



The Franciscan Times

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

Pace e bene

Summer 2020

From Our Bishop Protector

The Rt. Rev. David Rice

Yesterday [June 4], we paused and remained silent as we joined with millions in a National Day of Mourning. The intention of the day was to remember and grieve over 107,000 people no longer with us in the US and over 371,000 worldwide. And we are painfully aware that those numbers continue to increase daily.

And so, we remember and we grieve.

We have identified that public health will always take priority over economics. We have acknowledged that communal and theological responsibility will always supersede individual rights. And we have named that the very best way we can ensure care of and for one another is by taking care of ourselves through adherence to protocols and precautions.

And so, we remember and we grieve.

Tired and weary and grieving we are. We have been engulfed by COVID-19. It has redefined and refigured most aspects of our lives. It has taken life from us, both literally and figuratively. And as a result, we will never be the same.

And so, we remember and we grieve.

And yesterday, in-and-around our pausing and remaining silent, we were yet again confronted by images of protestation. Protests continue to occur throughout many of our cities from Minneapolis to Los Angeles to New York to Seattle to Washington, D.C., and innumerable places in between. And the images prompt us to grieve even more deeply. The grieving about which I write comes from hearing chants of “*I can’t breathe.*” The grieving takes place as we see a memorial, a chalk drawing on a wall surrounded by flowers and people kneeling in quietness. The grieving occurs as we see businesses looted, vehicles torched, and unmitigated despondency and rage on display.

Let’s be clear, the violence in our streets must stop. This violence and opportunistic destruction will not bring solace to our rage or despondency or grief. The violence must stop. However, what must continue are the peaceful and prophetic protests declaring that brutality, inequality, and injustice have no place on our streets or in our lives.

And so, grieve we must. And may our grief lead us to peaceful action, to peaceful change.

And so, we remember and we grieve.

Yesterday, we paused and remained silent. There is a time and place to pause and to remain silent and there is a time and place to act and to give voice. Now is our time to act and to give voice. The other pandemic in our midst must also stop. Racism has no place on our streets or in our lives.

And so, we remember and we grieve.

Remain silent we must not, if we dare follow Jesus. Remain silent we must not, if we dare live out our Baptismal Covenant:

David Rice, cont. on page 4



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*Keep in your prayers the lives
lost in the pandemic
throughout our Province*

Brazil—50,000

Canada—8500

Costa Rica—12

Cuba—85

Dominican Republic—655

Ecuador—4200

El Salvador—93

Guatemala—483

Guyana—12

Jamacia—10

Mexico—21,000

Nevis—0

Panama—485

Peru—800

Tobago & Trinidad—8

US—121,000

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

“I will, with God’s help.”

The very breath was taken from George Floyd on Monday, May 25. On May 31, six days later, the Church celebrated Pentecost, God breathing God’s very breath into God’s People.

Sisters and Brothers, George Floyd wasn’t the first person of color to have his breath taken from him. Unfortunately, the list is far too long to recount. We can say this with absolute certainty: we are called to breathe our breath, the very breath of God into this grieving world in which we live. And we are called to act and to give voice to ensure that no breath is ever taken away again.

And so, we remember and we grieve.

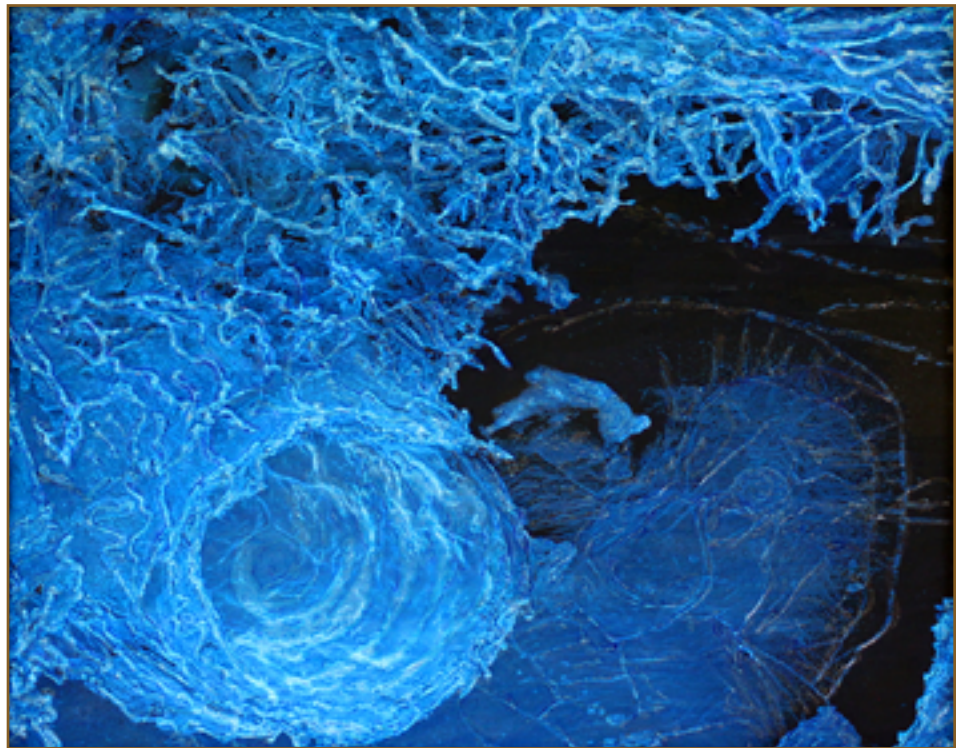


From the Editorial Desk: Fertile Ground

*Alice Baird
Assistant Editor*

*The stories in this issue point
to a fertile time of waiting, of
preparation, of being in the
desert, with God.*

*"Fertile Ground," painting by
Janet Strickler, 16" x 20"
Clear silicone caulk,
watercolor, and acrylic.*



Just as Janet Fedders was captivated by the painting entitled “Enassamishhinjiweian” (“Hope of Good Things to Come,” see page 10) and had it reproduced on our Daily Provincial Covid Prayer, I was inspired by TSSF artist Janet Strickler’s painting entitled “Fertile Ground” and wanted to use it as an introduction to this issue of *The Franciscan Times*.

While my initial reaction to the alarming spread of the novel coronavirus around the globe had been one of pervasive anxiety and visceral grief, I, like many of the writers in this issue, have come to realize that this strange pause in our communal life can

Fertile Ground cont. on page 5

*Fertile Ground,
cont. from p. 4*

be a time of spiritual renewal and positive change in the world: in other words, *fertile ground*. Certainly the reactions of some state and local governments to the Black Lives Matter protests are proving hopeful, and our turning inward has caused us to examine what is true, what is good, and what is important in our lives.

What if this is a time of preparation for a better world, one where social justice and equality take priority over racism and greed?

Recently I participated in an online retreat, whose leader compared the seeming wasteland of our lockdowns, social distancing, and deprivation of the Eucharist to Jesus' time in the desert. His was not merely an ascetic withdrawal from the world: it was a time of preparation for his ministry.

What if this is a time of preparation for the coming of a better world, one where social justice and equality take priority over racism and greed, one where getting ahead at all costs gives way to lifting others up?

Janet Strickler based "Fertile Ground" on "a scanning electron microscope photo from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory of beneficial soil fungus around the root of a pine tree." Explaining her inspiration, she wrote:

Beneath the surface of our yards and gardens, forests and parks, lies an unseen world of creatures and micro-organisms which are crucial to the health of the soil: insects and worms, bacteria and fungi. Even in times that seem desolate above ground, these little beings are doing their thing, making a welcoming environment for new roots and new growth.

If we look below the surface, inside ourselves, are we creating an environment that will allow the Presence of God to take root in us? What habits and practices might we want to cultivate, even if they are invisible to the outside world, that will help us be fertile ground for God's work to thrive in our lives?

We hope you will spend time with this issue and that it will nurture your soul.

It struck me that while the artist drew her inspiration for "Fertile Ground" from a micro world, I see in the painting a cosmic view of the whorl of the waters of Creation. I see the great energy of change. At a time when we were witnessing images of angry orange flames on the news, I gravitated to the brilliant blue of sea and sky and heaven. I saw that I could immerse myself in life, in hope.

The stories in this issue point to a fertile time of waiting, of preparation, of being in the desert, with God. We hope you will spend time with this issue and that it will nurture your soul. ♦

FROM THE PROVINCIAL MINISTER

What Does Obedience Mean to You?

Janet Fedders

Please write down what Obedience to the Third Order means to you, and share your thoughts with Janet Fedders.

Here's a loaded question for you all: What does Obedience mean to you? Let me put a little tag on the question for you. What does Obedience to the Third Order mean to you?

I was talking about this with Clark Berge the other day (Guardian of Hillfield Friary). We laughed about the idea of Obedience to God being easy to describe. We all do it. We all make it part of who we are. We may even think that's the easy one compared to Obedience to the Third Order Society of St. Francis.

In my thinking, Obedience (as expressed in our disciplines) to God is the key in the door. Insert key; door opens wide to God's nearer presence.

What is Obedience to the Order though? We say that we agree to abide by decisions made by Chapter. Is that our Obedience? Is that the extent of it? And do we? Is this why some of us still think of the workings of the Order as "top-down?" Is that another way of bristling that we had no say-so in what Chapter "decrees?" Is that part of it?

So, to return to my question about Obedience. Obedience to what? To the Principles? To our Rule of Life? To Chapter? Is there a part of Obedience that informs our interactions with each other?

Please take some time if you can and write down what Obedience to the Third Order means to you. Let's talk about this. We'll collect your thoughts and report back to you in the next issue of *Franciscan Times*.

Blessings to you all. ♦

What is Needed Now?

Janet Fedders

Not too long ago, the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NAECC) met via Zoom. There were quite a few of us and our President, Masud Ibn Syedullah, led us into thinking about "What is Needed Now?" This is a question we were asking even before we were hit by the pandemic. Now, the answer seems a little more elusive, at least until we come to something called the Other Side. Assuming there will ever be a discernible Other Side. Complementary to Masud's question is another, "What can we do for the Church right now?" This second question seems to me to appeal to our Franciscan charism. Francis's utter devotion to the Church motivates us as well. What can we do for the Church right now?

One of our responses is prayer. We are praying communally with the Society of St. Francis brothers in the prayer that they composed and we adopted for our Daily Obedience use. And we held a 24-7 prayer vigil for the Presiding Bishop and his staff during Holy Week. What a profound experience that was! In fact, when the Community

What is Needed Now, cont. on page 7

*What is Needed Now,
cont. from p. 6*

***What can we do for the
Church right now?***

of the Gospel heard about it at the NAECC meetings, they called and wanted details. They then kept a prayer vigil around the pandemic on Ascension Day. So prayer is one response. What else can we do for the Church right now?

Many of us are assisting our priests in the overload of work and new kinds of worship they are having to lead. We are also focusing on the Episcopal Church in Navajoland with our prayers. (Many of you have donated money to the Navajo, as has the Third Order officially, from my discretionary fund and from our own Medical Mission Fund. The Third Order has had a presence in Navajoland for a long time, beginning with Fr. H. Baxter Liebler, then with Fr. Henry Bird, Fr. Jack Fowler, Bishop Mark MacDonald, and Deacon Jean Treece. We are there now too, with Carol Tookey and Les Lundquist.)

I invite you to think of what else the Church might need now—from us. Presiding Bishop Curry expresses interest in inviting Religious to produce a series of videos on living the Way of Love, especially on the use of a Rule of Life. NAECC is working on this. Where might our Franciscan and Clarian energy be put to real use? Do our priests and deacons (and bishops) need a “support group”? (I have heard this from several of you, priests and lay alike.)

As we all, each in our way, endeavor to stay on course during these strange times, let’s think about where we might help the Church stay its course too. Will you join me in this? ♦

**But What Can I Do
About Climate Change?
A Conversation with
Mary Harlow**

Janet Fedders

*A conversation with
Mary Harlow, relevant to
practicalities or action items
in this time of change.*

Many of you are asking, “But what can I do?”
“How can I have an impact, especially as a Franciscan?”
“Give me a list.”

Action Items

In conversation with Mary Harlow from the Minnesota Fellowship, a list evolved. Here are some of the Action Items we can all do.

1. Vote. Know which candidates support a strong environmental platform.
2. Implement Meatless Mondays and Fridays; or become meatless, period.
3. Purchase wind or solar power through your local utilities vs. fossil fuel.
4. Avoid unnecessary travel.
5. Know your house and retrofit it gradually for energy efficiency. Insulation, caulking, and programmable thermostats are inexpensive ways to reduce energy consumption. Think about replacing your furnace or windows, which is of course more expensive. Switch out incandescent for LED light bulbs.

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*But What Can I Do, cont.
from p. 7*

6. Turn down the heat and turn up air conditioning 1 degree a week.
7. Wash clothes in cold water and hang to dry, indoors or out.
8. Reduce water usage in your home by being mindful of water consumption: take shorter showers, turn on water faucets for as short a period as possible, install efficient shower heads and faucets, replace appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers, and install toilets that use less water.
9. Compost. Do organic recycling if your city provides this. Food scraps and yard waste make up 20-30% of the waste system.

RESIST CONSUMPTION....REUSE WHAT YOU CAN.....RECYCLE

Systemic Changes

In terms of more systemic changes:

Divest.

Remember when college students in the 1980s demanded that their colleges and churches disinvest in South Africa? It worked, and Nelson Mandela said it did. Empty your portfolio (if you're lucky enough to have one) of all fossil fuel, chemical, alcohol, tobacco, and pornography (entertainment) stocks so you won't have blood on your hands.

Invest.

Invest in renewable energy companies/enterprises and organic, local food when possible.

Spread the word.

Learn how to talk about care for creation and talk about it to your family, friends, and communities/churches. Spread the word.

Spiritual Changes

In terms of spiritual changes:

Give the Earth a few minutes of your time. Walk outside—if only for 10 minutes. Notice the beauty of the Earth and how that nurtures you. Listen to the Earth. Pray for the healing and preservation of the Earth.

Enjoy silence. Pray in silence. Maggie Ross says the Earth hums in B-flat. Can you hear that?

Consider the spirituality of food and your relationship to the Earth. Share your experiences with others.

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Plant seeds of all kinds.

Begin the deep journey of knowing where you live. Have an internal compass of knowing what lies in each compass point direction from where you are. Imagine the unique resonance and unfolding story of where you live. Practice orienting yourself in relation to other intersections, maybe water courses, fault lines, or rock outcrops. Learn about the indigenous who used to live where you do.

There really are a lot of things you can do about climate change.

So, you see, there really are a lot of things *you* can do about climate change. ♦

Our Daily Provincial Prayer with Our Brothers

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

They cried to the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.

Most Merciful and Triune God,

We come to You in our weakness.

We come to You in our fear.

We come to You with trust.

For You alone are our hope.

We place before you the disease present in our world.

We turn to You in our time of need.

Introducing the Artist, Tom Uttech

Candia Thew

Enassamishhinijweian, 2009
Oil on linen, 103" X 112"
Crystal Bridges Museum of
American Art, Bentonville,
Arkansas

© Tom Uttech, courtesy
Alexandre Gallery, New York
Photograph: Steven Watson



In April Janet Fedders sent to us a prayer sheet with a beautiful painting that headed our Provincial Prayer with the Brothers. This work of art, teeming with birds and animals in an imaginary northern wilderness landscape, is named in Ojibway *Enassamishhinijweian*, meaning, “hope of good things to come.” What an appropriate hope on many levels, as we pray for the healing of our families, friends, and neighbors during our COVID-19 pandemic and for the healing of our earth as we pray with our sacred ecology mandate in mind.

The artist is Tom Uttech (1942-), an American landscape painter and photographer. He lives with his family on a small farm outside of Milwaukee in Saukville where he has his studio.

His paintings are inspired by the unspoiled wilderness of northern Wisconsin and Minnesota as well as the Quetico Provincial Park, Ontario. He paints from the memories he brings back from his walks in the woods and from his canoe and camping trips, translating them into much more than a photograph or a pictorial representation. An Audubon enthusiast, he has been fascinated by birds and birding since he was a child, a lifelong study that is well represented in the myriad of bird species that populate his canvasses.

His landscapes, which are not a description of any actual place or time but are based on his imaginary remembrances, have as their foundation the rocks and boulders of the Precambrian shield of the north country. Here, evergreens, lichen, moss, birds and native

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Tom Uttech, cont. from p. 10

(but sometimes fictional or symbolic) creatures are deliberately introduced in a combination that gives his paintings a magical or spiritual quality. In an interview at the Smithsonian, he states that his paintings are not “a specific representation,” but are of “fictional creatures that can be influenced by my design, a design that carries the meaning of what I want to represent [and which] I keep painting over and over until I get it right.” Light also plays a role and may be reflected in water, the sky, and the air, contributing to an other-worldly magic of each scene.

The painting is named Enassamishhinijweian, meaning, in Ojibway, “hope of good things to come.”

He has been called by John Thornton (*Tom Uttech: Magic Beyond Belief*) “a man who cannot live without nature [and where] his love for wilderness is overflowing.” When our world opens again, I recommend a trip to see this painting in its original frame at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas. (There is also a April 2020, five-minute YouTube in which a conservationist at this museum leads the viewer on an exploration of the painting (https://youtu.be/BEig1x_Qf2g).

Several other museums whose permanent collections house his paintings are listed on the internet, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Wisconsin Art (MOWA) in West Bend, Wisconsin. Meanwhile, before you venture out, there are some interviews that you can find on the internet that will provide insight into his art and the artist himself. A book by Margaret Andera, *Magnetic North: The Landscapes of Tom Uttech*, Milwaukee Art Museum, 2004, is also available. ♦

Erratum:

Our apologies to Mary Tarantini, whose poem, below, appeared in our last issue minus its last stanza. A.B.

God Moved Into the Neighborhood **Mary Tarantini**

God moved into the neighborhood
I opened my front door
A surge of swallows swept down the street
And shook me to the core

A wave reached up and blessed the sky
And then returned to me
Enveloping my soul in bliss
Then flowed north with the sea

I followed to the ocean shore
A dove with silver wings
Flew past me with a knowing smile
On her way to crown the King

My feet sank deep into the sand
My spirit lifted free
A voice as lonely as the wind said –
Come and follow me

RACIAL HEALING

Statement from Chapter

June 9, 2020

As followers of Jesus, the Third Order Society of St. Francis, Province of the Americas, “is pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind.”

We lament the role we have played in racism, both intentionally and unintentionally, in the past and today.

As expressed in one of our liturgies, “We confess the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.”

Beyond personal expressions of racial prejudice, we recognize the even more destructive policies and practices of institutional racism which favor one race over others, preventing a just community.

Love is always the answer. We are committed to press forward in love. We are called to listen, pray, and love, because we know deep within ourselves that God’s bountiful, encompassing, and liberating love is for all.

As followers of Christ in the world, there is much for us to do. Regardless of past failures, God is calling us right now to transform our cultures, our societies, and the future, for the good of us all.

Let us not be faint of heart but rejoice in the work!

In our next message, we will share ways of Prayer, Study, and Work that can take us deeper in this moment, and in the months to come, deeper into studying injustice of all kinds.

May God’s love surround you.



Peace and All Good,
Janet Fedders



Followup Statement from Chapter

June 10, 2020

If we look at our Principles, we are called to Prayer, Study and Work. These are our ways of service. During this time and in the months to come, we ask you to pick one, or more than one, but please discern where you are called and do **something**, so that our community is united in response. Here are some ideas.

Prayer

What does the Lord require of us? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

Pick a special prayer time. You can pray for our Province, for the whole Body of Christ, and for peace. If you need more prayer ideas or would like a copy of a set of Peace mysteries for use with the Rosary, contact Chapter member Janet Strickler.

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*Chapter Followup Statement,
cont. from p. 12*

Study

Should Study be your choice, Chapter members Tracey Carroll and John Rebstock have shared these weblinks for resources.

- Find a comprehensive list of anti-racism resources at <https://tinyurl.com/y7auxs4h>. Are you computer-free? Ask someone in your Fellowship to print this list out for you.
- Or explore Talking about Race, from the Smithsonian Museum of African-American History and Culture at <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>.
- There are also webinars you can attend at the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing, or check out Dr. Catherine Meeks' teachings on Finding Brave Space (<http://www.centerforracialhealing.org/>). These are important because they feature black voices.
- The Digital Poor People's March was held on June 20, and you can read about their campaign platform at <https://tinyurl.com/ybyemnaf> and their fact sheets at <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/learn/>.

*Please discern where you are called
and do something, so that our
community is united in response.*

Work

- *Listen.* Is there someone you know or interact with whose experience of what is going on is different from yours? Ask them to tell you about it, and listen without judgement and without countering with your own opinion. Just seek to understand.
- *Write.* Share your experiences in writing.
- *Walk in nature.* Listen to nature. Bring creation into your processing of what is happening around us.

*It is important that we
embrace this work in
intentional community
with those who are
different from us.*

And that's not all.

As we move into summer, your leadership team will be providing other opportunities for deepening our walk, our understanding, and our humility. We will let you know of these as they become available.

It is important that we embrace this work in intentional community with those who are different from us. Transformation requires that kind of understanding and clarity. We will need to hear "the deep that calls to our deep."



Knee on My Neck: Slavery's Ghost

Masud Ibn Syedullah



Masud Ibn Syedullah

Since the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, protests have sprung up across the United States and around the world demanding real change. Is this the time for that change? Is this the moment to make a lasting difference? It CAN be. Let's not let it slip by.

These atrocities not only represent the effects of personal, prejudicial attitudes about race, but are indicative of insidious racist principles imbedded in the very fabric of many, if not most, American institutions—existing from the nation's inception. Slavery, an institution at the core of national life, both North and South, was viewed as an economic necessity justified by disavowing the humanity of those enslaved. These two principles supported the institution of slavery and have made their way through the history of the United States to our day, being expressed and enforced through various institutions, both governmental and private.

Systemic Racism

One need not feel personal attitudes of bigotry and racism to participate in perpetuating racist ideas and actions. They are so much a part of the systems and structures of our society that they generally go unnoticed—unless you are negatively affected by them personally. Although racial prejudice is all too often expressed in interpersonal encounters, with black, brown, red, and yellow people being subjected to demeaning and deadly attitudes and actions based solely on the color of their skin, the problem of racism in the United States is far more pernicious. Beyond such personal expressions of racially based prejudice is the existence of laws, policies, and procedures of government and private institutions that favor white people over People of Color. The two principles of economic advantage and disavowal of the humanity of People of Color for the benefit of whites continue in today's American systems and structures. Those who accept and participate in those systems and structures unknowingly (and many knowingly) perpetuate racist ideas and actions that “corrupt and destroy the creatures of God.”

Is this the moment to make a lasting difference? It CAN be. Let's not let it slip by.

Currently across the United States and in many parts of the world, the policies and practices of police departments, health care systems, educational systems, the justice system, real estate and lending institutions, and other areas of our common life are being examined—and challenged—revealing many policies and practices to be unjust, designed to benefit whites while disadvantaging People of Color and putting them at risk. The themes of economic advantage and the disavowing of human value persist. The ghost of slavery lurks among us, continuing to oppress.

It is time for us, people of faith committed to the Way of Jesus, and particularly we who follow Jesus in the Way of St. Francis, to examine how the principles of economic advantage and disavowing the humanity of others go counter to our commitment to “strive

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*Knee on My Neck,
cont. from p. 14*

for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.” It is time for us to look more keenly at our Baptismal Covenant and Third Order Principles (look again at Day 7 of the Principles) to ask how they speak to the social, systemic, and structural policies of our time, and what that requires of us— each and all of us—as we persevere in the Way of Jesus and Francis.

Presentations Well Worth Your Time

It is time for us to look more keenly at our Baptismal Covenant and Third Order Principles to ask how they speak to the social, systemic, and structural policies of our time, and what that requires of us— each and all of us— as we persevere in the Way of Jesus and Francis.

Furthermore, I invite (even urge) you to take the time to view the following presentations that make clear the reality and damage of institutional policies that perpetuate racist ideas and actions in our society.

These presentations, offered by Dr. Wornie Reed, Director of the Race and Social Policy Center of Virginia Tech, were the centerpiece of a program for racial justice sponsored by the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. There are three presentations, each about 75 minutes, with

Q & A following, and a half-hour interview in summary— each presentation is well worth the time.

Please view the following:

Part 1 – Lexington:

https://youtu.be/0q_lxMf82qE

Part 2 – Roanoke:

<https://youtu.be/jpgJEH1Q2PA>

Part 3 – Wytheville:

<https://youtu.be/1VRVDU4Hevo>

Extended Interview – Wytheville:

<https://youtu.be/jqjRoMtBokU>

God has placed each of us in this particular time and place on the earth. Paraphrasing Jesus’ words, “Let us be about our Father’s business.”

Your brother in Christ, Francis, and Clare,

Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF



Is It a Riot or a Revolution?

Sonya Riggins-Furlow

**Editor's Note:*

The quote by James Baldwin appeared in the New York Times on February 18, 1965, a few days after his epochal debate with William F. Buckley, Jr. entitled "The American Dream is at the expense of the American Negro, held at the University of Cambridge in England. The full New York Times report may be found at <https://www.nytimes.com/images/blogs/papercuts/baldwin-and-buckley.pdf>

In a civilized society, there is no excuse for looting and "protestors" turning to violence.

I am the mother of a young black man. When Trayvon Martin was murdered, I told my son not to post on Facebook, not to march, period, definitely not at night.

It's hard to tell a young black man what to do, but he has been raised in church. As an acolyte and with Franciscan spirituality covering him, he has been the center of peace in his small circle many times. But, he still has to deal with the outside world and policing in America.

We are systematically being stripped of that which made us African. We are not recognized as Americans because of skin color, and that is why a policeman can place his knee on our neck until all breath is gone. All our breaths be gone. George Floyd is a mirror.

In 1965 James Baldwin declared in a debate entitled *"The American Dream and the American Negro"*:

*"It comes as a great shock...to discover that the flag to which you have pledged allegiance...has not pledged allegiance to you. It comes as a great shock to see Gary Cooper killing off the Indians, and although you are rooting for Gary Cooper, that the Indians are you." **

We are not full citizens.

Perhaps the eyes that are witnessing the events of the past week are the eyes that invaded the land, suppressed the people of the land, went to another land, stole a people to work the land, and created wealth on the backs of the exploited peoples. And now, just want to be done with us.

When you see us coming, we have a percentage taken off because of skin color.

We are not fully Americans.

Racial prejudice in this country is real, tangible and yet at times subtle. Months ago, I hosted a Black Lives Matter Group, and at the end I was asked if I had remarks. They were all tense, expecting a long prayer. Malcolm X said there are times when you must leave your religion at home. I was impressed with those young people, and I felt their struggle and frustration. I told them: *Be encouraged!* Even today, I can say to protestors, the marchers: *Be encouraged!*

A breakthrough is happening. And it's real, tangible, and sometimes subtle. ♦

Even today, I can say to protestors, the marchers: Be encouraged!

A breakthrough is happening. And it's real, tangible, and sometimes subtle.

On Politics, Anger, and Lovingkindness

James Alexander



James Alexander

When it came to the social/racial situation in the mid-50s when I was born, things weren't so great for the poor and minorities. We were a poor family, neither of my parents had finished high school (indeed, my mom only completed 4th grade). All throughout the 50s and 60s, Kansas City, Missouri, where I grew up, was highly segregated. When we first moved to Kansas City from Chicago, when I was about 5, we moved in with my aunt, who lived in an area that had transitioned to being largely black. A year or so later, when I started school, the situation was beginning to change in Kansas City.

Black folks were getting tired of segregated neighborhoods and inadequate schools. Anger began to stir. The black areas of town were largely poor, and it seemed that most arrests in the city were made in the black community. The response by the largely white and more affluent folks was to keep moving out of neighborhoods that became mixed. When there was an outcry concerning unequal educational opportunities after mandatory desegregation of schools, the answer of the white school board was to put in place a vocational program in a largely black high school called Principles of Sanitation—largely aimed at training folks to be garbage collectors. (I wasn't aware of this at the time but learned of it in a mandatory training class dealing with racial dynamics when I taught for Kansas City Schools in the 1990s.)

One of the corollaries of this segregation and inequality was the perception in the city that the police unfairly targeted minority groups. That seemed pretty obvious. All you had to do was watch the evening news. Most crime and policing activities disproportionately took place in the African-American community. The disproportionate representation of people of color given to the care of the justice system became even more obvious to me when I became director of a literacy program at a state prison. How could it be, I wondered, that most folks in the state were white, and so many inmates were black and brown?

So, that is indeed the continuing situation even now. I currently live near Indianapolis. A recent case here (representative, not really unusual) deals with a young black man, Dreasjon "Sean" Reed, who was killed by the police after a high-speed car chase. This young man had finally stopped his car, gotten out, and began to run from the police. As he ran away, he was shot and killed. His mom, quite distraught, says that she knows he was doing something wrong, but why, she asks, did the police have to take his life?

That question can be asked over and over again. Most recent in memory, George Floyd, about whom no crime has been proven, unless it is the crime of being a person of color, is choked to death without mercy.

People have had it! Black and brown folks have had enough! Many white folks have had enough as well. So, folks are marching and protesting.

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*Of Politics, Anger, and
Loving-kindness, cont. from
p. 17*

My son lives in Oakland, California. He and his wife felt compelled to join the outcry in their city and joined a protest. There was to be a citywide curfew at 8 p.m. Although, as near as he could tell, there was nothing destructive or violent being perpetrated by the protestors, law enforcement officials began using tear gas and rubber bullets at 7:30.

Then, he reported to me in a phone conversation, more disruptive folks in the crowd began looting and breaking windows. He understood that when oppressed people protest peacefully and are met with excessive force by representatives of the government, anger begins to take over. Chalk it up, he said, to years of frustration.

My Franciscan Soul Gets Angry too

And anger. My Franciscan soul gets angry too. As Franciscans, we are on the side of justice. We are on the side of the oppressed. We are on the side of the disenfranchised. We know, without a doubt that Black and Brown Lives Matter. They are precious to God.

Yes, we are on the side of the oppressed. But are we on the side of the oppressor as well? We know that we have not always done so well ourselves. We haven't always spoken out. Maybe we haven't even cared as much as we should. We need forgiveness. We need to pray for forgiveness for our nation, and for ourselves.

The Operative Word is Love

This brings me to our Franciscan Principles. They tell us that it is our task to spread Jesus's love everywhere. Spread peace and harmony. Have humility. Work against injustice. Take a stand against class distinction. All of that, certainly. But I think the operative word is love. We can read all about love in I Corinthians. We can read all about not taking into account a wrong suffered. We read of the nature of love being patience and kindness. It is a love beyond words and theories.

*There is the crux of it:
we need our indignation
and anger. Also, we must
love.*

I've been thinking about how my anger and what seems to me righteous indignation concerning politicians, movements, and parties are so natural. Don't get me wrong, that may not be a bad thing at all. We should be angry at injustice. We should be appalled at actions of governments (including our own) that hurt people. The anger demonstrated on the streets of this nation in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing has already moved municipalities and state houses throughout the country to action.

There is the crux of it: we need our indignation and anger. Also, we must love. "Be angry, but do not sin...." "Love your enemies...pray for (them)."

The Metta Prayer

I have been thinking about the Buddhist practice of *Metta*. Many Buddhist teachers call this loving-kindness meditation. It involves using some phrases of good intention towards others. Many teachers recommend using these phrases to express good intent towards

*Of Politics, Anger, and
Loving-kindness,
cont. from p. 18*

someone for whom you have unconditional positive regard. Next, using the same phrases, you concentrate on a friend. Then, you focus on someone about whom you have neutral feelings. From there, the intentions of good move to those you do not like.

This isn't exactly a prayer, as it is commonly taught. The goal isn't really to change the ones that are the objects of our intentions. If it is about change at all, it is about changing ourselves. I have been doing a lot of loving-kindness meditation lately. However, I view my meditation both as a way to change my attitudes and also as a prayer for good intentions for others. I make my meditation about those that are making me angry, and at times resentful.

I use these phrases:

May you have a life filled with peace.

May you have ease of wellbeing.

May you find fullness of joy.

May you be embraced by love.

I say these silently and meditatively. I coordinate the phrases with my breathing. I close my eyes and listen to the words. I have been finding that it helps. Does it help those for whom I send my intentions? I don't know. It does seem to help me. Sometimes I think that the real problem with the folks in my meditations might just be that they are lacking peace, wellbeing, joy, and love.

This doesn't mean that I am not going to be angry. It doesn't mean that I am not going to do what I can to change structures and leaders that I think are not helpful. It doesn't mean that I will not work with likeminded people to elect representatives who would be my best choice (always remembering how flawed politics and governments are).

It does mean that I choose to love others no matter who they are or what they do. ♦

COVID - 19

Haiku

New Life Continues

New life continues
Not expected, yet I trust
Joy awaits.

*A robin's nest among the roses.
Photo by Alice Baird.*



Be Not Afraid

Diana Turner-Forte



Diana Turner-Forte found GRACE in her experiences of COVID-19 and lockdown.

The message I received in those first few moments of testing my aliveness was "Be not afraid."

The roof of my mouth felt like razor blades. Suddenly I was very warm, overcome with fatigue and had to sit down to finish teaching. When I finally arrived home, I collapsed onto my bed, not to wake up for twelve hours. At which time, I determined that I was seriously ill and cancelled classes, a decision that extended into several weeks. I developed a painful, raspy cough, it felt like something was sitting on my chest. My body ached, and I was either freezing or sweating. For several days I was mostly in a horizontal position getting up long enough for Kenn to change and wash sheets and offer me spoonfuls of soup. His level of anxiety must have reached an apex because on Day Three, he asked, "Should we go to emergency?" My response was several convulsive coughs.

Unapologetically, I admit that I was terrified. That evening I lay in bed sweating, coughing, and sometimes, literally, choking, holding my progressively sorer throat as Pierre, my miniature schnauzer, nestled closer to me. I had never felt so bad in my entire life, and the added complication of not being able to breathe increased my alarm. Intuitively I knew that breathing was critical to healing, but unable to do that—I thought I was dying!

The next day I woke up and gingerly put my feet on the floor. The room was no longer spinning, and my head had stopped throbbing. My aching-body symptoms had subsided, and I could maintain a vertical position (sitting at least)—what a blessing. The message I received in those first few moments of testing my aliveness was *"Be not afraid."*

GRACE

That was early February 2020, before everything was shut down due to the novel coronavirus. I had already experienced COVID-19 and would be hard pressed to be convinced otherwise. Since I was not functioning on all cylinders, experiencing occasional dizzy spells and bouts of coughing, I did not rush back to work but rested in nature: my first lesson. Weeks later, as the world unraveled into mass hysteria and fear, I watched and listened. Having already suffered through the illness, I could be attentive to what was happening and figured I had two choices as I walked through the stay-at-home mandate: to dwell on bearing witness to political gaffes, misinformation, and scapegoating, or devote time to soul-tending.

When I chose the latter, a whole new world opened to me and I was given a word to contemplate, *GRACE: God, Resilience, Air, Creativity, and Earth.*

G: God

My inward journey demanded of me an affirmation of my faith in *God*, that divine source I invoke regularly, sometimes automatically, and certainly habitually. Devotional time and prayer would not

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Be Not Afraid, cont. from p. 20

end the immediate crises, suffering, and grief of some families, but prayer was a pathway towards solidarity with others and harnessing compassion for worldwide suffering, thus releasing those energies to a loving God. To hold those moments in balance with its many nuances and not teeter into thoughts of despair or expectant results took faith and intentionality. There were additional sacred moments to be had: virtual worship at the Washington National Cathedral on Sunday mornings. I was also able to just Be, detached from the rigors of a schedule of Doing. I became enthralled with the variety of bird songs on the land where I live and the richness of another season emerging. No matter what evolved during the day, I was learning to let go of anticipations, judgments, and to express gratitude for the smallest of things.

R: Resilience

Acknowledging that mastery was not the goal of this spiritual exercise and that I was to take the world as a whole, I wondered what resilience really meant in a rapidly changing environment? What could I learn from staying at home, not working as I was used to, not grabbing a hot meal from my favorite restaurant, and rushing to get back to teaching, grocery shopping early in the morning to avoid crowds, and social distancing. One of Webster's definitions for resilience is "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness." The Latin, *resiliere*, "to rebound," didn't seem to hold much promise in light of present external circumstances. Between the uncertainty and taking one day at a time, it didn't feel much like a rebound. Attending to Presence each and every moment 24/7 . . . well, that was different.

A: Air

To remind someone who is coughing to breathe seems ludicrous, but COVID-19 directed attention to our lungs. During my illness, I knew I had to relax enough to breathe in order to recover. Air was needed to fulfill the cycle from illness to recovery, especially for those seriously ill. And air

is one of the essential gifts from God, including water, fire, and earth: material elements for existence in a temporal body. Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit upon his disciples (John 20:22). During my recuperation, it was essential to get warm, clean air into my lungs, something that can so easily be taken for granted because breathing is the work of the autonomic nervous system. Unless something is gravely wrong, we don't often think about breathing.

C: Creativity

Creativity was re-gifted to me during the COVID-19 crisis. Since I wasn't running around engaged in busyness, I had time to be curious about possibilities like completing long-delayed projects from knitting to learning the fine art of script writing, sitting with Kenn sorting through a puzzle, doing some deep reflective journaling, and re-working a manual for adults studying classical ballet. After moving past the initial shock of going nowhere for a while, my days became enlivened with a dynamism and energy that I had either become oblivious to or had lost in the minutiae of daily life.

E: Earth

On my more optimistic days, I sensed this quiet time was a metaphor for pressing the pause button on my CD player; a pause to clarify and re-think our society and give us all a chance to evolve toward something different, a new way of functioning together collectively, more holistically. Even in our social isolation, technology provided the tools

to stay connected and (as time passed) celebrate a significant anniversary of Earth Day where the worldwide community could pray, meditate, and explore our relationship

with planet *Earth*. And as stated earlier, I realized early in my recovery, the first step toward healing (when I was able), was resting in nature. Just as we are breathed into Being, so are we expected to be caregivers and sustainers of the land on which we live. Is it not revelatory that so many cities' air quality has improved, waterways are cleaner and clearer, and in places like the Grand Canyon,

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Attending to Presence each and every moment 24/7... well, that was different.

*Be Not Afraid, cont.
from p. 21*

animals are returning to their natural habitat without the threat of humans. Just think about that: in fifty years of environmental education and awareness, mandating that humans “stay-at-home” for the safety of others and ourselves for nearly two months also helped to heal the planet.

So, this word, *GRACE*, acquired unimaginable significance during the COVID-19 “Stay Safe, Stay Home” health mandate. Even now, it keeps me circling with new questions and answers about God, Resilience, Air, Creativity, and the Earth.

*As the cycle builds momentum of vitality, renewal, and healing,
I rest in the comfort and hope of dreaming into existence a
world where:*

*all people and all things are treated with dignity and
respect,*

collaboration complements diversity,

*children and families have clean water and plenty to
eat,*

everyone has access to necessary health care,

wages support a healthy lifestyle, and quality education,

government officials serve “We the people,”

and freedom of speech leads to thoughtful discourse . . .

a world transforming into the kingdom of God.



Lessons from an
Organism 10 Millionth
of a Meter in Size

Rick Pearce

A virus has sharpened my senses and forced me to focus on my immediate environment.

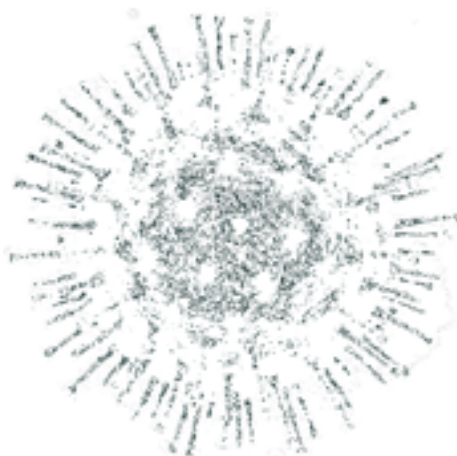
A virus teaches concentration.

A virus has made me see who I am (just a little more clearly) by forcing me to look at who I am not. My identity is not tied to my haircuts, clothes, car, restaurants, church buildings, trips to store, work, nor relatives, not even to being physically close to others.

A virus teaches simplicity.

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*Lessons from an Organism,
cont. from p. 22*



*Along with climate change,
the coronavirus, one ten-
millionth of a meter in
size, is the biggest thing to
happen to Planet Earth in a
century.*

A virus has helped remind me of our class system in the USA: the rich are safe; the middle class relies on deliveries and distance learning; and the poor continue to serve with health risks or become jobless without resources. Nonwhite folks suffer more from this virus due to our preinstalled racism reflected in our health system.

*A virus teaches that the truths of suffering
need to be addressed.*

A virus has made me see who is important: the loving helpers: teachers, delivery people, tradespeople, janitors, nurses, hospital employees, and EMS folks. Billionaires sit in comfortable helplessness, some gouging profit where they can—yet if they lift their heads, they will be frightened by seeing a horizon of change away from a cruel system whose excesses may destroy itself.

*A virus teaches the perspective of love
and the futility of self-interest.*



REFLECTIONS

on Life, Liturgy, and Things Franciscan

Why Is Confession in
Our TSSF Statutes

*Rick Simpson
TSSF Chaplain
Province of the Americas*

Every few years Chapter is asked to reconsider various parts of our Rule. Some years it is about Daily Office; other years it is Confession. This short piece addresses confession, or as our Episcopal Anglican Prayer Books calls it, The Reconciliation of a Penitent.

The nature of reconciliation is that we all are in need of making a good confession. Yes, we have and use a general confession at most of our regular Sunday Eucharists. Daily Office also includes a regular general confession. These are excellent tools and are a part of our daily examen.

But we who follow St. Francis in the Third Order are also under that wonderful spiritual burden to follow in the way of St. Francis. In 1221 Francis asked Cardinal Ugolino di Conti to draft a Rule for the 3rd Order Lay Brothers and sisters. This was the Rule used by Father Joseph in the founding of our North American Third Order. The 1221 Rule stipulated that Private Confession was to be done three times a year. Fr. Joseph reduced it to once a year in our first Rule. Remember that the European Third Order based its first Rule

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upon *Christa Prema Seva Sangha* and the English organization called “The Brotherhood of the Love of Christ.” This expression did not include annual confession, thus the difference between our provinces in the Order.

The real rub of required Reconciliation is theological. We know that God readily forgives us and is merciful; so some say that we do not need an intermediary clergy to confess to. It is true we can go directly to Jesus for forgiveness of our sin. It is also true that when Jesus spoke to the Apostles and his Church during his first post-resurrection appearance in the locked room, he said, “Whatever is loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.” This is the ministry of reconciliation. To forgive each other and to be forgiven is the first act of love we Christians are called to perform. We are not very good at it. We carry anger and resentment against one another, and a good confession can set us on the path of restoration with those where we bear a burden.

St. Francis said to his First Order brothers that if they cannot find a priest to make their confession, they should use another brother, even though they will not receive a sacramental absolution. This tells us that sharing our burdens with another is vital to our spiritual health. Reconciliation is more than personally getting right with God; it is about the healing of our whole community and world.

Our Anglican tradition of reconciliation is that anyone can receive our confession, but only a priest or bishop can pronounce absolution. Having a good conversation with a spiritual friend about our burdens can, according to Francis, fulfill the Rule. There may be times when we do need to hear with our own ears and experience the blessings of absolution.

Reconciliation is the path of restoration and wholeness for the Church and the whole world. Don't get hung up on the how, but rather spread the love of Jesus in doing the work of reconciliation. ♦

From *The First Rule of Saint Francis of Assisi* [1906]

Translator:
Father Paschal Robinson

20—: Of the Confession of the Brothers and of the Reception of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let my blessed brothers, both clerics and laics, confess their sins to priests of our religion. And if they cannot do this, let them confess to other discreet and Catholic priests, knowing firmly and hoping that from whatever Catholic priests they may receive penance and absolution, they will undoubtedly be absolved from these sins if they take care to observe humbly and faithfully the penance enjoined them. If however they cannot then have a priest, let them confess to their brother, as the Apostle James says: “Confess your sins to one another;” but let them not on this account fail to have recourse to priests, for to priests alone the power of binding and loosing has been given. And thus contrite and having confessed, let them receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ with great humility and veneration, calling to mind [54] what the Lord Himself says: “He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life,” and “Do this for a commemoration of Me.”

<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/assisi-the-writings-of-saint-francis-of-assisi>

What It Means to Be a Franciscan

Derek Larson



A modern interpretation of St. Francis preaching to the birds at the Church of the Red Rocks, Sedona, Arizona. Photo by Alice Baird

The life of a Franciscan is a life of poverty. I will go so far as to say there are no rich Franciscans, unless by rich we mean the great riches gained in giving up everything.

When I say a life of poverty, I mean at least three things:

First, I mean the material poverty that causes us to depend upon God and others for our survival and wellbeing. The poverty that for some of us is imposed by the injustice of society and for others is chosen in the renouncing of all the “things” that compete for our attention. The poverty that forsakes the extravagance of society for the extravagance of God’s creation. Lest we think vows of poverty are solely for First Order brothers and sisters, the life of a tertiary is not an exception to poverty but a life of contextual poverty. We adopt an attitude of simplicity, which meets the need of our own context, but nothing more.

Second, by life of poverty I mean the poverty we encounter in the communities that we are called to serve. Communities, which feel the weight of the world’s social sins: racism, white supremacy, sexism, homophobia, classism, greed, and power. We have always on our minds the world’s increasing wealth inequality, the limits to who can afford healthcare, and the walls that separate refugees from shelter. As Francis embraced the most rejected and forgotten in his society, we dedicate our lives not simply to the work of charity, but to the bonds of relationship and compassion with those forced to the margins, remembering that just as we do for the least of these, we do for Jesus (Mt 25:40).

Finally, by life of poverty I mean the spiritual poverty to which Jesus ascribes blessing in Matthew 5. The poverty that calls us to have the same mind as Christ, “who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant” (Phil 2:6-7). As Jesus prayed in the garden, “not my will but your will be done” (Lk. 22:42), we seek to let go of our desires for worldly power, affection, and security to foster a spirit of continual praise of the Father and Provider of all.

The Gifts of Poverty

And yet hidden in each of these things there is a surprise gift.

The first poverty teaches us humility and gives us freedom from the prison of materialism and capitalistic competition. Without a stack of things to defend, Franciscans may be open to experiencing the beauty and gratitude of a world that belongs totally to God and has been graciously and hospitably shared with creation. The things we hold become sacred and priceless because their worth comes not from market value but from divine generosity.

The second poverty teaches us love and gives us authentic friendships and intimacy, for the basis of our relationships comes not from the exchange of material goods but the exchange of mutual affection. Instead of segregation between groups of rich and

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What It Means to Be a Franciscan, cont. from p. 25

Yes, the life of a Franciscan is a life of great wealth.

poor, black and white, American and foreigner, documented and undocumented, we perceive all people as our siblings and fellow children of God.

The third poverty teaches us the meaning of joy by walking us into the very presence of God. It invites us to become participants in the unity of divine Trinitarian love where we find our deepest and truest self as belonging to God.

Yes, the life of a Franciscan is a life of great wealth. I will go so far as to say there are no poor Franciscans, unless by “poor” we mean the great riches gained in giving up everything. ♦

*The 2020 Holy Week Experience in the Time of COVID
from the Perspectives of Clergy and Layperson*

*A Clergy Perspective
High Tech Prayer/
High Touch Holy Week...
and After*

R. John Brockmann

John Naisbitt first developed the concept of *high tech/high touch* in his 1982 bestseller *Megatrends*. He theorized that in a world of abstract, ethereal technology, people longed for personal, human contact. For me, this concept of high tech/high touch was translated to the life of prayer in a book by Cornelia Jessey *The Prayer of Cosa: Praying in the Way of Francis of Assisi* (1985). Jessey observed that many approaches to prayer and meditation proceed along the Via Negativa (the pushing aside of everyday reality). Francis’s method of incarnational prayer is the Via Positiva (the embracing of all reality in the act of prayer).

A Franciscan approach to prayer seeks to bring all the senses as well as the mind into the heart with God. Francis’s creation of the crèche at Gubbio in 1223 sought to make the written, scripture description of the Nativity visceral to illiterate peasant farmers who could appreciate the smells of the stable, the sounds of the ox, and the feel of hay between their fingers. Francis’s most famous Canticle of the Creatures gathers in sun, moon, forgiveness, and even death in his praise of God.

Stations of the Cross

After Francis’s death, Franciscans continued to incarnate ethereal prayer with sensate reality. For example, Franciscans became active in the development of the Stations of the Cross when they gained custody of the sacred sites of Jerusalem in 1343. The “Stabat Mater Dolorosa” (“At the cross her station keeping”) was customarily sung while physically walking from one Station to the next in Jerusalem. While the actual author of this hymn is in dispute, many believe it was Jacopone dei Benedetti da Todi, a Franciscan poet and Friar Minor.

This very popular incarnational approach to prayer ended in 1587 when the Moslem Turks took over Jerusalem and forbade anyone “to make any halt, nor to pay veneration to [the Stations] with uncovered head, nor to make any other demonstration,” basically suppressing the physical observance of the Stations of the Cross

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High Tech/High Touch, cont. from p. 26

in Jerusalem. Realizing that few persons were able to gain the set indulgence by means of a physical pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in 1686 Pope Innocent XI granted to the Franciscans the exclusive right to build physical representations of the Stations of the Cross in Europe and, in addition, attached the same indulgence to making the European Stations as to visiting the sacred sites in Jerusalem. (Church regulations required a set of the Stations to be blessed by a Franciscan when possible.)

So the Christmas Crèche, the Canticle of the Creatures, and the Stations of the Cross illustrate the historic Franciscan tradition of *Via Positiva* embracing all reality in the act of prayer.

Then Came the Virus and the Need to Rebalance High Tech and High Touch Prayer

Early in March, right in the middle of Lent, our sensate sacramental prayers were suspended, and, at least in our Diocese of Massachusetts, we moved to High Tech to protect each other, especially those most vulnerable, and to “flatten the curve” so that hospitals would be able to handle the flood of patients. Thus, we moved to High Tech/Via Negativa prayer in which, for example, “spiritual communion” replaced consecrated bread and wine in ways described by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Alphonsus Liguori (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_Communion). “Spiritual communion” was enacted by all our services moving to Zoom or Facebook-live.

However, as Palm Sunday and Holy Week approached, arguably the most sensate, incarnational season in our liturgical year, our parish of Grace Church Norwood (Massachusetts) began to explore how *safe social distancing* High Touch prayer might combine with the High Tech digital presentation of prayer.

“Drive-Through” High Tech/High Touch Prayer

For Palm Sunday we drilled 70 separate holes in the dirt alongside our driveway and parish volunteers inserted one palm frond in each so that those who wished to come by, hopped out or reached out and grabbed a palm to take home.



Driveway palms for Palm Sunday.

On Good Friday, we posted a drive-by Stations of the Cross on the driveway around the outside of the church so that parishioners and members of the community could view and meditate on the Stations of the Cross from the safety of their vehicles as they drove through the church parking lot.

Our efforts at this nearly a month after spring had begun were, according to one parishioner, assailed by the devil, because our carefully crafted outside stations were hit first by unpredicted high gusts of wind, rain, and, finally, by large hail. Portraits of stations were overturned and glass broken and shattered. Yet, this same parishioner motivated us to continue on despite all this, declaring that she



Parishioners stand by the Flowering of the Cross.

High Tech/High Touch, cont. from p. 27

was sure God wanted these Stations to happen. And, indeed, parishioners and members of the community came and thanked us for the effort.

On Easter Day we posted a cross fronted by chicken wire so that after the Facebook-live service and all day, people brought cut flowers from their gardens to the church where they drove through and helped “flower” the cross outside near the front stairs of the church.

The chicken-wire aspect may sound crass, but this was a tradition I had brought north from my Mason-Dixon line parish in Delaware. The dark solid side of the cross was used in my Good Friday service for children and represented the pain and



suffering of Jesus. However, this same cross when turned with the chicken-wire front afforded an Easter Day emblem of Jesus’ resurrection when covered with fresh, living flowers. ·



Going Online

The second half of Lent was a kind of slow spiritual water torture as one by one the customary Sunday prayers and Eucharistic actions disappeared. First, for safety, there was no wine for lay people; then, for safety, there was no bread for lay people; then, in order that the whole parish could be in solidarity at loss, it did not make sense to consecrate any bread and wine despite all the good intentions of “Spiritual Communion.”

Thus, Sunday Eucharist disappeared completely in our parish.

This last disappearing act was an almost inconceivable loss—the impossible had to come to pass for the best of all possible reasons: protecting others.

On the run-up to Rogation Sunday, the 6th Sunday of Easter, a few weeks later, I blessed planting soil and packets of sunflower seeds, and a parishioner lovingly nursed the seedlings so that by Rogation Sunday we had over a hundred containers of Sunflower seedlings that were placed out on the front steps of the church along the drive-way so that parishioners and members of the community could come by, pick up a seedling, and drop off food in a large box for the town Ecumenical Food Pantry housed at our church.

Mind you, such incarnational prayer outside the walls of our church has been long-established. A gang of parishioners and I just finished woodchipping a path through our 9-year-old orchard—a living labyrinth to walk and consider aphorisms, posted at the feet of the trees, from Judaism, the Gospels, Islam, Native American

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*High Tech/High Touch, cont.
from p. 28*



A "living labyrinth" on the grounds of Grace Church Norwood.

wisdom, etc. This living labyrinth works for walkers, moving them to consider the juxtaposition of the abstract, spiritual aphorisms (High Tech) with the very physical reality of the orchard's branches, blossoms, leaves, and fruit.

So What's Next?

We are still not on the other side of the pandemic and the social constraints it brings, we still do not know what the new liturgical normal will be. However, I do know that we have been bequeathed a Franciscan compass that will always move us to consider the elements of High Touch/Via Positiva (the embracing of all reality in the act of prayer). Whatever may come in our life of prayer, we know we will always seek ways to bring all the senses as well as the mind into the heart with God. ♦

*A Layperson's Perspective
Gloom, Zoom, and Room:
A Franciscan Reflection on
an Anxious Easter*

Weston F. Cook, Jr.



Weston Cook reflects on the changes the novel coronavirus has brought to our experience of the sacred Holy Week liturgies.

When the decrees went out in March that all the nation should begin the shutdowns essential to protect our society and selves from the coronavirus pandemic, I reacted with a mixture of annoyance, curiosity, and fear. Annoyance because all my old routines became impossible, the little pleasures of outings and socializing prohibited, and the gentle joys of the beach and the parks now forbidden. Curiosity because, as a historian, I had read about the great sicknesses and wondered what it would be like to live through one. And fear because I was about to learn. I feared for my family, for my friends, for so many people in our country. I heard the rallying slogans, of course, about how "We are all in this storm together." Well, I knew that we were all in the same storm together, but I also knew all of us were also in different boats, many of them small and not very seaworthy.

Particularly, I worried about the small crafts, little communities of faith like our own church. For years, living in North Carolina, we worshipped in a struggling congregation of about fifty members. Two years ago, returning to New England, we had joined another "small, joyous" church, living in faith, prayerful in mission, and preoccupied with funds, fix-ups, and demography. Now, imperiled by Covid-19 and, in the midst of Holy Week, we could no longer gather our little fellowship to hear the stories, ponder the dramas, and worship again in our treasured sanctuary. Nature itself seemed to have conjured up this deadly air to scatter, isolate, and oppress us. Indeed, the virus magnified all our social tensions and uncertainties—physical confinement, food shortages, job losses, great and small bankruptcies, schools and art centers shuttered, political rancor and befuddlement, etc. Daily, the media droned its dismal countdown towards no certain end, the cold, unrelenting tally, naming and numbering the sickened and the dead.

The Changing World in Francis's Time

Francis knew our world. The Christians of his age saw nature as hostile, cruel, unpredictable, demonic, a dreadful place of darkness

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*Gloom, Zoom, and Room,
cont. from p. 29*

and savagery. Human society was little better. As the urban world began to revive, so too did class polarizations between the noble, the newly wealthy, the less fortunate classes, and the rural villages which fed the cities. New technologies, new philosophies, and information about the world challenged old certainties. Confounded by these changes, the Church sought to proclaim Christ's message in the face of political, environmental, and economic turmoil. Frequently, the message became one of punishment for sin.

Francis boldly countered the emphasis on damnation with an unwavering conviction that God's love permeated the entire world and that, by manifesting that love to all peoples and creatures, that world could be liberated from its despair. He began by rebuilding abandoned and decrepit churches, the original version of "build it and they will come." And they did. He taught that nature was God's arena, filled with wonders and beauty, deeply damaged yet relentlessly loved. Francis treated men and women, learned and unlettered, rich and poor, ordained and secular, as equals, imitating the model Jesus embodied. Pointing out that, after baptism, Jesus first went not to humanity but to the animals in the wilderness, the "Little Poor Guy" preached and ministered to the critters—to birds, lambs, deer, and even wolves. Against the powers of darkness, Francis proclaimed God's relentless love and the power of redemption. To him, the study of nature brought people closer to nature's God and the Father of our Lord.

Coronavirus as "Great Accelerator"

What might Francis have thought of Zoom? Despite his vaunted simplicity, he was familiar with the technologies of his day, including music, poetry, engineering, and medical practices. Like many others, our church sought a path on the internet through the separations and restrictions of the quarantines. Instead of a physical church and its familiar layout, Zoom video communication became our Holy Week liturgical platform. I was guarded. Being myself technologically inept and rather disdainful of social media, I braced myself for something resembling "The Muppet Show" with hymns. Yet, as we stumbled through the honks and whistles of onscreen worship, what seemed to emerge was a kind of twenty-first century variation of an online Eastern Orthodox service, our own little individual portraits as living icons that form part of a parish iconostasis. Francis might have agreed. Devoutly Western Catholic, he still apparently respected Orthodox Christian services. For all his passion for church repair, he was no stranger to outside worship under "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon." While the idea of Francis having a Facebook page nauseates me, Zoom might have intrigued him and his followers.

Several observers have referred to the coronavirus pandemic as "The Great Accelerator," as a force that is not so much changing society but accelerating changes already afoot. So, for example, a trend towards "work at home" has grown slowly since the dawn of

cont. on page 31

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*Gloom, Zoom, and Room,
cont. from p. 30*

So now, we will need to find new ways to bring the touch of God to the alienated today, ways that might be aided by all sorts of communication styles, but that only the heart can complete. What Francis did in his changing, gloomy time, we have to take up now.

the twenty-first century as the concentrated office arena was seen as confining, wasteful, and toxic by some innovators. The Zoom video system now emerges as the perfect tool for this mission. Some of these observers have also suggested that another trend that will be “greatly accelerated” by the pandemic is secularization. They posit that the “Zoom Service” will cut off worshippers lacking wi-fi access, alienate many others, and increase the number of those drifting into the ranks of the “fallen-away.” Maybe. I doubt this foreboding will come to pass. Rather what we will see is the “acceleration” of those darker trends that Francis saw and society faces today: deepened impoverishment, class and racial polarization, automation and unemployment, institutional corruption, human and animal degradation, and spiritual wretchedness. Like Francis, our answer to these challenges must take its energy and direction from the love of Christ, whatever role technology plays in our actions. Our answer must be Easter.

The Touch of God

Easter always beckons us into the room, the Upper Room, and the Lord’s reclamation of the Apostle Thomas. I’ve always had a fondness for Thomas—grumpy, contrary, a little cynical, and fiercely loyal. He’s willing to go up to Jerusalem to “get killed with him (Jesus)” but refuses to believe in the news of the resurrection. (Wonder if he called it “fake news!”?) Like Francis, Thomas is a “toucher,” not a man of social-distance. It’s in that Upper Room where Jesus offers himself to Thomas’s rough worker’s fingers so that he might believe—for himself and for us all. So now, we will need to find new ways to bring the touch of God to the alienated today, ways that might be aided by all sorts of communication styles, but that only the heart can complete. What Francis did in his changing, gloomy time, we have to take up now.

Shortly after Easter came a warm and beautiful day, and I decided that Sophie (our dog, a mix of sheltie, corgi, Pomeranian, and—we suspect—red fox) needed a walk. They say the air and sky has never been clearer, the seas healthier, the soils less polluted, and the plants and animals freer of contaminants. Whatever its horrors, Covid-19 seems to be gifting nature a sabbath ... from people. Along the road we encountered a turtle, bulldozing through the grass on some secret reptilian task. Sophie, who is enchanted by all things now living, halted near her, and I could see she was a spotted turtle, shiny blue shell speckled with yellow dots. Decades ago, when I was a child, I often encountered turtles, a variety of different kinds, and then they all disappeared. Perhaps her mission was a message, the turtles have returned! Or, perhaps, her message was one Francis always liked to give at Easter...

“Behold, I make all things new...”



Treasures of Darkness

Scott Robinson



I will give you the treasures of darkness and the riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by name. Isaiah 45:3

This past spring I was diagnosed with a fatal neurodegenerative disease called cortico-basal syndrome. It's a nastier cousin of Parkinson's disease—one that moves faster and for which there is no treatment.

On the morning I checked myself into the emergency department at Penn Hospital, I could barely walk, even with my wife's help. It was a relief to finally sink into a wheelchair once I got inside. The next time I tried to walk down that hallway, it took three physical therapists to hold me upright.

I don't remember much of what the physician who gave me my diagnosis said, because when my wife—also a doctor—began to quietly weep, I sort of went out-of-body. After he'd gone, I said, "So this is something people die of?" She nodded as she held me, and we cried together.

My wife and I had a lot of conversations I didn't want to have—about life support and feeding tubes and how long before the medications stop working. We figured I probably had 3 to 5 years. I began to make preparations: I started letters to be

given to my two daughters and my goddaughter when they turned 21. I started a list of happy memories to be read to me as my cognitive loss got worse. My wife and I drew up my advanced directive, listing the things I didn't want such as a feeding tube or CPR. I made a list of objects I wanted with me in the room where I died.

My wife and children put in new railings in my house, handlebars in the bathroom. Our pastor said the church could build us a wheelchair ramp for our home.

I gave away artwork, file boxes full of books. I prayed a lot. I read books about death and dying which I'd been doing for years anyway because I am a hospice chaplain.

One of the reasons I love being a hospice chaplain is that no one ever asks me to pray for a miraculous cure. My patients know they are dying, and most of them are ready. My job is to help land the plane well.

I gave away artwork, file boxes full of books. I prayed a lot. I read books about death and dying which I'd been doing for years anyway because I am a hospice chaplain.

I think that experience of ministering to the dying is one of the main reasons I was able to remain as calm and focused as I was in the weeks after my diagnosis. In fact, I was kind of glad I didn't have something like cancer that I would be expected to fight. You hear so many stories about brave people overcoming the odds and fighting their way back to health—maybe you know some of those people—maybe you are some of those people—and I knew that wasn't me. I knew I didn't have it in me to fight—that I would rather prepare to die well than fight to stay alive. In fact, the end-stage of cortico-basal degeneration is so horrifying, I was comforted to learn that, by the time I got there, physician-assisted suicide would be legal in New Jersey.

At the same time, an interesting thing began to happen. Learning how to take care of myself and

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Treasures, cont. from p. 32

preserve what functioning I had while I could, I found myself spending more time in the right-here-and-right-now than I ever had before. I watched myself move in slow motion (bradykinesia is the medical term.) I committed to memory the names of every nurse, aide, therapist, physician, and specialist with whom I came into contact. I noticed how my body felt, acted, worked, and didn't work.

I also began wrestling with a passage from 1 Peter, in which the writer addresses the nascent Jesus Movement as people who "may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

That sounds beautiful, doesn't it? But I realized I had no idea what it means or feels like to be called out of darkness and into the light. But I think I do now, at least with respect to myself.

I have come to believe that "the darkness" is most of what goes on in my head. Playing and replaying resentful memories. Useless recriminations. Alternative histories. What-ifs and if-onlys. Revenge scenarios. Sexual fantasies. Endless loops upon loops that keep me in my head and out of touch with whatever is outside my head.

Conversely, I have come to believe that "the wonderful light" is what exists on the other side of my eyeballs—the people, places, activities, and situations in which I am actually placed.

Since my diagnosis, I've spent considerably less time in the darkness inside my head, and a lot more time in the wonderful light. I am more in touch with my own life as I am living it.

Since my diagnosis, I've spent considerably less time in the darkness inside my head, and a lot more time in the wonderful light. I am more in touch with my own life as I am living it. It makes me wonder how much life I have missed while hanging out in the darkness in my head. There must've been an awful lot more life I could've lived in front of my eyeballs than I have lived behind them.

Another advantage of the wonderful light is the way it has encouraged me to cultivate the "curiosity" about things that the Buddhist writers are always recommending.

What's it like to have someone stand with you in the bathroom because you are a "fall risk?" What's it like to eat French toast with your fingers in front of other people because only one of your hands works? What's it like to realize you are never going to be a grandfather, or father of the bride, or see your goddaughter confirmed? What's it like to lose the ability to type, or play musical instruments? What's it like when people honk their car horns at you because you aren't hobbling fast enough? What's it like to have someone else wash your backside in a shower chair?

Of course, all these things would have been happening to me whether I were living in the darkness in my head or in the wonderful light; but in the light, they were things I was learning about, and learning from, rather than merely things that were happening to me. This is a choice we all make, moment by moment—to stay present, or to check out; to stand the ground of our awareness, or retreat into self-distraction. We can be victims of events, or we can be students of them.

The temptation to retreat sometimes to some inner "happy place" can be strong, and not just for me. But I've heard so many people—friends, patients, and patients' families—express gratitude for the immediacy, the intensity of presence they have experienced in the shadow of death. Few things can help us to be here now like knowing we won't be here much longer.

So I am grateful for the way my illness has evicted me from my inner darkness and thrust me into the outer light, where my life has a reality, an immediacy it has only rarely had in the past. This is not to say, of course, that I never sneak back into my inner darkness from time to time. Of course I do. I kept a key! But I don't live there any longer.

I do think a lot about dying, and pain, and debility, but those thoughts are about real things. The family I worry about and dread to leave are real. The friends who visit me are real. The medication-induced constipation is real. It's all real.

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Maybe this is why Jesus said, “I have come that you may have life, and have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10) Not more easily. Not more conveniently. Certainly not more painlessly. Just more abundantly. More life. Uncensored life. The whole dirty ball of wax.

When I first came home from the hospital after being diagnosed, my wife gave me a tour of the modifications she had made to the house in anticipation of my return. As I sat in the new shower chair, holding on to the newly installed grab bar, she pointed out how the shower doors had been replaced with a curtain.

“Now this curtain,” she said, “is the part that’s really going to drive you crazy.” I stared at her a moment. Then I began to laugh.

“Oh, I see,” I exclaimed. “So *this* is the part that is going to drive me crazy! I was wondering what the really annoying part was going to be! At last the other shoe has dropped!”

We collapsed in laughter, giggling helplessly.

When my time comes, I hope I am ready—at peace with God and my fellow creatures. I pray I can go calmly and steadily into the Great Mystery.

But one thing became clear in that damp shower stall: I am not yet ready to go, and my wife is not yet ready to lose me.

About two months after I was discharged from the hospital, I pushed my walker up the handicapped ramp at my bank and discovered that the ramp ends in a flight of stairs. So I folded up the walker like a beach chair, tucked it under my arm, grabbed hold of the railing, and climbed the stairs. I heard a man’s voice call out from the sidewalk, “They took yo’ walk, but they didn’t take yo’ step! You look like you gon’ throw that thing in the Olympics!”

I did keep exercising. I did my physical therapy; I resumed practicing the accordion, and even started tentatively doing some yoga again. As a sort of Hail Mary, the doctors had given me a drug used to treat Parkinson’s, and to everyone’s surprise, it helped. Against all expectations, I started getting better. Soon, the wheelchair was stored away in the basement. Then the walker.

I resumed walking a mile to church and a mile back for Morning Prayer on weekdays. I resumed mowing the lawn, walking the dog. I got my driver’s license back.

In October, my neurologist finally changed my diagnosis to Parkinson’s Disease. Of course, “the gift that keeps on taking,” as Michael J Fox called it, is not ordinarily something to turn cartwheels about, but in my case, it was definitely good news.

You wouldn’t have known it, though, from the way I responded to my unfortunate doctor’s first intimation that I may not be dying any time soon. “Don’t mess with me!” I told the poor man.

See, I had worked very hard to reconfigure my life to that of a dying person, and while the prospect of a “near-normal lifespan” was exhilarating, it was also disorienting. I had quit my job. I had broken the grim news to family and friends. I had spent many hours over several months steadying myself—reading, meditating, and praying—preparing to not be here anymore. It was a big adjustment. I actually found myself occasionally missing those first, awful days when I knew, more or less, exactly what was going to happen.

“If you live in the dark a long time and the sun comes out,” wrote memoirist Mary Karr, “you do not cross into it whistling.”

But I know I have more to be grateful for than I have time to list. To name just one thing, though, I am grateful for what the experience has taught me about myself: that I am strong, that I can apply myself, that I am a fighter. (In fact, I am now taking a boxing-based exercise class for people with Parkinson’s.) I am grateful that, though they took my *walk*, they didn’t take my *step*.

These, then, are the treasures of darkness, the riches hidden in secret places, that I brought with me when God called me out into the wonderful light: the knowledge that, as C.S. Lewis put it, it is only in the present moment in which “freedom and actuality are offered” to human beings—the knowledge that, wherever we are and whenever it is, this is the house of God, here is the gate of heaven; now is the acceptable time, and today is the day of salvation. ♦

* Portions of this article appeared previously at elephantjournal.com (July 1, 2019) You can also see Scott deliver this live on YouTube, <https://youtu.be/SNknqFX7LGQ>

Helping at the Refugee Camp in Matamoros, Mexico

Amy Nicholson

A banner speaks pointedly to American agents enforcing the Trump administration's "Remain in Mexico" policy, which bars asylum-seekers from entering the United States until their immigration proceedings have been completed.



When Gilbert and I left Western North Carolina, it was 27 degrees, and 20 hours of driving later we were in Brownsville, Texas. It was 82 degrees, like entering a different world. We traded our community and farm for a chance (call) to serve migrants at the border in Matamoros, Mexico. We have prayed about the heartbreaking situation and spent a week at Casa Alitas in Tucson, Arizona, with families who were allowed across. Locally we support families awaiting asylum hearings in an area which is generally kind but has divided opinions on immigration.

As people of faith, how do we welcome the stranger? At the respite center we package basic goods: rice, beans, corn meal, coffee, oil, salt, sugar, and diapers. Many faithful volunteers cross over and pull 14 wagons across rough walkways to help serve over 1,000 families living in tents. Some have been there 7-8 months. The children are generally happy, and the adults grateful for any help we bring. They live in a dusty area with no running water and little access to power. The latrines are overworked and smell.

"Remain in Mexico" has created a humanitarian crisis.

We could bring a few blankets, sleeping bags, and tents, but not too many or they will be taxed. We are not allowed to bring used clothes—when it turned cold and windy, we layered on extra shirts, coats, and scarves from Catholic Charities. We filled our pockets with underwear and put children's clothes in small backpacks. The goods were easily shared in the tent city. We learned how to smuggle!

I had a chance to leave the food distribution area and share time and supplies with the United Nations play area. Children were not in school because it is not available. They have experienced trauma. The families hope and pray to be given temporary asylum soon.

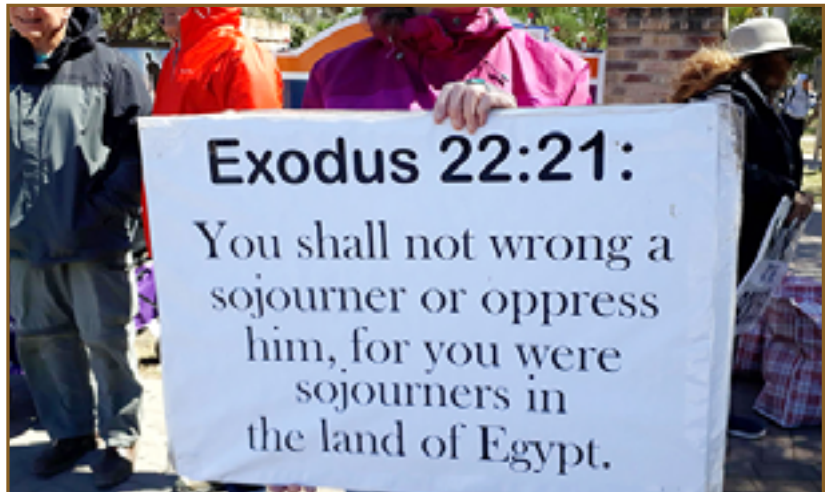
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Matamoros, cont. from p. 35



Above, a trail of volunteers crosses into the Mexican tent camp at our border. They bring food and other necessities to 1,000 families living in tents, the ruinous result of the “Remain in Mexico,” policy that some groups claim to be a violation of both U.S. and international law.

Right, protesters deliver a Biblical message.



Los Pequeños
Fellowship Retreat Day
February 29, 2020

Beverly Hosea

The Los Pequeños Fellowship in Spokane, Washington, spent Leap Day together for a retreat at Inner Sky, a small spirituality center created by David and Tamara Milliken, TSSF novice and companion respectively. The center has a small main house big enough for eight or so persons with a meditation room, meeting room, and library; three individual hermitages; a labyrinth; and permaculture gardening. We spent the day meditating and reflecting on the climate crisis and our Franciscan response, and learning more about permaculture (permanent agriculture farming) in rural, suburban and urban settings. Finn Pond, retired biology professor from Whitworth University, provided the latest updates in climate and environmental figures. After that sobering

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*Los Pequeños, cont.
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presentation David Milliken presented the video *Inhabit* (Go to <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/inhabit> to rent this documentary), and we had a lively and heartening discussion following.

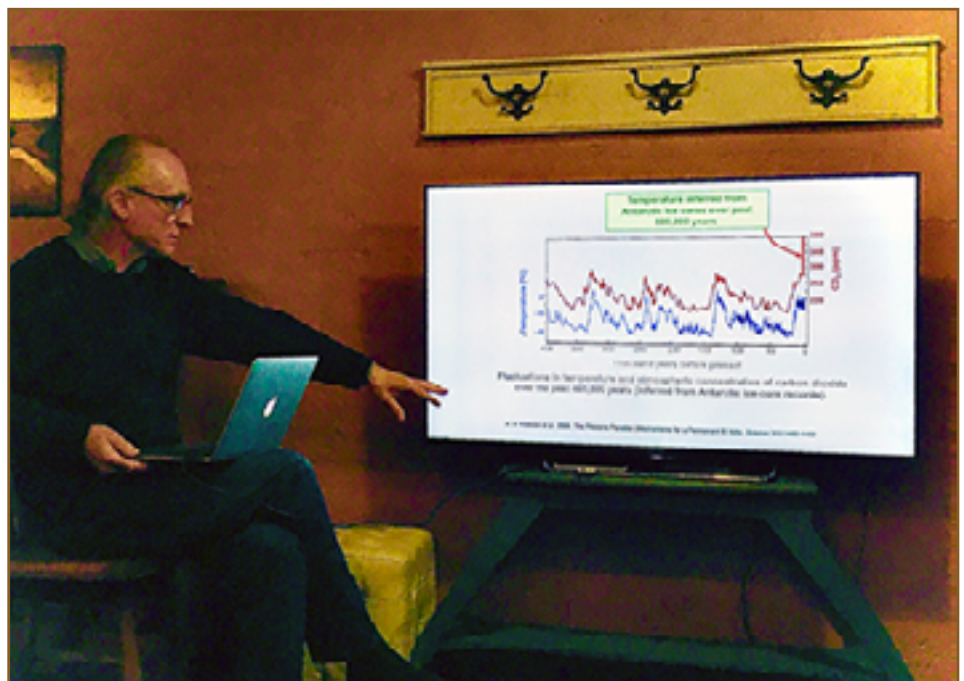
Spokane's Expo '74 was the first world's fair dedicated to the environment. It called attention to environmental issues and helped to shape the consciousness of the Spokane community. As we near the 50th anniversary of Expo '74, we now live with daily news about climate change. We wonder what we can do to preserve the natural environment for our children and their children. Now is the time to look back at where we've been, consider carefully what is being done, and develop a road map for the future. Spokane was a leader in creation care then, and that leadership should continue.



From left to right, Matt Phillips, Jack Venbrux, Beverly Hosea, Finn Pond, David Milliken, Tamara Milliken, Jonathan Steinheart, and Jane Nelson Low. Not pictured, Gaye Lagana.



Finn Pond, deacon and retired biology professor, updating us on climate trends.



NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

Address to Chapter
Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Brother Desmond Alban, SSF
(Desmond Goodman)
Minister Provincial,
Province of the Americas



Editor's Note:

CAROA is the acronym for the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas.

NAECC is the acronym for the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities.

Exactly two weeks ago today I was again on Zoom, taking part in a couple of hours of frank and un-minuted sharing with other Superiors in what is possibly the most valuable session of our weeklong CAROA and NAECC Leaders' meeting. So, I can't tell you anything about what was said except in the most general terms. I had our Centenary to recall, of course, but it won't surprise you to hear that the ways that communities are coping with the current Covid-19 crisis dominated the meeting. I'm glad I decided not to open with the words that had first occurred to me as they'd clearly occurred to others too. Several began in the same way, "Well, we haven't murdered each other yet!"

A Reminder of Truth

There is, of course, a lot more to this current time than just surviving, even surviving one another. It is, as Damien Joseph wrote online last week, quite literally an apocalypse, an unveiling, a revealing of God. So, and these are my words, it is an encounter with Reality, a reminder of Truth. Cynthia Bourgeault points out that the Greek word for truth, **A-letheia** (ἀ-λήθεια), derives from the River Lethe, one of the five rivers of Hades in Greek mythology, the river of forgetfulness. She observed, "When we come into this planetary existence, we fall into a sort of forgetfulness." (And that, in turn reminded me of one of my favorite lines of Wordsworth, "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.") The video in which she made her point was recorded before the current crisis, but others—CS Lewis comes to mind—observe that suffering, especially, can shock us out of our sleep, or more generally, as Bourgeault puts it, "the immediacy of life yanks us back to a remembrance." Damien, in his post, is careful to add something else, "To be clear, I am not asserting that God sent the novel coronavirus to get our attention or teach us a lesson. God is being revealed all around us, all the time. The apocalypse is simply an invitation to open our eyes."

I have to admit, however, that this lockdown period (Day 56 in the Bay Area) has not been, for me personally, dominated by a sense of suffering. Of course, it is a disaster for many: physical, emotional, psychological, and economic. As always, it has disproportionately affected those who were already most vulnerable, most marginalized, most at risk. But it does not negate that to acknowledge some unanticipated blessings, including for me, *space*. I have walked outside except on really frantic days. I have taken daytime prayer times in our much-improved backyard, sat on our new bench communing with the hummingbirds at the fountain. I have read more. Indeed, I didn't know quite how I was going to engage with that online course with Cynthia Bourgeault when I signed up for it at the turn of the year, but it turned out well. Perhaps it is all a reminder to me of what "balance" might look like.

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What Are We Learning? What Are We Being Initiated Into?

But what *are* we learning? What are we being *initiated* into? That idea of this crisis as an *initiation* is suggested by Richard Rohr. Our whole culture, our whole world, has been drawn right now into a disconcerting, disorienting time of liminality, similar to the challenges imposed upon young men in initiation rites across the world. It is of the essence of such times of liminality that we can't know the new reality into which we are emerging until we emerge. We do just have to abide in the uncertainty. It is no mere practical convenience that we have left most of our usual May agenda for a face- to-face residential gathering in October.

This is not the best time for most decisions. But it is a good time to hold ourselves in openness and receptivity, for the kind of reflection that doesn't jump prematurely to conclusions.

This is *not* the best time for most decisions. But it *is* a good time to hold ourselves in openness and receptivity, for the kind of reflection that doesn't jump prematurely to conclusions. So, I have been grateful to a number of writers and thinkers, but that certainly includes our two brothers in New York, for their blogs. I have mentioned the most recent from Damien, but I also particularly appreciated two in particular from Thomas, beautiful words about choosing Hope and practicing Resurrection. I won't attempt a paraphrase. But I will acknowledge that these in turn relate to other themes that emerge for me as Minister when I am "yanked back to a remembrance" in responding to various events in the life of the Province: As Franciscan Brothers, we are people of *faith* and people of *forgiveness*.

Prudence and Providence

As people of faith, we are called to make the decisions we make in the light of a serious and whole-hearted engagement in both *prudence*

and the recognition of *providence*. It might be in the area of our finances where that is most obvious, taking seriously our sober collective responsibilities, and yet *also* living in trust in the faithful loving kindness of God. As Brother Leo reminds us, "On the mountain, the Lord will provide." That applies to so much more than *just* finance. It applies to decisions about projects and staffing and ministries and leadership, and to our serious initial discernment with the men who come to us expressing a sense of vocation. But it's not an either-or. Not prudence *or* providence. Not more prudence *instead* of trusting in providence. Rather, both-and. We have to be prudent and responsible. And we have to trust God and take risks, to not lose our nerve. "Trust God and keep your powder dry?!" Perhaps more, "wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

And that applies to our dealings with one another too. Most of us have a long way to travel in our journey to wholeness and holiness, to our complete individuation. I know. I hear the moans about other brothers...and I can't usually argue much with what I hear. There are legitimate "bones of contention" with every single one of us—we're all, each of us, a work in progress. I'm sure you complain about *me*! That incompleteness, that flawed-ness certainly applies to those beyond the community with whom we work. A difference might be that in the case of brothers we can at least *expect* that there is a definite intention to a process of transformation and spiritual growth. A commitment to tools for that process is actually reflected in the way we are spending some of our money at the moment. But "fixing" the other brother, or especially others with whom we work? Not really.

"Only One Thing is Needed"

Some of us *do*, of course, have specific responsibilities in formation. And formation is supposed to be a collective responsibility. And formation is supposed to be lifelong. So, logically, that does add up to the fact that we do all have a role in forming one another. But obsessing with the faults of one another? Not my job. "Martha, Martha, you are concerned with so many things, only one thing is needful!" That "one thing"? — My own relationship with God—*my* growth, *my* change, *my* transformation.

cont. on page 40

*Address to Chapter,
cont. from p. 39*

Now we're not to be fools. When we're aware of the ways some of those we live or work with behave from time to time, that calls for the wisdom of serpents! But when we continue to make our hearts open to them, to let ourselves be available to them, emotionally and not just practically, to offer simple human warmth whether deserved or not, when we resolve to return an offering of love, time after time—well, then we can get caught up in a miracle of grace best received and discovered precisely to the degree that we risk expending it. I've seen moments of such grace in San Damiano this year, especially during this lockdown period—and picked up rumors of the same in our other houses. I've seen efforts to reach out and seek connection when escape to a protective shell seemed so much more the easier option. I appealed to people early in this crisis to actually allow others in the house to not be the best possible version of themselves, and I believe I saw moments where exactly that was fulfilled. Because conflict is inevitable!

In the current *Franciscan* magazine from the UK, a priest and reconciliation educator and facilitator, Alastair McKay, writes about insights he gained from the Mennonite mediator Carolyn Schrock-Shenk. He learned some of them in the course of a deep and serious conflict he had to work through with her concerning their collaboration in a book—on handling conflict! Her *definition* is that “conflict equals differences plus tension” and in that broad definition it is clear that conflict is a regular guest in our houses and ministries. But McKay also shared surprising interpretations touching on both ends of the human story. In *creation*, he explained Schrock-Shenk's insight that God deliberately created such a diverse

world that, as McKay puts it, “God was wiring it for conflict... we... need to expect conflict as a normal part of the territory of life itself.” It is not the result of sin!

Diversity and Difference

And at the other end of the story? Here the insight was from Sam Wells, commenting on Rev 21:26, “People will bring in to [the heavenly city] the glory and honor of the nations.” Sam Wells highlights how that verse points to the *diversity and difference* present in the heavenly hope. McKay again: “Rather than being conflict-free, heaven is a place where we bring all our gifts and creativity to addressing our diversity and differences.” Many of us are perfectionists in our

We need constant practice in the ways of grace and forgiveness. To forgive others...To forgive our world ...Sometimes...we have to forgive Reality for just being Reality, the way it is.

own particular ways. Many of us enjoy the taste of righteous indignation about the actions and attitudes of others. We need constant practice in the ways of grace and forgiveness. To forgive others for not having grown and transformed in the ways we think they should have by now. To forgive others for not being who we want them to be. To forgive our world for not taking the form we so romantically imagined.

Sometimes, as this unprecedented crisis teaches us, we have to forgive Reality for just being Reality, the way it is. ♦

★ ★ ★ HELP WANTED ★ ★ ★

At our monthly Chapter meeting in May, Bishop Claude Berkley inspired us with the idea of using this time and climate for some kind of social media presence as to who we are. What would that look like? What platform would we use? How can we inspire others with our stories? Who would be our audience? Are YOU intrigued by the idea? Do you have the I.T. skills to contribute? Have you been thinking about this yourself? IF SO, contact our Secretary, Lucinda Dyer. We won't know if we can do it, until we do it. *Janet Fedders*

TSSF Province of the Americas Financial Summary 10/1/19 - 5/31/20

Alison Saichek

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I pray you are holding up during this difficult year. I am awed by your faithfulness in supporting TSSF. As you can see by the summary, income is actually ahead of budget. Expenses are way down, of course, because no one is flying anywhere! Not included in the income and expense portion of the summary is a generous bequest from Kay Miller's estate. Chapter is considering ways to honor Kay by setting up some kind of fund.

Chapter also agreed to let me arrange to get a check scanner through Bank of America so I no longer have to go to the bank to make deposits or transfers. This has been particularly helpful in sending funds allocated by the Medical Mission Fund committee. Support was sent to Guyana for medical assistance, and to assist the Navajo/Zuni peoples who have been so hard hit.

Peace and all good,

Alison Saichek, TSSF, Bursar

Fund Balances	3/31/2019	5/31/2020
Operating Fund	46,394.00	51,771.00
Savings Account & CD	55,806.00	75,924.00
JCFU Account	3,661.00	6,456.00
Medical Mission Fund	9,326.00	4,676.00
Tom Johnson Mission Fund	1,300.00	1,300.00
Memorials	2,175.00	2,250.00
Companions Funds	3,508.00	2,706.00
Fiscal Year 2019-2020 As of 05/31/20		
	Budget	Actual
Contributions	37,916.00	41,790.00
Other Income (Amazon Smile, Interest)	88.00	499.00
Total Operating Income	38,004.00	42,289.00
Operating Expenses		
Servants (Ministers, Chaplains, Officers)	13,971.00	9,768.00
Formation	1,692.00	84.00
Outreach (Support for other Orders & Organizations)	6,912.00	5,746.00
Communications	2,304.00	1,792.00
Meetings Chapter 2020	8,750.00	500.00
Overhead (Insurance, bank charges, website)	1,283.00	1,705.00
Total Operating Expenses	34,912.00	19,595.00
Income less Expenses	3,092.00	22,694.00

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION RESOURCE

Did you know that the Third Order now has a listing of tertiaries who are available for Spiritual Direction? Check it out! It's on our website, on the Resources page. There you'll find a short description of each spiritual director, their training and their practices. Thank you, Lucinda Dyer, for pulling this together for us!

If You Have Kids, Grandkids, ANY Kids—Let's Talk

Derrick Fetz

For many affiliated with TSSF, the Franciscan way of being Christian isn't a solo act. What God is calling us to be and do is integrated with our immediate families, our TSSF family, and all those closest to us. How do we intentionally incorporate our children into living out the Principles in our day-to-day rhythm and the Rule of Life in general?

I'm working with some other tertiaries to answer that question, and we invite you to answer that question with us through a simple, short survey. To complete the survey, go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QYZBXZM> ◆

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review

The Little Book of Racial Healing

By Thomas Norman De Wolf and Jodie Geddes

Review by
Diana Turner-Forte



The subtitle for this small volume is *Coming to the Table for Truth-Telling, Liberation, and Transformation* and focuses on issues of racial inequality and systemic injustices that have plagued United States history since its inception. A format designed by Eastern Mennonite University “teaches that a healing journey begins with breaking free from the cycles of violence and moving toward healing in three stages.” From learning skills in active listening to practical steps in building authentic relationships to promote racial healing, the book provides useful information for those seeking to grow and change through the process of racial reconciliation. The authors are committed practitioners and facilitators to promote racial healing and restorative processes in schools and communities through conflict transformation. ♦

Paperback. Published by Good Books (January 1, 2019).

Available on Amazon.com at

<https://tinyurl.com/y7jykfoa> \$3.99

Book Review

Wrestling with God: Through Suffering to Grace

By Valerie Hart, TSSF

Review by Liz Peacock



It's a page-turner. Valerie's memoir is gripping, compelling, like a great suspense novel. I couldn't put it down, couldn't wait to find out what happens next.

But that's not why I love this book.

It's brutally honest and self-searching. With great courage, Valerie lays open her deepest fears and struggles, baring her naked soul for the world to see. She displays a profound self-knowledge, sharing her own weaknesses, blindspots, and missteps as easily and honestly as her victories.

But that's not why I love this book.

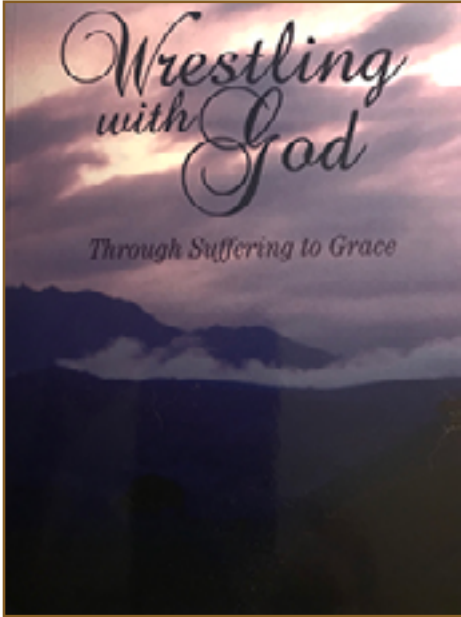
It seems to me no accident that this book came out in the middle of the pandemic. I experienced with Valerie crisis after crisis, tragedy after tragedy, loss after loss. I felt with her all the fear, all the brokenness, and all the despair. Her story of pain resonates with the pain I'm feeling right now.

But that's not why I love this book.

I love this book because it's a book about hope, the kind of hope that :

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Wrestling with God,
cont. from p. 42



Windflower Press, 2020,
ISBN 0997030291, 265 pages
\$18.95

Available from <https://www.wrestlingwithgodmemoir.com>

- rises out of the deepest despair;
- comes from knowing in the depths of her soul that God is present, intimately present, through all of it; and
- is drawn from someone who has truly wrestled with God.

I need that right now. We all do. ♦

From Valerie's Website

Six months pregnant with her first child, Valerie Hart's life is shattered when her husband Ron is hit head-on by a truck. Locked in a co-dependent relationship, she must deal with his lengthy recovery, a disrupted professional career path, and the stresses of motherhood alone.

More challenges followed, including job loss, grief, brain surgery, a mysterious chronic illness, and the ultimate betrayal that brought on a forced cross-country move.

"I want to share my story so that others might see their lives in a new way by knowing that what I've struggled with has become a source of blessing," says the author about her reason for writing the book "This may be the perfect time for a story that acknowledges personal pain, to remind us that we are not alone, and lift up the hope of moving forward, even if we walk with a limp." ♦

Book Review

Prayers from Franciscan Hearts

By Paula Pearce, SFO

Review by R. John
Brockmann

Paula Pearce S.F.O. (Author),
Murray Bodo O.F.M. (Foreword)
182 pages St. Anthony Messenger Press (September 20, 2007)
0867167416vPaperback (\$3.99 new) or Mass Market Paperback (\$12.22 new)(From Amazon.com product overview)

Editor's Note:

Five TSSF members
contributed to this collection:
**Stephen Best, David
Bertram, Susan Pitchford,
Sue Tidwell, and Andrew
Wilkes.**

Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi were people of prayer who found spiritual inspiration in a variety of places and forms. To help modern-day followers of these two beloved saints who seek similar inspiration, Secular Franciscan Paula Pearce has collected prayers and reflections from Franciscans in several countries and compiled their diverse contributions.

Pearce organized the contributions around pilgrimage stations dear to Franciscans and that mark significant stages on the saints' journeys back to God, such as San Rufino, the Porziuncola, and La Verna. Each of fourteen pilgrimage stations opens with an introduction, giving information about the place and its context within the saints' distinctive journeys. Each station closes with simple suggestions for further reflection and pertinent Scripture references.

From the Foreword by Murray Bodo: "Some of the writings here aspire to art, some are simply the spontaneous outpourings of the heart confronted with the lives and places of Francis and Clare of Assisi. Some are prayers, others meditations, but all attest to the power of the Franciscan charism to change lives, to inspire, and to elicit words of gratitude and joy that the pilgrim soul feels impelled to preserve in the written word." ♦

MILESTONES

Welcome the Newly Professed

Newly Professed

Tracey Johnson



Manager of animal hospital. Member, Brother Juniper Fellowship. Provides marketing and online media for vestry and local food pantry. Married to Yvonne.

Considering profession in the midst of Covid-19 is not something I would have expected. However, the Formation Process taught me to lean into daily rhythms of prayer in the midst of stress and solitude. I find comfort each day knowing that the time I spend in meditation keeps me close to God. My journey has been a series of winding pathways, which lead me to TSSF, and for that I will always be grateful.

I grew up on a farm in southern Minnesota, surrounded by animals, lulled to sleep by crickets, and awakened by twittering birds. I always had a special relationship with animals, as they kept me company while working on the farm. I first encountered St. Francis in elementary school through Giotto's painting, "Francis Preaching to the Birds." Little did I know, I would see the original painting 40 years later in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi.

Growing up, I attended a Protestant church—that my great-grandfather had helped build—which was led by a very stern and conservative pastor. My parents were a mix of Lutheran and Catholic, so I considered myself a half-breed. I loved the ritual of the Catholic Church and the ice cream socials of the Lutherans. During a grueling two-year confirmation process, I was taught about the wrath of God and judgement. Later, I attended a Catholic college in Duluth, Minnesota, where I enjoyed attending Mass regularly. I then moved to Boston, Massachusetts, to attend graduate school. During this time, I fell away from the church for many years.

I met my future spouse, and we moved around the country, living in Virginia, California (ten years,) and then back to Massachusetts. While I lived in California, I stumbled (or was pushed by the Holy Spirit) into an Episcopal church, where I found friendship and acceptance. I attended Education for Ministry (EFM) and was very active in lay eucharistic ministry and the vestry. It wasn't until I moved back to Massachusetts, and into my current parish, where I was introduced to the Third Order by The Reverend John Brockmann.

During Formation, I learned much about the Third Order and St. Francis. As many novices do, I read books and watched movies to learn about the charismatic man who loved God and enjoyed being

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Newly Professed: Tracey Johnson, cont. from p. 44

and praying in nature. As I learned to follow the patterns of my Rule, I worked very hard to integrate them in both my personal and work life. Now, during hectic days, I whisper a prayer asking for patience and guidance. I am leaning into my Franciscan call with the help of the Holy Spirit, and I am seeing remarkable glimpses of God in my daily life and work.

The veterinary field has a very high suicide rate...I feel a calling to help provide a calming and positive environment for my staff, by providing a listening ear and a compassionate heart.

I manage a very large emergency and specialty animal hospital. Much like a human hospital, we deal with the young, the dying and often experience the traumatic. I lead a large team of caregivers, who have to navigate their feelings around the care they provide and deal with clients who range from all-caring to mentally ill. The veterinary field has a very high suicide rate—we suffer from massive stress, burnout, and waves of compassion fatigue. I feel a calling to help provide a calming and positive environment for my staff, by

providing a listening ear and a compassionate heart. I find that my formation as a Franciscan has provided me a warm cloak that comforts and sustains me. I am so grateful and humbled to become a Third Order Franciscan, I can't wait to find out where the Holy Spirit will lead me on this path. ♦

Newly Professed

Dennis McLeavey



Husband, father of two, grandfather of three. Member, Brother Juniper Fellowship. Parishioner, St. Augustine's Episcopal Center. Professor Emeritus of Finance and Decision Science, University of Rhode Island.

One of my favorite memories is attending a High Mass at St. Bart's in Manhattan. Seeing a female celebrant and two male priests assisting was very refreshing for me as someone having grown up Roman Catholic. In my youth in Canada before Vatican II, women were not allowed on the altar at all, girls could not be altar servers, but I am grateful that the Holy Spirit breathed through Vatican II. I also appreciate the approach of the 16th century theologian Richard Hooker and the Anglican middle way that includes reason and human experience.

In the vestibule of St. Bart's, I discovered a book by Franciscan Richard Rohr called *Falling Upward*. I am not sure how that eventually led me to Julien Green, *God's Fool: The Life of Francis of Assisi*, an important starting point for me. What I enjoyed about that

Reading Lester Bach, The Franciscan Journey, I was captivated by the theology of Duns Scotus: Jesus came because of God's love, nothing to do with atonement theories.

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Newly Professed: Dennis McLeavey, cont. from p. 45

* From Bob French, “The Surprising Case of Solanus Casey” *The Word Among Us* (July, 2015): 52-57: “They came to him because he had a reputation for kindness and wisdom — and miracles. One who stopped in was a fellow Capuchin on his way to have emergency dental work; he was instantly healed when Solanus blessed him. Returning later to report that the dentist had found his tooth perfectly healthy, the brother received yet another surprise. “This calls for a celebration!” said Fr. Solanus, opening a desk drawer. Out came some ice cream cones that he had been given a half hour earlier. Despite the heat, they hadn’t melted a bit.

biography was the psychology of Francis, someone imperfect with normal human ambition as he wanted to be an important soldier. Following Francis, spiritual growth attracts me in the face of my faults and failings. I learned about Secular Franciscans and went through the Roman Catholic formation process. Reading Lester Bach, *The Franciscan Journey*, I was captivated by the theology of Duns Scotus: Jesus came because of God’s love, nothing to do with atonement theories. Belonging to the Blessed Solanus Casey region of the Secular Franciscan Order, I learned about his simplicity, actually a simplex priest not granted the full faculties of ordination. Known for spending endless hours with people, listening, praying, and encouraging, his ministry focused on where he was and the needs of the times. His definition of religion was relationship with God and neighbor. So I think of him as a saint even though I do not believe in Fr. Solanus Casey’s “miracle” of the ice cream.*

Growing up with a Catholic family on my mother’s side and Anglican on my father’s, I was raised Roman Catholic but attended many Anglican services over the years. When I worked in Charlottesville, Virginia, I attended St. Paul’s Memorial and was received there. My wife, Jan, fully supported my transfer process to TSSF. In my reading as I was in the early stages of applying for transfer, I came across a wonderful publication, the *Franciscan Times*. That started an enriching dialogue with John Brockmann and spiritual growth for me through the *Times*. The next marker came with some wise questions and suggestions from my formation counselor, Deacon Bob Thomas.

What was incredibly moving for me at my profession on Ascension Thursday was not only to have the Brother Juniper brothers and sisters as well as my wife attending the Zoom service, but also to have Vicar Beth Sherman and Lorén Spears participating. Beth has helped me so much spiritually with her insights and her participation and leadership of our book club at St. Augustine’s (my favorite book so far – Neil Douglas-Klotz, *Prayers of the Cosmos*). Lorén is Executive Director of the Tomaquag Museum that preserves the wonderful culture of the Narragansetts, and she has helped me with her wisdom on creation spirituality. John, Beth, Lorén, the Brother Juniper Fellowship, and the *Times* are great influences for me. ♦

Peantamóonk

Prayer Offered by Lorén Spears* on the Occasion of the Profession of Dennis Mc Leavey 5-21-20

Kunoopeam Wutchee neetompooag kah neetônksog ut ahkee ut Nahiganseck.

Welcome all my friends and relatives to the homelands of the Narragansett.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee wamee nuweeaeenuqun wuneeteuônk.

Thank you, Creator, for all the beauty that surrounds us.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee wunnee keesuk.

Thank you, Creator, for the beautiful day.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee nippawus kah mataquasag.

Thank you, Creator, for the sun & clouds.

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Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee Keetán.

Thank you, Creator, for the ocean.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee nahmahs, toonuppaoag, Nkekeooag, pootômpooag, poquaûhohhaaug, kah ashaûntteaûg.

Thank you, Creator, for the fish, turtles, otters, whales, clams, & lobsters.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee weta.

Thank you, Creator, for the forest.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee nepeshooag, quanunôn, wômpissacuck, kah hônkooag.

Thank you, Creator, for the birds, hawks, eagles, & geese.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee penashímwock, masquag, màhtuqas, kah ahtug.

Thank you, Creator, for the animals, bears, rabbits, & deer.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee sokkanún, cutshauóshá, neimpauog, kah waupaimanash

Thank you, Creator, for the rain, thunder, lightening, and the winds

Nashpee mishétashin peeyâwag kutcheeseetau

with a storm comes cleansing

Kukatanumwuw wamee sequan, quaqusquàn, taquônk kah paponé pashaw nashpee wuneeteewónk

We want (wish) all the (seasons) spring, summer, fall, and winter burst forth with beauty

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee wamee pom-an-tam-wae tean-teag-oo-assin-ish.

Thank you, Creator, for all living things.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit ut wutchee-ttuong-goonog.

Thank you for our ancestors.

Ku-tong-quom-om ut unnantam, muhhug, kah nashāuonk.

(they) who suffered, mind, body, & spirit.

Kunash-auônk-oo kutchis-su-mau Onkhum Keenawun

Their spirits wash over us.

Ku-ka-tan-um-wuw keenaw aquené wamee peshôkni

We want (wish) you peace in the future.

Nunee-pau-un maywe ut wuttoo-an-tam nukhas-ahkee!

We stand together to care for/protect Mother Earth.

Kutaputush Kittántoowit wutchee wamee wôm-ooau-sinneat nukhas-ahkee.

Thank you, Creator, for all to (love) enjoy Mother earth.

Kutaputush Numanutoomun wuchee wamee wuneehteawonk nee nuwaeenuqun.

Thank you, Creator, for all the beauty that surrounds us.

Kutaputush wuchee wamee kumagooaunash Numanutoom

Thank you for all your gifts, my Creator.

Neenaj

Amen

Kutaputush, Aquené, kah Noonantam,

Thanks, Peace & Blessings

* Lorén M. Spears is an educator, essayist, artist, and two-term Tribal Councilwoman of the Narragansett Tribe in Providence, Rhode Island. She is also Executive Director of the [Tomaquag Indian Memorial Museum](#).

MILESTONES

Rest in Peace

Rest in Peace

Billie Alban
Professed 55 Years



Published in Greenwich Times, February 10, 2020

Billie Alban died February 7, 2020, at age 94. Alban was a leader in the field of Organizational Development, the systematic effort to improve organizational effectiveness. She was a lifelong advocate for the positive outcomes engendered by inclusion. A biographer wrote, “her profound contribution...is making it a moral imperative to give voice to the voiceless.” *Creating the Future Together* was both one of her book titles and her lifelong guiding principle.

Alban was born Renice Telfair Wetter December 22, 1925, in her parents’ home on Washington Square in Greenwich Village, New York City. Her mother was the 20th century artist Gladys Mock; her father, engineer Pierce Trowbridge Wetter, imprisoned at Leavenworth for his conscientious objection to World War I, was later pardoned by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Pierce Wetter was a supporter of workers’ unions and also fought to save Washington Square from demolition by NYC Parks Commissioner Robert Moses. Billie was deeply proud of a civic activism lineage dating to the American Revolution.

Alban attended Goddard College and studied drama at Yale University. She married fellow Yale student, Guillermo Alban, and moved to Ecuador. There, she partnered in her husband’s petroleum shipping business. She also taught drama, helped found the local Episcopal Church, and worked to improve education and food security for women and children. Alban returned to the United States in 1965 and began her organization development career with the National Training Laboratory (NTL).

Alban became a foremost practitioner of Organizational Development. She pioneered inclusive methods, commonplace today but novel at the time. With a gift for innovation and a knack for assessing people and institutions, Alban helped communities and businesses adapt and improve. Her books advocate transformation through large-scale interventions. Her mantra was to include all stakeholders. Alban’s clients included top Fortune 500 companies, yet she retained her community roots through ongoing pro bono work. Alban also published extensively and taught programs at Columbia University, Pepperdine, NTL, and elsewhere.

Later, Alban was on the Board of Advisors of the Yale Divinity School, served as president of her retirement community’s residents association and of the Connecticut Organization of Continuous Care Retirement Communities. There, Alban successfully promoted the Connecticut Bill of Rights for Residents of Retirement Communities.

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RIP: Billie Alban,
cont. from p. 48

"Her profound contribution...is making it a moral imperative to give voice to the voiceless."

Late in life, Alban lost her eyesight. She then vigorously dedicated herself to raising awareness and championing handicap accessibility.

Billie was cherished as a wonderful mother and adored grandmother. She is remembered for magical bedtime stories and reading the Narnia series aloud. She loved music, sang joyfully, and recited classical poetry from memory. To all who knew her, she was a charismatic source of strength, humor and optimism.

Billie Alban was preceded in death by her brother, Pierce Trowbridge Wetter, Junior; and her second husband, William R. Williams. She is survived by two daughters, Margarita Alban of Greenwich, Connecticut, and Lynn Shea of Simsbury, Connecticut; two granddaughters, Sara Shea of Asheville, North Carolina, and Katherine Shea of Washington, DC; three great-grandchildren and her nephew, Pierce Trowbridge Wetter III. ♦

Tributes to Billie Alban from Members of TSSF

Jenny Randall She was brilliant, committed, and frustrated with outdated structures and slow change. I also wish that I had reached out more and known her better. As I look back at the little correspondence we had, she was someone whom I would have liked as a mentor. She was worth looking up to.

Jocelyn Linnekin Billie did not attend fellowship gatherings over the past decade because she could not: she was legally blind and living in an assisted residential community. Billie was sharp as a tack and a formidable interlocutor, even over the telephone. She was thoroughly a businesswoman, and I think that organizing and optimizing human work was central to her spirituality—this was her “Work” in the context of our Franciscan Rule. When we spoke, it was very little about ostensibly spiritual matters and abstract principles: Billie was interested in practicalities and specific remedies. With a keen eye for institutional structures and their flaws, she had a critique and precise prescriptions for improving the administration and organization of the Third Order. From stray remarks overheard through the years, I sensed that some tertiaries found Billie rather intimidating in group discussions. She had an astute mind, a driving intellect, and tremendous professional competency, and those qualities—in a woman—tend to scare people. Yet I never sensed a hint of egotism or self-aggrandizement on her part. Her energy for work and her sense of urgency were grounded in humility and a deep-seated sense of mission.

I think Billie’s curtailed mobility in later life must have been very frustrating for her—because I know that it would be frustrating for me at that stage of life. Even at her age and with diminished eyesight, Billie was still running a business from her residence,

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*RIP: Billie Alban,
cont. from p. 49*

working professionally with clients on a part-time basis—a fact I found astounding. She was driven by a God-given life-force that said, “*Do, accomplish, as long as you possibly can.*” Thinking of her, I am reminded of John Donne’s “Do not go gentle into that good night....”

What a blessing for the Order that someone like Billie, whose line of work wouldn’t strike many as logically related to the way of Francis, or perhaps even compatible with it, committed herself to the Third Order for an astonishing 55 years. There is a clear lesson here for the future of the Order: that we should not limit our notions of potential aspirants to the obvious—clergy, parish leaders, people already doing many church ministries. Busy professionals in diverse fields may also be drawn to the way of Francis (if they learn about it) and could end up contributing to the Order in unexpected ways. When speaking of the Third Order to people, let us leave ourselves open to surprises from the Holy Spirit. I miss Billie’s presence in the world, and I profoundly regret not making the effort to know her better. She is a role model for me, nonetheless.

In retrospect, I wish I had asked her to expound on her Franciscan spirituality and its relation to her professional work. She was fascinating to listen to, but I wish I had directed the conversation more. In retrospect, I also wonder whether the Third Order might have made more use of her talents and ideas. She was one of the longest-professed living tertiaries, and she might have had valuable insights and advice about institutional matters. Perhaps that’s also a lesson for us. ♦

Rest in Peace

**Deacon Gwendolyn
Dillon**
Professed 30 Years



The Rev. Canon Gwendolyn J. Dillon, the first black woman to be ordained to the vocational diaconate in the Diocese of Chicago, died January 6, 2020, aged 93. A native of Minneapolis, Dillon was a leader at Chicago’s Sts. George and Matthias Church for decades, first as a layperson, and then as a deacon. She was the founding director of the Fr. Charles Pond Memorial Kitchen at the church and led its work of preparing and serving breakfast for the city’s homeless for nearly thirty years, until well into her eighties.

She was honored with the St. Stephen Recognition for exemplary ministry by the Association for Episcopal Deacons in 1995 and was made an honorary canon of Chicago’s St. James Cathedral in 2008. This was the citation from The Association for Episcopal Deacons:

Gwendolyn Dillon
Servant to Marginal Persons
Diocese of Chicago 1995

Gwen is a nurturing presence with an inner-city parish. Her vision and tenacity created a large Soup Kitchen which she now directs involving parishioners and community. Gwen also serves as chaplain of St. Leonard’s House, a halfway house for men released from prison, and assisted in creating

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RIP: Gwendolyn Dillon,
cont. from p. 50

She was honored with the St. Stephen Recognition for exemplary ministry by the Association for Episcopal Deacons in 1995.

a similar facility for women. Gwen is a living symbol of Jesus's words, "I am among you as one who serves." Her quiet ministry has the respect and love of her fellow deacons. (From the *Living Church* 4/2/2020)

The *Chicago Tribune* described her ministry in these words: "The ministry continues to feed the hungry, both in body and spirit, by serving a monthly meal preceded by prayers. The Kitchen Ministry is a self-sustaining ministry of St. George and St. Matthias, funded through the generosity of parishioners." ♦

Tribute From Alonzo Pruitt

If coincidence is when God does not want to sign God's name, we know of the blessing manifest when Gwen went on to God on the Feast of the Epiphany (2020), for she too was a stunning and wonderful manifestation of the love of God. I first met Gwen when she was an active layperson at a small mission church I served in the Diocese of Chicago immediately after my ordination in 1984. She directed a five-day-a-week kitchen ministry that fed some 7,000 people a year, and she did so with a compassion and a respect that were living and stellar examples of a well-lived Christian faith. Moved by her example, numerous parishioners decided to share in this witness in one of the poorest and more crime-ridden communities in the city.

Gwen became the first Black woman ordained a perpetual Deacon in the Diocese of Chicago, and ordination only deepened her love affair with God. While vicars would come and go, Gwen and the Holy Spirit remained. Blessed to have known her over four decades, I never heard her say an unkind thing about anyone, even when unkind and untrue things were said about her. She was not vengeful or angry or unkind. She possessed a patience whose origins were not of this world, and she found something to admire in everyone she met. She supported our late Sister, Catherine Davidson, in Catherine's becoming a Tertiary, and, well into her eighties, Gwen was caring for Christ by caring for those for whom He died. Though she did not seek acclaim, she was honored by a national Deacons organization and also made a Canon of Chicago's St. James Cathedral. She was well known and widely respected, and she had a wonderful ability to be hard of hearing as regards both criticism and praise.

...she had a wonderful ability to be hard of hearing as regards both criticism and praise.

Going home to God at age 94, she outlived two husbands and one son, but she never outlived her commitment to prayer, study, and work. ♦

Rest in Peace

Alicio Fajardo Rivero

Bolondrón, Matanzas
Province, Cuba

Professed 3 Years

By Anita Miner



Alicio was very faithful in reporting yearly by surface mail despite having no email or cell phone. In his handwritten letters he recounted his ministries...in such a loving manner.

Mr. Alicia Fajardo Rivero began his Franciscan journey as a professed member in the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans on August 23, 2001. The Order grew out of southern Spain but is no longer in existence. On February 15, 2017, he was accepted as a transfer to the Third Order Society of St Francis in the Province of the Americas.

Alicio Fajardo was born December 16, 1930, and died at the age of 89 on March 22, 2020, in his native country of Cuba. Alicio was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church on March 11, 1931 and confirmed in the Episcopal Church on March 26, 1950. A lifelong, faithful Christian, he was proud of his church ministries as Lay Reader and Lay Minister. Even in later years he continued to visit prisoners and to do practices to protect the environment. The care of animals was also dear to him.

Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Alicio while I was in Cuba several years ago, I did learn from the Rt. Rev. María Griselda Delgado del Carpio, Bishop of Cuba, whom I met at General Convention in 2015 in Salt Lake City, that there had been three professed Ecumenical Franciscans in Cuba. One had already died, but the other two faithfully followed their Franciscan disciplines. One of those still keeping his Franciscan Rule of Life was Alicio Fajardo.

The Cuban bishop had a fondness for these Franciscans and for Franciscan spirituality, hence she asked me if the remaining two could be transferred and admitted as professed Franciscans in the Third Order Society of St. Francis. After working with The Rev. Tom Johnson, then Minister Provincial, the Bishop Protector, and Chapter members, Alicio Fajardo and Jorge Mérida of Cárdenas, Matanzas Province, were approved as newly transferred TSSF members in 2017.

Alicio was very faithful in reporting yearly by surface mail to me despite having no email or cell phone. In his handwritten letters he recounted his ministries (to prisoners and for the protection of the environment), in such a loving manner. It was important to him to engage with others and help make the world a better place even if it meant only in Cuba.

On June 12, 2018, Alicio received a mission visit from Brazilian members, The Rev. Luiz Sirtoli and Mauricio Tolentino, in Alicio's own Cuban village. He said it was a time of great joy and learning, and that the Rev. Luiz gave him a copy of the TSSF Directory. He was very happy to be able to see photographs of members he had been praying for. Jorge Mérida, the other former Ecumenical Franciscan, now TSSF, was among those visited, as was the Rev. Armando Delgado from Nuevitas.

In the last report I received from Alicio in January of 2020 he made a point to say that even though walking was an ordeal for him, he continued to visit the sick, and prayed for parishioners and neighbors alike. He lamented that he now was older and that his health was failing. Don Alicio (title of respect), we would say, "What a faithful and joyous Franciscan life you led. Thanks be to God!" ♦

Rest in Peace

Mary Estelle Pettit Funk
Professed 39 Years



Mary Funk at 96.

Celine Gandolfo, Mary's daughter, gave this eulogy at her funeral.

Dignified, stunning, graceful, fun, loving, warm, artistically gifted, hearty, bright blue eyes, engaging beautiful smile, wonderful laugh, and was all about her family and the love of her life, her husband, Peter Van Keuren Funk. Peter and Mary experienced “Love at First Sight” and continued their passion for each other for 74 years until Peter passed away in 2016.

Her name was Mary Estelle. Mary was one of seven children. Her siblings were Karl, Anne, Walter, Bill, Sam and Barbara, the twins. Mary said she grew up in a noisy, rambunctious, laughing family. Mary was the last surviving person of her family’s generation. Because her family was so competitive with each other I would tell her: “Mom, you won the race—you are the last man/woman standing.” She would laugh at such a silly concept.

Raising Seven Children

Mother and father followed suit and had seven children: Peter, John, Celine, Mary, Mark, Paul, and Eleanor. And, yes, we grew up also in a wonderful, noisy, rambunctious, laughing, and loving family too. The most important thing to Mother was her family. It brought her great joy and happiness. She would say that often. In the last few years. Mom would ask, “What is my Purpose? What is my job?” She did not want to be a burden. I would tell her that she had one of the most important jobs in the world and that was giving love and support to people. I told her it was like a pebble thrown into a pond. That her love reverberated into the world. She would get a smile and say, “I like that job, I can do that.” That was true, Mother showed love to everyone around her. And Mother had an unusual ability to see the gift and special quality that each person had to offer the world.

Mother carried out the challenge of raising seven children with great enthusiasm, sensibility, humor, and extraordinary love. Her adventures during those years could fill a book – and in fact, directly and indirectly, they appeared in several books authored by her husband. These included *High Spirits*, *Love and Consequences*, and *My Six Loves*, which was made into a movie in 1963 with Debbie Reynolds and Cliff Robertson. Despite the demands of child-raising, she found time to assist Peter with his writing. Following in the footsteps of his father, Wilfred Funk, a writer and publisher, he wrote a monthly column for the *Reader’s Digest* called “It Pays to Enrich Your Word Power,” and she provided invaluable editing and organization for the column. (Just before Peter’s death, they began a blog, which you can find at <https://petervkfunk.wordpress.com/>)

One time I asked her: if she did not have her big, beautiful family, what would she have done professionally? She said, “I

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RIP: Mary Funk,
cont. from p. 53



One of Mary's playful cartoons.

From *How Flowers Nurture
and Cultivate You—
Grounded in Love and
Humor*
(Privately printed 2020,
part of our TSSF library)

would have been an artist.” Mary approached everything she did with an artist’s eye and produced beautiful, serious artwork. With her wonderful sense of humor, she also created fun and engaging cartoons.

Mother loved her gardens and plants and tended to them daily. As well, walking in the woods was an enriching experience with Mother. She would stop often to point out with delight certain flowers, animals, plants, trees. All of this inspired her to write a magnificently sensitive and beautiful book about flowers and their influence on people *How Flowers Nurture and Cultivate You—Grounded in Love and Humor*. The book is gracefully written. It is inspiring, funny, filled with wisdom, quotes, and lyrical images of her experiences. She said it was a personal book of discovery, which hopes to intrigue the reader into exploring their own worlds and to explore why flowers are so important or mean so much to people.

Mother and Father were Franciscan tertiaries of the Third Order of Saint Francis, speaking to service, humility, peacemaking, contemplation, and collegiality.

So, as Mary Estelle Pettit Funk would say, when people would be leaving , “Take care.....Be Safe..... and Have Fun!!” ♦

Chapter 18. A Franciscan Garden

A close friend of mine, Mickey, is a secular Franciscan, a lay person, and very much a contemplative. She seems to have found the essence of the response that flowers, herbs, bushes, and trees evoke.

She wrote me telling of her garden created to invite restoration of the spirit. A bench centered, but sheltered from onlookers, has been used many times for her own meditation and by others to whom she ministers.

People in despair, anxiety, or loneliness come to sit beside her in quiet. There is a deep need for “healing” silence.

Empty your mind of thoughts and just let your spirit “be,” absorbing the strength, sensing a loving, enduring presence of hope and peace, so evident, so necessary. Then go out of the garden to bring the beauty, love, and caring to others. As we have received, we are able to give.

You saturate yourself, your soul in response.

One spring day I took a few moments to just catch my breath. My schedule packed with “must” items suddenly seemed “too much.”

Going out onto our porch, I sat down near a window overlooking our garden, nothing anticipated, nothing planned, just a great need for rest.

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*RIP: Mary Funk,
cont. from p. 54*

A single white tulip rose high above the other budding plants, in full bloom, iridescent in the sunlight. It was a mute call to simplicity, purity, and a release to trust, a release to the understanding that God often unexpectedly breaks into our everyday existence to manifest Himself in beauty as well as in acts of kindness.

Many times I have recalled the picture of the pure white tulip in my inner eye to suffuse myself in a moment of absolute tranquility.

Another dimension of thought can add to the life in a garden. A well-known landscape architect, Daniel Kiley, creates a plan with water in it. Moving, “living water” brings life to a garden as nothing else can. Perhaps simply only three or four rocks with water moving over them, or a small fountain, a birdbath. Any one of these reflects the light—catches the light!

It can be sad if a garden becomes a Gethsemane instead of a Paradise. Instead of helping you reach out to others, it keeps you away, isolates you. One grandfather suffered the death of his wife so deeply that he just worked in his garden all day, certainly understandable. But his mourning took a strange turn. That can happen if we are alone too much.

His granddaughter was named for his wife and instead of having that bring him joy it brought back the pain of loss. She used to stop by to admire his prize-winning roses, but he never gave her even one as a small gesture of affection. Finally, she came to feel sorry to have been given her granny’s name as she realized the return of grief it brought.

Then perhaps the month of May arrived.

He finally recovered, and, on his grand-daughter’s birthday, presented her with a huge armful of his prize roses and just as big a hug.

An incident I will never forget happened one afternoon when I visited a friend, Daphne, a priest from Trinity Church, Princeton. We had a cup of tea and talked together in a comfortable room overlooking her green garden.

We talked of many deep matters that needed her loving, wise insight. As the sun began to set, a final beam glissaded across the grass. I knew I must go.

“Wait,” she said quietly. “Look, let’s just look a bit at the bird resting over the privet hedge.”

I looked. It stayed where it had lighted, still, still, at rest with no anxiousness to move on. It stayed as a picture of the ultimate peace of resting in the Lord.

The mysteries in life add to the excitement. The possibility exists that your discoveries in your garden, your perceptions, regeneration, and joy can grow, reaching out to enrich the lives of others. ♦

Rest in Peace

Mary Orr Hayes
Professed 27 Years

Editor’s Note:

This article, part of the Saints Wisdom project, is reprinted from The Franciscan Connection, with permission.

My name is Mary Orr Hayes, and I was professed as a Franciscan in 1992. As I near age ninety, I have my share of mobility and health issues. I no longer drive, and I feel I have the sin of pride in that I find it so difficult to ask for help in getting from place to place. And I even feel guilty when I can’t be somewhere I feel I should be. Thankfully, I have good neighbors, church friends, and fellowship friends who are so gracious to help me with transportation and other issues. And the Lord is still finding ways that I can be useful to my community. As I’ve aged and become more home bound, my prayer life has increased. My prayer books, my rosaries, my Franciscan directory and other publications are always on the coffee table close to

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RIP: Mary Orr Hayes, cont. from p. 55

where I sit. I thank God so frequently that I have so many reasons to feel thankful and blessed.

Sharing Is My Favorite Word

My real ministry is now and has always been “people.” I love to talk to people, especially to have spiritual conversations. I’m still able to contribute at times to the services provided by the Asheville Buncombe County Christian Ministry (ABCCM). In addition, I am currently working with a woman who is in charge of finding a home for a family of four who have come to the Asheville, NC area from the Ukraine. They arrived with one suitcase and speak no English. Personally, I’m in the process of downsizing my belongings, so I am able to give this family a lot of household items. (two carloads thus far). The next items I’ll be sharing with them include pots and pans and other kitchen utensils. “Sharing” is my favorite word, so this family is such a blessing to me!

Bound for Alaska

Much of my ministry in the past was associated with my career as a nurse. I graduated from nursing school in 1951, and my favorite field in nursing was obstetrics. I loved working with the mothers and newborn babies. When I first graduated in 1953, I was appointed as a missionary by the National Council of Episcopal Churches and was assigned to Fort Yukon, Alaska. It was on this assignment that I learned how inexperienced and immature I really was. I spent two years in Alaska, living on the banks of the Yukon River, about six miles over the Arctic Circle. I worked in a log cabin hospital with about twenty-five beds.

NYC Skyline

After this assignment was over, I moved to Jersey City and took a graduate course in obstetric nursing. From where I worked in the hospital, I could look out the windows and see the New York City skyline. I liked it so much that I decided I wanted to get a license to nurse in New York so that I could live and work in New York City (NYC).



Some Career Experiences

Over the years I worked at St. Luke’s Hospital in NYC, Yale Medical Center in New Haven, and various VA (Veteran’s Administration) hospitals. While at St. Luke’s, I became acquainted with a priest on staff at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. He was what might be described as my first spiritual director. At Yale, I worked with Dr. William Glenn, a pioneer in the field of open heart surgery. He was head of the cardiology department. Like me, he was also an Asheville, North Carolina, native. Unusual for those days, he had his own “recovery room” for his patients. I enjoyed working with him for seven years. I can’t remember exactly how it happened, but somehow I also managed to work for two summers as a nurse at boys’ camps in Connecticut that were associated with Trinity Church Wall Street.

Twenty-Five Years for the VA

One job that didn’t work for me was that of a Red Cross nursing representative. That job required me to move to Albany, NY, about a hundred and fifty miles from NYC. I essentially “lived out of a suitcase” and traveled by train between Albany and NYC. I resigned from that job, but worked for thirteen years at a VA hospital in Albany.

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RIP: Mary Orr Hayes, cont. from p. 56

Towards the end of my career I was reassigned to a VA hospital back in my hometown of Asheville. I retired from that hospital after a total of twenty-five years of working for the VA. It was such a blessing all those years to serve as a nurse to some wonderful people, thus fulfilling my most important ministry of helping people.

Keep Up With Us!

We older folks deal with our lack of mobility and sometimes our loneliness. I encourage the younger people in our Order to keep up and be aware of us as best they can, starting with the older members of their own fellowships. But it should not stop there. Personally, I am so grateful to people like Mike and Ginny Halus, TSSF, who always give me rides back and forth to fellowship meetings whenever I am able to attend. It means so much to be able to stay in touch with my Franciscan community! ♦

Tributes from the Land of the Sky Fellowship**From Clare Barry**

Mary traveled to Ireland during the late 1990s with a small group of pilgrims led by the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Canham, who provided daily Celtic meditations throughout the trip. Mary loved being in Ireland, meeting and greeting the Irish in her enthusiastic way. Mary enjoyed the sights, like Glendolough and the High Celtic Crosses. She shared her experiences in Alaska, a place that will remain forever in her memory. Mary was an enthusiastic member of the Third Order. She made it to virtually every meeting while she was able to drive. Mary listened carefully at our meetings, and prayer meant the world to her. When she was in the nursing home, she loved being prayed for and was deeply grateful for prayer, especially with the Franciscans when they would come as a group after the Franciscan meetings. Mary really perked

up when the Franciscans arrived. She loved being a member of the Third Order and had a picture of Francis over her bed as well as a statue of Francis. Everyone who knew Mary shared a real blessing of her prayer and her special presence.

From Mike Halus

Mary always expressed her love of the Third Order. She delighted in sharing her stories of being a nurse in various locations and speaking of her life in Asheville. It was difficult for her to attend meetings but she would always make the effort. We enjoyed her and will miss her.

From Nancy Dotson

Info that I learned from our many phone calls is that Mary always slept with a rosary under her pillow. She also watched a Catholic Mass every afternoon on TV. I knew not to call her during that hour!! And she always said she had too many blessings to complain. She was a very spiritual lady with much love for God. She enjoyed talking about her experiences as a VA nurse and a camp nurse. Much of her nursing experience is in the preceding article I wrote for her. Mary has no family, or no connection with any that might still be living. But she had a neighbor that was so good to her, and Mary could not have stayed in her home for as long as she did without that neighbor. I have talked to that neighbor on the phone, at times when Mary wasn't answering my phone calls. When that happened, the neighbor could always tell me that Mary was hospitalized and the reason why.

The Land of the Sky Fellowship was so important to Mary. That's how I first met her in 1999. Members of LOS have visited Mary in her nursing home. Mike and Virginia Halus were so good to drive Mary to the LOS meetings when she was able. Clare Barry has been particularly good this last year to visit Mary in the nursing home, and I know that Lance and Alice did too. So I'm very happy that Franciscans closer to her were very kind and attentive to her. ♦

Rest in Peace

Diane Jones
Professed 11 Years



Diane Jones, who died May 6, 2020, was married to Frank Jones, who has also been professed 11 years, making them one of the few TSSF couples. Her family wrote in her obituary: "She lived a life of learning and service, travelling the world, mastering languages, and supporting local and global charities. She was a Third Order Franciscan, whose values guided her life. She was a teacher, professionally and voluntarily, for over 50 years. But she was happiest when surrounded by her loud, boisterous, loving family, who will all miss her smile and stories terribly." (*Her autobiography was featured in the Franciscan Connection, Early Summer 2020, pp. 5-10*).



Rest in Peace

Anne H. Osborne
Professed 30 Years



This remembrance was submitted by Janice Syedullah, Anne's Fellowship Convener.

Anne was 73 when she died at home on March 28th after a brief illness. Her parish priest administered the final Ministrations to the Sick a few days before her death.

Anne was a life-long Episcopalian. After her first marriage ended in an annulment, Anne tested her call as a nun by entering the Order of St. Helena in South Carolina, but she left before taking final vows. She made her Life Profession in the Third Order just before Christmas in 1989, and she attended conferences and conventions for as long as she was able. Often she could be found listening and knitting while sitting next to Mary Ellen Traugott at the Northeast Regional Convocation at Graymoor Monastery in Garrison, New York.

Anne was long a teacher. She got her Bachelors at William Smith College, and her Masters of Christian Education from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. She first taught at the Valparaiso Adult Learning Center in Indiana, but then taught for many years with the New York State Department of Corrections at the Fishkill and Sullivan Correctional Facilities. She also taught GED and Pre-GED courses for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of New York (BOCES) for many years.

When Anne wasn't teaching, she was volunteering. A former co-worker at one of the nonprofits where she helped remarked "helping people is in her DNA." She worked as a Community Habilitation provider, creating community-based enrichment experiences for adults with developmental disabilities. Anne was a long-time

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*RIP: Anne Osborne,
cont. from p. 58*

*Helping people
was in her DNA.*

member of St. James' Church of Callicoon, New York, where she served as a member of the vestry and treasurer until her death.

While Anne did all this work as a teacher and volunteer, she was plagued with health problems and chronic pain during her entire adult life. After retiring due to pain, she still continued helping as a literacy volunteer and in a thrift shop run by an interfaith charity in Callicoon.

Anne loved butterflies, especially monarchs. In late summer she would cruise the back roads of the Catskills looking for patches of milkweed, collecting eggs and caterpillars that she raised until they hatched, when she released them to begin their journey to Mexico. She loved cats. Her nephew Dan recently reminisced that to him Anne was his "cool tattooed aunt" whose visits he always looked forward to, when they would have long talks about butterflies, hummingbirds, and nature in general, finding the miraculous in the everyday.

She is survived by her husband, John, as well as by Dango, Dudley, and Blanco, the feline members of the Callicoon household.

Ann was a bright light in our fellowship. She always attended when she was able to even though it was a long drive for her. She was having health problems all along but did not let that prevent her from participating in our meetings. She always had something meaningful to contribute to our discussions. After she was not able to drive to our meetings, she would join us on the phone. The last conversation I had with her, she shared with me how much the Third Order meant to her and how she was committed to her Rule even though she was bedridden and very ill. We will miss her greatly. ♦

**From The Rev. Diana Scheide,
Her Parish Priest**

Anne was a bright and caring spirit in our small rural church on the Delaware River. I have had the pleasure of knowing her for the past five years. Anne was always finding a way to minister to her friends; she had a friend she called just to check-in with in Colorado until Anne couldn't talk anymore. She volunteered at the local thrift shop, and when she couldn't come in, they sent her treasures with butterflies. She served St. James as a Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM) and as treasurer for many years.

Even when she could not speak the thoughts in her mind, she could and would read us her favorite stories of St. Francis during coffee hour.

The last thing she said to me was "wow" when she recognized me after I anointed her and gave her last rites. What a fighter, and she lived many more days with the loving care of her beloved husband and his sister.

Anne, our beautiful butterfly, has flown back to the arms of her Lord. ♦

Rest in Peace

Sue Stewart Tidwell
Professed 25 Years



The first paragraph above is from her obituary in The Gadsden Times.

Sue passed away peacefully at home on Monday, February 24, 2020. She was born in Birmingham in 1940 and moved to Gadsden in the early 1940s. Sue was of the Society of St. Francis Third Order, and was instrumental in mentoring others on their journey within the Order. Sue was very active in the community and life of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter and Church of the Resurrection in Gadsden. ♦

Tributes

From Dr. Joe Howell

Sue had precious little by some standards, but in spirit, she was wealthy beyond words. Sue studied the spiritual aspects of life and made this her spiritual practice. She understood the power of the Enneagram and the power of community. As a Franciscan, she lived the Rule of Life and was close to nature, animals, and whoever came into her tent. Sue invited everyone who was needy on any level into her life for inspiration, guidance, and honest presence. The ripple of her ministry is felt in far regions today by many souls.

May Sue's amazing life bring us pause to savor the precious little time we all have on this planet and in consciousness to be present to every moment, the only time we really have to live.

From Frank Romanowicz

Sue was in her 80s when she died, and after the late Yvonne and Lou Willie, she was the oldest living TSSFer in Alabama. She brought me into the Order and counseled me many a time and later recommended me as a Formation Counselor. She was very nurturing and caring of me and my journey. We've attended many Regional Convocations together.

She suffered for many years from health issues, and, if there is any "redemptive value" in her long suffering, she has earned many a star in her heavenly crown, and caused the release of millions of souls from purgatory (smile)—me and my past Catholic upbringing kicking in here!

I love her and will miss her – but she IS ready to go, for sure.



We conclude this issue of The Franciscan Times on the following page with a poem Sue has published in Prayers from Franciscan Hearts, p. 35—reviewed on p. 43 in this issue.

*RIP: Sue Tidwell,
cont. from p. 60*

“Lord Christ, Let Me Feel Your Touch”

By Sue Tidwell

Lord Christ, let me feel your touch.

Touch my voice, teach me to say, “Abba, Father.”

Teach me to say, “I love you.” Lord Christ, let me feel your touch

Touch me when I am afraid, anxious, discouraged,
apathetic.

Cast out my fears, calm me, give me hope and purpose. Lord
Christ, let me feel your touch. As you were present to the disciples
on the road to Emmaus.

Be present to me in the breaking of the bread. As you forgave
the Thief on the cross and the woman caught in adultery. You have
forgiven me. Touch me again so I can forgive others. As you healed
those you touched in Galilee you have healed me.

Make me a channel for your healing love to flow through to
others. You have called me, included me, invited me to your party.

Help me never to exclude anyone. You know what it is to weep.
Touch me when I need to cry, So the healing tears may flow. You
have allowed me to touch the hem of your garment.

Now touch my whole being so I may be transformed. Lord Christ,
let me feel your touch. Let others feel your touch through me. Lord
Christ, let me feel your touch.