



**Third Order,
Society of St. Francis
*European Province***

Third Order News - March 2021

Are you switched on?

Knowing when to switch off is a great gift.

During these Covid days I have been surprised by the number of people who have confessed they quite often switch off the news. When I have been able to ask about this the responses range from 'I find the news depressing' or 'It makes me anxious'. I recognise from my own experience that when I'm anxious it is often because I'm not quite sure what to believe. How do I know for sure that what is said is true?

Writing this opening to TON is interesting!

In our time 'fake news' comes in huge variety. Even as Tertiaries it is hard for us to be insulated from this culture of doubt, distrust and depression. This is a corrosive way of being.

Gospel truth begs similar questions.

The trial of Jesus unfolded by Saint John turns on Pilot's agony 'What is Truth?'. But Pilot had missed the point of Jesus' words: 'everyone who belongs to the truth hears my voice'.

To be possessed, to 'belong' to the truth, happens as we walk the talk and discover it works.

This is not about the skill of debate, a game of winning. Saint Francis is taken seriously just because truth for him was not about grasping a 'possession'; his life is a light in our world because he reflects the Light of the world: the One whose Being lights 'the Way, the Truth and the Life'. Peace and all good happens when we are switched on, possessed, trusting.

Tim Higgins. Acting Minister Provincial

Chapter Digest

Remembering all those who have died in Covid Pandemic

In their opening prayers members of February's Candlemass Chapter kept a minute's silence and prayed for all who have died as a result of the Covid Pandemic. Members also prayed for those who have been released from their Vows, been professed or have died since the last Chapter meeting. Members took to Zoom for the meeting, held on Thursday 11-13 February.

Sense of Community

Despite being separated in distance there was a clear sense of community, a desire to act prayerfully and for the benefit of the whole Order. The important role of Area Ministers and Link Tertiaries in feeding the conversation between Chapter and Local Groups via Area Teams was stressed. "We want to hear from our sisters and brothers. We are here to serve The Order ... not direct it," stated Tim Higgins, Acting Provincial Minister. Chapter agreed to continue considering ways of strengthening the two-way communication. To

help with this, Sally Hastings, from the Guildford Area was welcomed as Acting Provincial Communications Guardian, and she has already begun the task.

Second Interim Report

Tim reported that members of The Independent Review Panel, looking at the structures of Chapter, and methods of working, are beginning to share their findings. These will be communicated more fully once the process is complete, so that lessons can be learned and changes made, where needed.

Improving the website

Karen Vincent, Deputy Web Editor, told us how the judicious use of Mailchimp, which can email information directly to all Tertiaries online is a useful tool to help us all deepen our experience of community. It is hoped that the problems updating the website will be sorted quickly. In the meantime, the search is on for a new Web Editor. More details from Karen further down in Ton and on the website. She has also compiled a handy five minute video to give you more idea of what is needed, also on the website. It sounds exciting.

Third Order Distribution

The Third Order Distribution Centre at Freeland has been closed during Covid but hopefully, will be reopened soon. Read Chris McLeod's TON article for more details.

Celebrating our 800 birthday!

The whole community will have a chance to celebrate the Order's 800 birthday, in a year of celebrations, beginning this Francis-tide, in October. More details elsewhere in TON and on the website. Tony Ross, acting Formation Guardian, met on line with 32 Area Formation Guardians in November. Six new AFG's were welcomed and farewells were said to Rob Axford, who stood down as Severn AFG to become acting Area Minister of Avon Vale. Due to Covid restrictions tertiaries were missing the personal contact with Local Groups. In spite of this, most Areas reported that the majority of Tertiaries had reported and renewed Vows. Plans are going ahead for the Early Formation Handbook. Chapter welcomed the draft form of the Principles in Practice which will be sent to all Area Formation Guardians for Local Groups to use as study and discussion material.

Farewell to Caroline Baston

Chapter prayed its farewells to Acting Provincial Novice Guardian, Caroline Baston. She was thanked for all the wise supervision she has given on Early Formation, and her joint chairing of the Formation Forum. In her report Caroline paid tribute to the work done by John Ansell (retiring ANG Severn) and his team on the Early Formation Handbook. She also acknowledged the work of Peter Dixon and Stuart Ballard who set the ball rolling. Twenty seven ANG's attended the Zoom meeting in November 2020. Two Areas do not have ANG's.

Safeguarding

Mandy Hughes, Safeguarding Officer said much has been done to ensure that safeguarding is enshrined in our Order. Areas are being invited to appoint a Safeguarding Advocate to help the Provincial Safeguarding Team spread awareness.

Pastoral Care

Peter Thompson told us that Link Tertiaries, in their annual meeting, asked for Chapter to consider appointing a Provincial Chaplain. Robin Minney (North East and North West) said Pastoral Care for ageing Tertiaries should be a permanent item on Area Group agendas.

It was agreed that Tertiaries can attend a Local Group outside their Area .However; they must settle in one group and not move from one group to another. Consideration was given to forming a Scandinavian Cluster, with a Link Tertiary, to enable the fullest participation in Chapter life. Area Ministers May Hedal from Sweden and Olavi Heino from Finland agreed to take this back for consideration

Funding Our Purpose

When Tertiaries' contemplative action needs money to make it happen the Province can respond. Funding Our Purpose will be the way for new Franciscan work to be given funding. Look out for launch details across the Province.

Provincial Treasurer, John Lovatt, presented a Financial Policies and Procedures Manual, compiled and revised with support from the Finance Committee.

News from Sweden

May Hedal reported that Swedish Tertiaries have kept in touch via Zoom, offering meetings, talks and prayers. The Norwegian local group in Gothenburg has translated The Principles into Norwegian. Work is now being done to create a good and practical website.

Minutes

The minutes of the Candlemass Chapter will be published after being ratified at June Chapter.

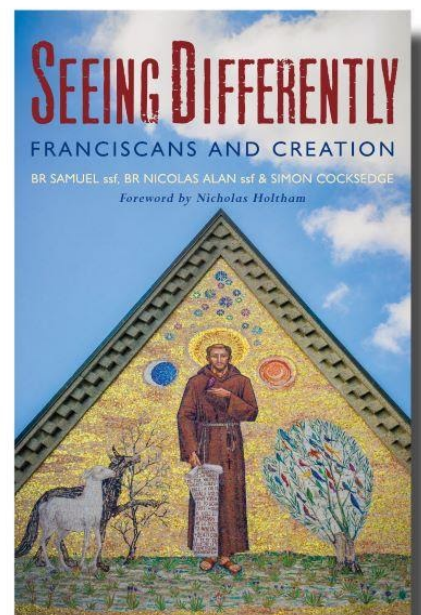
Chapter Digest compiled by Sally Hastings, Acting Communications Guardian on behalf of Chapter and the Provincial Secretary.

Seeing Differently: Franciscans and Creation

TSSF Study Online Event 15, 22, 29 April and 6 May 2021 7-9pm

This year's main TSSF Study event will take place via the Zoom platform on four Thursday evenings after Easter and will focus on the newly published book *Seeing Differently: Franciscans and Creation*, written by Br Samuel SSF, Br Nicholas Alan SSF and Simon Cocksedge TSSF. At least one of the authors of this important and timely book will be with us at each session.

We'll meet on Thursdays 15, 22, 29 April and 6 May, 7pm to 9pm and there will be around 90 places available. Please note the dates in your diary now - booking details will come later. If you would like to participate but are not a member of the Study Network (who will be notified automatically), please email study@tssf.org.uk to register to receive booking details, putting 'Seeing Differently' in the subject line.



Meanwhile, Seeing Differently: Franciscans and Creation is now published by Canterbury Press:
<https://canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781786223005/seeing-differently>

If you would like SSF to benefit more directly from your purchase, you can buy it through Hilfield Friary:
hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk

Helen Hood, (Co-ordinator, TSSF Study Network)

Treasurer's Viewpoint: How can I be a Franciscan Provincial Treasurer?

We are supposed to have a written set of Financial Policies and Procedures, and this year I sat down with the Charity Commission Guidelines and tried to write one. What had Francis to say about money? He saw it as so much manure. So how can a treasurer be Franciscan in the work? How can I write a Policy and Procedures in Franciscan style?

The first thing I felt passionate about was that I should pay the officers' expenses (and indeed our suppliers) within hours of receiving a claim, because in his Rule for the Third Order, Francis stated that we must 'restore what belongs to others'. Withholding payment to officers or suppliers is therefore withholding what belongs to them, and is contrary to our vocation.

Treasurers have a reputation for being fierce, and I was determined to follow Jesus' and Francis' injunction in his Testament not to let people feel the weight of my authority (Mt. 20: 25). So I had to be gentle, and patient in the face of silly questions, and in the Policies this comes out in being gentle about people not paying their contribution, which I see as a pastoral matter, not for me to contact a Tertiary directly but notify their Area Formation Guardian. When asked about the amount they should pay, for all the above reasons I never state a 'recommended amount'. Instead, I say: 'Tertiaries circumstances vary very widely, so there is no recommended contribution. All I can say is that some (quite a few) contribute £5-£8 a year, some (also quite a few) contribute £800-£1,200 a year, the largest group contribute £25 a year, closely followed by those who give £35 a year.' This has so far proved to be a satisfactory answer.

John Lovatt (Provincial Treasurer)

Web Editor, Webteam and IT Communications

TSSF has been developing its IT communications and needs to take this to the next stage with the appointment of a Web Editor and additional Web Team members. If you have experience of webmail systems and/or website maintenance and development – especially Wordpress – we would like to hear from you.

A short video presentation giving information about the current provision and situation can be viewed at: <https://tssf.org.uk/tertiary-members-centre/opportunities/> which may help you understand the tasks involved. If you cannot access the member zone of the TSSF website please contact Karen Vincent via webteam@tssf.org.uk for an alternative shared file link.

Karen Vincent, Webteam

Formation

The Formation Forum oversees both Early Formation and Lifelong Formation. Early Formation is about Postulancy and the Noviciate and a revised Early Formation Handbook will be trialled after Easter this year. Lifelong Formation is about the ongoing formation of professed tertiaries.

There have been far fewer resources available for ongoing formation than early formation and to rectify this a small editorial team under the leadership of Anne Spalding has been working on "The Principles in Practice". This offers a resource for use in Local Groups and by individuals to encourage conversations about the Principles.

Days 1 – 16 have been sent to Area Formation Guardians to pass on to Local Group Convenors. It is suggested that Local Groups use one of the days per meeting and allow about 30 minutes for the session. Your feedback will be most welcome. Feedback should be sent to the Provincial Formation Guardian at formation@tssf.org.uk.

Tony Ross, Acting Provincial Formation Guardian

Prayer Initiative

A simple observance: in obedience to St Francis's desire for all to pray as often as possible.

Wales TSSF is starting a new synchronized prayer initiative beginning February 2021. Three times a week for just 15 minutes, community members can stop whatever they are doing and join with others to pray in silence and/or offer up to God whatever matter is of concern at the time.

It is a chance to be as one with the whole, to feel the presence of the community and turn to face God, as St Francis was often in the habit of doing whenever and wherever he could. As simple as that - a time to let God work in us and through us.

Over time, perhaps, others may want to share any experiences or benefits they have felt from this but it is not a requirement! The only thing is to know the times and put them in the diary as a reminder of this observance. We also felt it would be something to offer the whole Province to join in with us in Wales. A time to Be.

The times are: Mondays at 9pm; Wednesdays at noon; Fridays at 2pm

Jean Rogers, Wales

General Chapter News

The next General Chapter will be different from previous General Chapters in recent memory. It will not be a residential weekend chapter but a year-long event culminating in celebrations in four cathedrals – Durham, Manchester, Southwark and Wells. The theme is 'Passion' and you have been asked, 'What are you passionate about as you follow Francis and Clare?'

The Planning team are in the process of grouping those with similar 'passions' so that they might gather material to share and inspire others during the year leading up to the cathedral celebrations on 8th October 2022. The purpose of a year-long General Chapter is to celebrate the founding of the Third Order by Saint Francis 800 years ago.

In the Calendar section of our Manual the 28th April is noted as the Birthday of the Third Order. It is a day when Luchesio and Buonadonna are remembered. They were a married couple living as merchants in the town of Poggibonzi. After meeting Saint Francis around the year 1213 they decided to devote themselves to a life of penance and works of charity, but without joining celibate Religious communities. They were among the first members of the Third Order. They both died on 28 April 1260

To celebrate the birthday and the 800th anniversary of the Third Order there will be a Province-wide Quiet Day in three parts on 28th April 2021 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Theme: Letting go, listening for God and living the Gospel

What: A one day online and offline retreat so all can take part; resources will be available in advance.

Leader: Constantina Alexander, Area Minister Wales

Tony Ross and Karen Vincent, Coordinators for General Chapter

Your Charity Needs You

Franciscan Aid is our Charity, whose sole aim is to relieve poverty and advance education of deprived people and refugees from developing countries through projects sponsored by Anglican Franciscans.

Franciscan Aid is in need of members of our Order to become Trustees, and it is also looking for a new Treasurer to work with the Chair and Secretary.

Trustees ensure that the gifts of money, so generously given, can prayerfully be allocated and continue to be distributed as intended to the projects that are supported.

The Treasurer maintains an account of the funds and transfers funds granted to the projects after approval by the Trustees at their formal meetings.

The Trustees meet three times a year (normally February, July and November) either in London or by Zoom and may carry out some correspondence between meetings.

If you would be interested in learning more about being part of this Franciscan contribution to God's work in the world, or know someone who may be interested or right for either of these roles, please contact the Chair, Caroline Ugbo (cjugbo3@hotmail.co.uk or 07876 728 572).

William Mitchell, Trustee

Website and TSSF Emails

Since the start of the year, and in particular since 20th January, a problem on the TSSF website has meant that enquiry forms from the site have not been getting through to TSSF email addresses.

We are sorry if your communication has been lost and no reply received. Unfortunately this has included attempts to register for site access and update passwords etc. A backlog of enquiries has built up but we are working to reply to these as the services become available once again. Thank you for your patience.

Karen Vincent Webteam

The Absorbeat

This medieval prayer, much loved by St Francis, is incorporated in the Third Order Office. Over the years, on my walks before dawn on Southsea beach, watching for sunrise, I will say The Absorbeat. I adore the prayer.

I have received so much on my journey of 30 years with TSSF; it is one of the paradoxes of religious life that commitment brings with it liberty. So, during Lockdown Number One I commissioned the music in celebration of the 800 years of the Third Order. I approached one of our lay clerks at Portsmouth Cathedral, Adrian, who produced the music. We had it typeset and in September it was recorded in a local church which has a good acoustic, performed by eight professional singers from the South of England.

I had this incorporated into a five minute video dedicated to the Worldwide Franciscan Third Order.

This is my gift and legacy to the Order, especially in these dark and challenging days.

The link is: <https://youtu.be/e7WRlc8n7UI>

May the power of
your love,
fiery and sweet as
honey,
wean our hearts
from all that is evil.
Grant in us to die
for the love of your
love.
You who were so
good as to die for
the love of our
love.

Heather Hall, Solent Area

Contemplative Network

Contemplative Action is at the very heart of our Franciscan Charism. The Contemplative Network encourages the practice of contemplation by offering a Newsletter twice a year at Easter and Francistide. These Newsletters are available on the TSSF website together with details of how to join the Contemplative Network. If you are unable to use the website please contact the Membership Secretary, Tony Ross, on 07773333587.

Paul Alexander, TSSF, at Bullaven Hermitage offers Contemplation, courtesy of Zoom, at the following times each day: 6.30am – 7.00am, 1.00pm – 1.30pm, 6.00pm – 6.20pm, and Compline at 8.00pm.

The joining link is:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6528770290?pwd=VDdNQXJta1ZRTRXUXRwVXB2UXpEZz09>

Meeting ID: 652 877 0290 Passcode: francis

Paul writes: "Feel free to drop in. You don't have to do anything. Just be. You can remain anonymous or not, whatever feels comfortable. The aim is to provide support in the practice of contemplative prayer and help strengthen our Franciscan family. May God bless you, Paul tssf"

Tony Ross, Contemplative Network Secretary

TSSF Retreats organised by the Oxford Area

Monday 22nd March – Thurs 25th March 2021

A Lent Retreat "Into the Desert" A Lent and Passiontide retreat, spend some time in the desert (our own experiences of Lockdown and pandemic), leading up to the core experience of the Crucifixion.

Led by Giles Charrington TSSF. This is a Zoom retreat, cost £75 all inclusive.

Friday May 14th – Sunday 16th May

"Seeing Differently - viewing ourselves, each other and the world through the lens of Francis and the Gospel".

Conductor Br Sam SSF. This is a Zoom retreat, cost £50

Monday, 12th July -- Thursday, 15th

Silent retreat: "Franciscan solitude, finding solitude in everyday life"

Conductor: Sister Carolin Clare OSC - a Sister of the Community of St Clare, previously a tertiary and Minister Provincial for the European Province 1997 – 2003, and was a staff member at the International Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury.

Please note given the uncertainty of when the Old Parsonage will reopen this is provisionally a Zoom Retreat, Cost £75. If residential £180 including the Conductor's expenses

Friday, 15th - Sunday, 17th October

Silent retreat: Creativity and Spirituality.

Conductor: Revd Dr Anne Holmes TSSF - "I serve as an SSM Associate Priest in a central Oxford benefice. I work as a group analytic psychotherapist, psychodynamic counsellor and supervisor. I work privately and with NHS teams. I have a particular interest in the role of the creative arts in restoring the energy expended in pastoral care and have a doctorate in practical theology. I review books on pastoral care and mental health for the Church Times. I have been a Tertiary for almost 40 years."

Please note given the uncertainty of when the Old Parsonage will reopen this is provisionally a Zoom Retreat, Cost £50. If residential, cost £120 including the Conductor's expenses.

Bookings: contact Revd Geoffrey Clement, oxfordretreat@yahoo.co.uk The Vicarage, Church Street, Shipton Under Wychwood, OX7 6BP Tel: 01993832514

Member News

Some of these announcements were missed off the last issue of TON, They are included here with our apologies. Please pray for all these members.

Professions	Withdrawals	In Memoriam
<p>2020 Maria Wells (Severn) Julie Lynch (Guildford) Michele Lee (London West) Cheryl Freeman (London West) Lee Spragg (London West)</p> <p>2021 Hilary Bond (Blackmore Vale) Sue Mann (London East & Essex South)</p>	<p>None reported</p>	<p>2020 Iris Duke (Kent West) Brian Druce (Severn) Jean Durrant (Cambridge) Jean Angus (Kent West) Dorothy Knott (Kent West) Jane Bain (Durham) Patricia Webster (Durham) Rowena Lack (Wessex) Geoffrey Richardson (Oxford)</p> <p>2021 Ann Scott (Kent West) Penny Whittaker-Wright (East Anglia) Ulla Jacobson (Sweden) Peter Allen (London South) Winifred Laws (Oxford) (aged 102!) Pamela Freeman (Shrewsbury) Clive Cresswell (Scotland)</p>

Who to send things to:

Changes in address, telephone number, e-mail address, TSSF Office held
Alan Williams, Membership Secretary, 4 The Holloway, Amblecote, Stourbridge, DY8 4DL
T: 01384 394057 E: memsec@tssf.org.uk

TSSF Website and IT Services
Karen Vincent E: webmaster@tssf.org.uk

Other Communications Matters E: comms@tssf.org.uk

Contributions and letters about finance (Please make cheques out to "Third Order Society of St Francis ").
John Lovatt, Provincial Treasurer 8 Small Acre Park, Mortimer's Cross, Leominster, HR6 9TQ
T: 07576 941 052 E: treasurer@tssf.org.uk

Enquirers interested in joining the Order E: novguard@tssf.org.uk

Formation E: formation@tssf.org.uk

All other enquiries about the Order
Minister Provincial E: ministertssf@tssf.org.uk

Matters Concerning Little Portion E: editor@tssf.org.uk

Contributions for TON
Jeremy Cole, TON Editor, 1 Hood Walk Kettering Northants NN15 6PZ
T 07 596 85 25 85 E: ton@tssf.org.uk

TON Notes

The next TON is due to be published in July 2021. The deadline for contributions is 26th June 2021.

TON is seen as a newsletter not a magazine. Items are expected to be short and informative. Contributions should be no more than 200-300 words. Please try to be concise, remember the editor reserves the right to edit your contribution! Advertisements for profit will not be accepted.

An audio copy of TON is available. If you would like to receive this please send your name and address to the editor. A simple layout version (no images, no formatting, suitable for screen readers) is also available in docx or pdf format, again by request from the editor.

In exciting news: The editor has been approached by the Province of the Americas and asked to send a copy of future TONs to their Provincial Secretary with a view for distribution to their members, so TON is reaching out to the "New World"!

Any views and opinions expressed in TON are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the TSSF.

Jeremy Cole TON editor