Being a parent to two toddlers means free time is limited, but I still find time to pray and to connect with the divine energy that surrounds us all.

*I felt confused and doubted the good in humanity. And then I attended my first fellowship meeting....and I knew that TSSF was going to become a big part of my life.*

Whenever possible (just about every month), I attend the Potomac Witness Fellowship meetings. The members of my fellowship are my family, and I love them all dearly. Environmentally conscious, I love being in nature and spend a lot of my time figuring out ways to create less waste and to find new and

exciting ways to reuse and recycle things that most people just throw away.

Since my journey began nearly three years ago, the entire formation process has been a true blessing for me. I am so very grateful to all those who guided me along this magnificent journey through self-discovery and understanding of Franciscan spirituality. ♦

## REST IN PEACE: NANCY CHIAFULIO

A Dedication to NANCY CHIAFULIO. . . a handful of her many gifts: accepting, dignified, dedicated, compassionate, grateful, humble, inclusive, light-filled, prayerful, Gospel-driven, courageous, fortitude, open, free, peaceful, reflective, zealous for Christ, St. Francis and St. Clare, independent, resilient.

*The Fellowship of the Wolf of Gubbio was honored and humbled to journey with Nancy on part of her incarnational journey.*

*By Diana Turner-Forte*

Farewell to My  
Fellowship Sister,  
Nancy Chiafulio

*By Weston Cook*

“Good-bye, Jersey girl!” Now some might read that salutation as flip, disrespectful, or even snide, but you just had to know Nancy to know how very fitting a farewell it makes.

First of all, she was from New Jersey and had the accent and attitude to prove it. A working-class woman from a wondrously tumultuous Italian family, she was street-smart and hardscrabble. Second, Nancy was remarkably versatile, having done everything from school teaching to social work to a vocational time as a Catholic sister. And third, she was funny—gifted with an absolute genius for finding the humorous and the humanity, even in the most difficult situations. Her humor—like her radiant smile—conveyed warmth, a sincerity, and an openness to listeners that made you like and trust her instantly. At the same time, Nancy’s ability to find the laughable in life also hinted at deeper things: her hard-earned wisdom, extensive education, and humility.

*Nancy lived in the constant sense of God’s loving presence surrounding her and enveloping the entire creation.*

Nancy was a relentlessly joyful individual. Joyful in a way that is deeper than a mood, not in that artificial giddiness that poses as joy among some folks who are grimly determined to convince you they are obsessively happy. Rather, Nancy lived in the constant sense of God’s loving presence surrounding her and enveloping the entire creation. Since both of us were teachers,  
*cont. on page 39*



*Goodbye, Fellowship Sister,  
cont. from p. 38*

*The Wolf of Gubbio Fellowship, from left, Linda Cannata, Weston Cook, Nancy Chiafulio, Bob Thomas, Barbara Wilbur, and Julie Goodin. The Wolf of Gubbio has been hit hard with the deaths of two beloved members, Nancy and Julie, following each other so closely.*



we often confided our frustrations to each other. I never left her company without learning something, without a couple of chuckles, and without marveling at the sense of adventure and fun she always found in the classroom. For Nancy, even the tedious and the venal was just another stage for the human comedy, opportunities for compassion and her quiet leadership.

To me, Nancy Chiafulio embodied the Franciscan quality of joy that a life in the companionship of Christ might reveal. In this aching age in which we live, we may find the discord and distractions of our own lives too shrill a challenge to sustain a joyous life. Yet, thanks be to God, we might receive the gift of recognizing those who manage to provide the humble models of how we might come closer to this gentlest of goals.

Thank you, Lord, for Nancy's time in ours lives. May her exhilaration find joy in Your rest and company. *Goodbye, Jersey girl!* ♦

**Blessings and Joy, Dear  
Sister, on Your Eternal  
Journey**

*By Beth Harris*

**I** met Nancy Chiafulio on July 7, 2017 when I drove from Smithfield, Virginia, to Burlington, North Carolina, for the Wolf of Gubbio Fellowship meeting on the following day. Martha Knight, my Assistant Formation Director, told Nancy about me (I was a new postulant) and how I needed to attend fellowship meetings. At the time, Burlington was the closest fellowship to me., and it's a 3 ½ hour drive. It's also the city I grew up in, so I love to go back there, even though I have no family left living there. Nancy emailed me and said she would be thrilled if I came and stayed with her at her home, and we could go to the meeting together. The minute Nancy opened her door and gave me a most hearty, joyful welcome, I knew we would be friends.

*cont. on page 40*

*Blessings and Joy,  
cont. from p. 39*

*The minute Nancy opened her door and gave me a most hearty, joyful welcome, I knew we would be friends....I think we laughed practically the whole time I was with her.*

We had great times, and it blessed us both. She opened her home to me, said the extra bedroom was my room, and told me I was welcome any time. Since she didn't drive, I always took her to her favorite place, Mike's Deli, so we could get the best New York Reuben sandwiches ever made. And she said it was an authentic New York deli because the owners had moved from New York where they had owned a deli. Then on Saturday I'd drive her to the fellowship meeting, and then back to Mike's Deli for lunch.

I think we laughed practically the whole time I was with her. She loved telling me stories of the time she was a nun in a Catholic convent. She said she and three other young nuns would sneak off to smoke! She received her college education while at the

convent. When she graduated, she wanted to be a teacher, but the Mother Superior told her she had to work in administration in the convent. This upset Nancy so badly that she made the decision to leave the convent, but she paid back the money they had spent on her education. She said that was only fair.

She went on to become a teacher, and she taught disadvantaged teens in a very poor part of the city. She said when she told her mother what poor families these kids came from, her mother would frequently send homemade Italian food to them. Nancy loved those kids, and from the notes and cards she kept, they loved her too.

Nancy had a huge heart and loved all things Franciscan. Almost every time I left on Saturday for the trip back to Virginia, I carried a Franciscan gift with me—a St. Francis figurine, a TSSF mug, a St. Francis t-shirt that is so big I use it as a nightshirt, a book on St. Francis, a beautiful silver Tau cross, and other little things. In between the funny stories about her childhood and teaching days, we'd talk about spiritual things.

She had a very deep faith and was not afraid of dying. When she told me she had decided to stop the chemo, she said she knew what it meant and she was OK with it. Mary Speight was Nancy's longtime friend, and her family was Nancy's "family." When she called about Nancy's passing, she told me that Nancy had said that she had had a good life and was ready to see her Lord. She got her wish on Monday, May 27, and I am sure she has everyone laughing in her new home! ♦

*Poem*

*An Order, After All*

*By Rick Bellows*

We seek balance with  
All life and all things.  
We're humanity incarnate  
And God incarnate—  
Jesus on earth,  
Rebuilding the church  
By loving the world.  
We're equality at eye level,  
The invitation hand delivered,  
Humility and trust,  
Down to earth peace.

Simplicity brings clarity  
To our worship, prayer, and charity,  
How we mirror God to the world  
And the world's needs to God.  
Humility shapes our power—  
Always shared, never hoarded.  
It emphasizes listening over speaking.  
We are called to love mercy,  
do justice, and walk humbly  
with God and each other.  
We're an Order, after all.

We live for joy, love, activism, prayer,  
And to be who we are before God,  
Nothing more, but also nothing less.  
We come from God  
And we're going to God

Holding ourselves accountable  
To do what is ours to do:  
To give our all to God who loves us,  
Making us a loving community.  
We're an Order, after all,  
And love makes all the difference. ♦

*Contemporary mosaic and sculpture grace the sign outside Assisi that points to San Damiano, where it all began. Photo by Alice Baird.*

