



The Franciscan Times

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

Pace e bene

Lent 2023

2023 TSSF Convocation

"Becoming Vessels of Compassionate Love" Contemplation & the Mystical Feminine

By Anton Armbruster



*St. Clare holding the sacred
monstrance.*

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The 2023 TSSF Convocation is scheduled **for June 4th through the 9th** (arriving on Sunday, the 4th, and departing on the 10th) at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. We are pleased to announce that Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, will be our keynote workshop leader. Our theme revolves around Saint Clare of Assisi's quote: *"We are to become vessels of compassionate love for others."*

This theme emerged from many prayerful dialogues over the past three years about seeing the Presence of Almighty God "through **her** eyes"; contemplating the divine feminine that flows through our charism.

Reflecting on the centrality of love, Saint Clare also taught: *"We become what we love, and who we love shapes what we become."* Her sentiments echo our Order's priorities: sacred ecology, decolonization, and curtailing the rising global tide of racism, misogyny, fascism, and xenophobia. These pressing matters indeed converge in the Cross of Light and Love, facets of the same sacred gem!

We are pleased to announce that Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, will be our keynote workshop leader. Our theme revolves around Saint Clare of Assisi's quote:

***"We are to become vessels
of compassionate love for others."***

How do we understand the "mystical feminine" concept as it informs contemplation and our lifelong conversion in the Spirit?

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Vessels of Compassionate Love, *cont.* from page 1

What is the Divine Feminine?

Firstly, the divine feminine is not about gender or gender identity. In a Jungian sense, it is an archetypal source of deep meaning that derives from openness to the Holy Spirit within and around us. It is characterized by *radical noticing*. The prerequisite is kenosis, or emptying of the ego self and making space for Christ to fill. This is the great opus of our spiritual lives and the object of our lifelong formation.

Reflecting on Saint Clare's daily practice of "gazing" at the San Damiano Crucifix, we see the mystical/divine feminine as a state of receptivity, vigilance, and watching for the Living Presence. In time, we appreciate the importance of spiritual detachment from all the things, constructs, ideologies, and even beliefs that tend to impair our fellowship with Christ in and with all Creation.

Ralph Otto Scharmer has argued that seeing with fresh eyes, or "Presencing," demands three kinds of openness: an open mind, an open heart, and an open will (the intention to try new ways of thinking, seeing, and doing). (Scharmer, 2016)

Letting go of our pet ideas and frames of reference expands our consciousness to reveal our cosmic kinship. Such devotion to the sacred feminine was the foundation that led Francis to preach even to the birds. While radical interconnectedness yearns to emerge in global hearts and minds, it is too often undermined by the thirst for power, control, and tribalism. This is echoed in the insightful book by Chris Hedges, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. (Hedges, 2014) When tribalism is our basis for a sense of belonging, it does so through the dark reinforcement of shared enmity against the other.

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Shallow vs. Deep Ecology

We see the malignancy of tribalism in our shared culpability for our struggling planet. A “shallow ecology” conceives of nature as at our disposal. Moving to Florida, my wife and I, initially, just three years ago, chose a place away from the busy suburbs, only now to see accelerated development of housing and commercial real estate. Where there were many trees, we now have cleared fields being readied for new development. In the name of “progress,” we see cavalier decimation of the natural world around us. Urban sprawl has been likened to the spread of viruses: an apt analogy.

This contrasts with “deep ecology,” representing “an interplay between outward-directed action and inward-directed action.” (Devall and Sessions, 1985) The ways of indigenous peoples and their spirituality reaffirm the truth of our identity as part of one cosmic organism. All manner of creatures, organic and inorganic, are part of the great sacred dance that celebrates our essential kinship. We are rich in siblings! No one and no thing is truly “other.” Steven Charleston beautifully expresses this in his book, *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder’s Meditation on Hope and Courage*. (Charleston, 2021)

Carl G. Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, made many trips to learn from the natural world and the truths embodied in the lives and rituals of indigenous peoples. His reflections gave rise to his conception of an “archetypal ecology” that defines cosmic interconnection, or inter-being. One such trip found him in New Mexico, living among the pueblo-dwelling peoples, the Taos Pueblos.

Jung’s dialogues with the Chief of the Taos Pueblo people moved him deeply. Recalling the awe-inspiring “presence of the sacred mountains” of his childhood in Switzerland, he marveled at the Chief’s emotional change as he spoke about his spiritual outlook grounded in nature. Jung opined about childhood memories: “Nature seemed full of wonders, and I wanted to steep myself in them. Every stone, every plant, everything seemed alive and indescribably

marvelous.” (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 1963)

In essence, the sacred feminine is at work when we genuinely and wholeheartedly abide in the Spirit without agenda: as we deepen our embrace of “I AM” and enter fully into the sacrament of the present moment.



The author generated this image from the DALL-E Open AI program with his input of the quote from St. Clare, “becoming vessels of compassionate love.” Images are free to reproduce since they are one-of-a-kind. (AI Generation date: February 2023.)

We struggle with just sitting. Authentic Presence is hard to come by, as the prevailing culture celebrates multi-tasking. In my global psychotherapy practice, the most frequent sources of malaise and distress are a sense of shallowness of purpose and loss of meaningfulness. The antidote is finding our “cave,” sitting still and abandoning our egos to silence and holy waiting. We need perpetual, lifelong rebalancing between all our doing and our yearning for deep connection.

Rebuilding our Sense of Community, Post-Pandemic

As is consistent with the life of Saint Clare, we look ahead to our time at Convocation this year with the goal of wholesome rebalancing. We will leave more space for interior work with measured doses of big ideas and inspirational dialogue.

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To register for the
Convocation, please click
below:

[https://tssf.org/resources/
resources-for-tertiaries/
convocation-2023/](https://tssf.org/resources/resources-for-tertiaries/convocation-2023/)

In doing so, we will be honoring comments received in our survey after the 2017 Convocation that it was “hectic.” Many felt rushed, and workshops co-occurred, causing people to miss other workshops of interest. We will also place a premium on informal time together. After all, this is our first post-pandemic convocation, so rebuilding our sense of community is a critical goal.

Concerning the keynote workshop, we are thrilled that Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, has agreed to be with us for a full day-and-a-half, midweek, to help us reflect on our three areas of missional action and reflection thread.

We will present four stimulus workshops that will be offered sequentially, so that we can attend all of them or spend time in contemplation and prayerful dialogue with other brothers and sisters as we choose. The four workshops, on “spiritual motherhood,” mending as spiritual practice, gratefulness, and “deep incarnation,” are described on the succeeding pages.

In addition to these several workshops, we will have morning *lectio* together on most days, Eucharist each evening, quiet time each day, and evening hospitality for informal conversation and song. There will also be several informal, panel-type conversations and other planned activities.

This is our first opportunity in a very long time to be together as a Province to celebrate our blessed community and learn from one another.

Most importantly, this is our first opportunity in a very long time to be together as a Province to celebrate our blessed community and learn from one another!

May you and yours be blessed with peace, health, and joy! See you in June.

References

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The Convocation Workshops



Sister Ilia Delio will share her insights and lead us in smaller group discussions. More about Sister Delio on About Our Keynote Speaker, page 8.

Deep Incarnation:

Are We Driven by the Energies of Love?

Meditation by Sister Ilia Delio, Keynote Presenter

We are honored to have as our Convocation keynote speaker and facilitator Sister Ilia Delio, OSF. She is joining us midweek for a full day-and-a-half to address the question she poses around “deep incarnation” and the conversion of consciousness in action that we seek as Franciscans. Sister Delio will challenge us to examine the crises of our times through the lens of her scholarship of many years on the thought of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who coined the term “Christogenesis:” the ongoing evolution of the cosmos toward full realization in Christ when matter emerges fully as Spirit.

Teilhard de Chardin identified love as the core energy of the universe and saw a relationship between evolution and Duns Scotus’s notion of the primacy of Christ. Christianity is more than a religion of salvation; it is the actualization of God in the embodiment of love.

How do we reconcile a universe oriented toward the fullness of love with the crises of our age, including global warming, racial profiling, and the perils of consumerism? We will engage these questions from a Teilhardian-Franciscan perspective and strive to see the points of resistance and the possibilities of change.



Bringing Forth Christ:

A Reflection on "Spiritual Motherhood"

Facilitated by Charlie McCarron



Below, workshop facilitator Charlie McCarron amid a glorious patch of Russian sage.

In medieval Franciscan spirituality, the concept of “spiritual motherhood” referred to a mystical and spiritual relationship between those called to the Franciscan way and God. It was believed that Franciscans could become spiritual mothers by devoting themselves to a life of prayer, penance, and service to others.

In the Franciscan tradition, spiritual motherhood was closely linked to the figure of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Francis saw Mary’s stance as the ultimate model for the Franciscan response

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to the call to Gospel life. It was she who nourished and cared for her children, the faithful, just as a physical mother would care for her own children.

We will look at this rich stream in our spiritual lineage through the writings of Francis and Clare, Angela of Foligno, Bonaventure, and others. We'll reflect on what this might mean to us today, as we enter into dialogue with these spiritual forebears.



Francis's mended robe from the Basilica of Cortona in Tuscany, Italy.

Repair the World:
Mending as Spiritual Practice

Facilitated by Janet Strickler

Did you know that Francis actually instructed his friars about mending their habits, in the Rule of 1223? Mending and repair are counter-cultural activities in a consumer-driven, disposable society, but they are critical skills in a world where we are extracting materials from the earth at an unsustainable rate.

Bring an item with you that you would like to figure out how to repair! Janet Strickler has a lot of experience at mending certain kinds of things, and we can tap our collective wisdom to come up with solutions for others. If your item is too hard to transport to the gathering, bring a picture!



"Everything has beauty, but not everyone can see it."
Image by Annie Spratt_Unsplash.

Always and Everywhere:
Gratefulness as a Path to Humility, Love & Joy

Facilitated by Janet Strickler

Gratitude is something most of us do sporadically, usually as a response to some experience or gift. But it is also something we can choose to do as a regular spiritual practice. Going through life actually *looking* for things to be grateful for can be transformative. That was the experience of Janet Strickler, who presents this workshop, which will be chock full of practical ways to deepen your ability to "*rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances.*" (*I Thess 5:16-18*)



About Our Keynote Speaker

Sister Ilia Delio



Sister Ilia Delio, speaking to a group in 2016.

Image Credit: The Chautauquan Daily, August 15, 2016.

One of the great themes of the work of Sister Ilia Delio, who will be our keynote speaker at the 2023 TSSF Convocation, is “being on fire for God.” Recently she wrote:

"Our world is desperately in need of real spirituality because it is in need of persons on fire with the love of God. Let us not deceive ourselves by spiritual consumerism. God needs us to be fully open and ready for transformation, a new type of Godly-life that makes the universe expand and stars explore. To give birth to God is to give birth to the freedom of our identity.

"Spirituality is about the creation of the soul, not maintenance of the soul. The greatest challenge of our age is the self-inflated ego, as well as the self-protected ego. We desire real transcendence, but we fear the cost of transformation. Jesus said it best: *If you want to find your life, you must lose it, and if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it.* (Matthew 10:39)

"Can we lose our lives in an age of the internet and consumerism? Spirituality must redefine itself in the twenty-first century if we hope for the future. The fires raging across our beautiful planet must become the raging fires of our own personal transformation: *I have come to cast fire upon the earth*, Jesus said, *and how I wish it were blazing.*" (Luke 12:49) Fire burns but it also transforms. The fire of the Gospel is love. Let us set ourselves on fire with love, and the world will be made anew." (Delio, 2022) ♦

"Fire burns but it also transforms. The Gospel is love. Let us set ourselves on fire with love, and the world will be made anew."

From her website, *Christogenesis.org*

Sister Ilia is a Franciscan Sister of Washington, D.C., and American theologian specializing in the area of science and religion, with interests in evolution, physics and neuroscience and the import of these for theology. Ilia currently holds the Josephine C. Connelly Endowed Chair in Theology at Villanova University and is the author of seventeen books including *Care for Creation* (coauthored with Keith Warner and Pamela Woods), which won two Catholic Press Book Awards in 2009, first place for social concerns and second place in spirituality. Her book *The Emergent Christ* won a third place Catholic Press Book Award in 2011 for the area of Science and Religion. Her recent books include *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution and the Power of Love* (Orbis, 2013), which received the 2014 Silver Nautilus Book Award and a third place Catholic Press Association Award for Faith and Science. Her most recent book, *A Hunger for Wholeness*, was published in 2018. ♦

Delio, S. I. (2022, October 22). *Transformation or Self-Inflation*. Retrieved from Christogenesis: <http://christogenesis.org>

Lovescape Examen

By Anton Armbruster

In the Spirit of Francis & Jesus, by Murray Bodo

This is a creative exercise based on the book, *Francis & Jesus*, by Murray Bodo, and framed as an examen of consciousness in the Spirit of the Divine Feminine resting in the heart of our charism.

I. Silence

Focus on breathing (e.g., *"Breathing in, I calm my body; breathing out, I calm my emotions,"* Thich Nhat Hanh)

II. Jesus Prayer

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

III. Imagine: Scenes in the Life of St. Francis

1. A New Life

"Francis & the brothers would bring joy and hope and song. They would sing of the Great King who was also their Shepherd and the Lamb who died for them. They would sing to the lepers of Jesus, who makes even a leprosarium a paradise of his heavenly court."



Image credit: Creative Commons
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*Q: In what ways am I called to be a "sign of the Great King"?
 What stands between me and the call?*

2. Clare as image of Lady Poverty

"Her hair in his hands, her locks falling like petals onto the floor of the Portziuncula." How did this noble lady, with so many luxuries and possibilities of the world, arrive here? How could she allow a poor beggar to cut off her beautiful hair? And then allow brother after brother to cut off another lock? And how did she find her way?

Q: What moment in my life does this passage recall?

3. The Nearness of God

"Like John, and Jesus after him, they must first go into the desert of prayer and fasting before they dared prepare the way of the Lord. They were to do so in order that those who heard would be led to Baptism or to renew their Baptism and in their own rising from the water would meet Christ and know that, yes, this is God's Beloved Son."

Q: How does the desert show up in my life?

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4. *The Peacemaker*

“And so began what Francis had prayed would happen. He met Jesus in an unexpected man, the ‘enemy,’ like the lepers who were also considered the ‘enemy.’ He and the Sultan shared their faiths, their hope for peace, and became friends.”

Q: Who are the “enemies” that I invite to my table and who do I keep at a distance?

5. *The Shepherd, the Lamb & the Baby*

“Francis knew that God the Holy Spirit was the real founder, and Christ was the Lord who spoke to him from the cross of San Damiano; but it was he that they spoke to and he who had gone in search of God’s will when brothers began to join him. If God wanted him to remain as leader of the Order, he would; if not, he would relinquish his authority and return to the brothers as one of those who obey rather than those who give obediences.”

Q: In what ways do I struggle with obedience? How do I understand it? How is obedience a source of freedom?

6. *Lovescape*

“He felt the bread and wine changing; he felt the pain which that change cost Jesus on the Cross: the broken body, the blood flowing out. And when Brother Leo placed the host upon his tongue, it was as if his very self was subsumed into Christ, rather than as before, when in Holy Communion, as if Francis were taking Christ into himself and Christ permeated his whole body as food is absorbed in the body. Now it was he who was being consumed by Christ and entering him completely, his own sense of himself lost in the Beloved.”

Q: Reflect on a time of especially consuming experience of Eucharist? What did I experience?

7. *Transfiguration*

“When Father Francis came to die, he sang the final stanzas of his canticle, knowing full well the words would give him hope and courage to make the passage into the Kingdom that already dwelled within him, a mirror of the kingdom he was about to return to.”

Q: What does this event in the life of Francis mean to me? What words give me hope and courage?

8. *Sister Death*

“He asked the brothers to lay him naked on the naked ground so that he could die like the naked Christ upon the Cross. And so, they did—until Brother Elias, the Minister General of the Order, intervened and commanded Francis under holy obedience that he be clothed in a borrowed habit and then be lifted from the ground onto his pallet.”

Q: In imagining this scene, how would I feel and think and act were I a brother on the scene?

IV. Reflections in Gratitude

Q: In what ways am I grateful in this moment?

V. Closing Prayer



Mary: Mother of Mystics

By Fr. Murray Bodo, OFM

*From Franciscan Spirit Blog:
Franciscan Media May 2, 2020
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Mary's life, like that of her Son, will be a living out of her own canticle. She will enter into the mysteries of Christ's life. Like the Christian mystics after her, she will participate in a more intense way in the very mystery that she is sharing. As the model of intimacy with God, Mary will enter into the death and resurrection of her Son. She will stand beneath the cross of his dying; she will rise with him body and soul in the mystery of her Assumption into heaven. Franciscans pray a seven-decade rosary, the Franciscan Crown, that for me summarizes what it means to enter into the mystery of how we are transformed by and into Christ. The mystic knows in a uniquely graced way these mysteries that we believe and live out as we try to be true to the mystery of our baptism. The very word *mystic* derives from the word mystery, and God does allow the mystics to see into mysteries, like the mystery of baptism, by way of visions or insights that transcend our usual way of seeing. They see and relate to us the wonder of what is happening within us, for example, as we live out the mysteries of our salvation. The mystics confirm that what we believe is indeed true.

The seven joys of Mary of the Franciscan Crown illustrate for me what happens in the lives of mystics.

1. Annunciation

Like Mary, the mystics have experienced some extraordinary visitation of God. They hear or see Christ or his messenger, and they are given a choice to respond or not. They realize that their experience of the Divine not only involves listening but responding.



2. Visitation

The response to God's annunciation ultimately involves a reaching out to others, as Mary does in the second mystery of the crown, the Visitation. When she hears of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy, Mary goes immediately to tend to her, to be her handmaid. She becomes her cousin's servant as she became God's servant in the Annunciation. The one leads to the other, and, indeed, to be handmaid to her cousin is to be handmaid to God. For, as her Son will proclaim, when you serve the least of your brothers and sisters, you serve him.

3. Nativity

The mystical heart gives birth to God in poverty, littleness and often in obscurity. Mystics do not literally give birth to Christ, but they do so spiritually by their charity, by the gestures of their lives.

4. Adoration of the Magi

The mystics imitate the adoration of the magi

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*Mary: Mother of the Mystics,
cont. from p. 11*

symbolically and literally when they offer their newborn selves to God. They have a sense that they no longer belong wholly to themselves to do with their lives as they please, but they belong to God.

5. Finding Jesus in the Temple

The finding of the child Jesus in the temple speaks to the truth not only of the mystic's life but of all our lives, namely, that we can't hold onto God. God will be about God's business, and nothing we do will make God our personal possession. We all experience this one way or another, but the mystics experience this most intensely because of the felt intimacy with God they've been gifted with. God at some point withdraws his presence, and the mystic is left in that dark night of soul, to use the language of John of the Cross, in which God seems to no longer exist, at least not for them. They long to experience God, but they cannot make it happen, because God is leading them through this dark night in order that they might love God for God's own sake and not for the intimacy and gifts God gives them. And so, they wait, and they go through the motions of prayer and charity; but there is no consolation, no joy in it, until God finds them again, and their joy is restored to a heart that has been purified of selfishness.

6. Resurrection

Jesus' resurrection is prefigured by the transfiguration. When Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up the mountain and is transfigured before them, they try to hold onto that experience the way other mystics have tried to hold onto their ecstatic experience of God. Jesus' face is changed, and his clothing becomes dazzling white, and Moses and Elijah appear in glory, speaking of the passage

Jesus will have to make in Jerusalem. Peter immediately wants to make three shelters there for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah in order to keep them there. But the evangelist Luke says that Peter doesn't know what he is saying because, as he is speaking, a cloud comes and covers them with a shadow, and the disciples are afraid. Then a voice comes from the cloud, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Luke 9:35). Jesus is left standing there alone. The vision has passed, and shortly afterward, Jesus enters Jerusalem, beginning his passion, death and resurrection. None of us humans, not even Mary, can hold onto glory. The ordinary passages through life and death continue as they did for Mary after meeting her Son as the Risen Lord following the Resurrection. The mystic, however, has indeed seen the vision, has heard God's voice. Those of us who have not are encouraged by their visions and voices to believe more firmly that beneath the appearances of our ordinary lives God's glory lies hidden. It flares out from time to time and is seen by those to whom God chooses to reveal this parallel world we believe in but do not see.

7. Assumption and Crowning of Mary

Like Mary in this last mystery, the mystics are assumed into heaven soul and body. By this I mean that only in the integration of soul and body do we enter paradise. Once one has had an intense experience of God, the temptation is to privilege the soul and denigrate the body, thereby splitting what God has made one person. Some mystics have seen the body as a problem, a source of sin, an inferior part of the self, and they have acted accordingly, often imposing extreme penances on the body, neglecting the needs of the body, even trying to become pure soul. This is another form of trying to hold onto God. Instead, we must let God go, as Mary did when she saw her Son die, saw him alive again, then saw him ascend into heaven. Following Jesus' instructions, she went with John to his home to live out her days. ♦

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE



Liz Peacock, newly appointed Guardian of Our Loving Community.

Loving Community Reprise

By Liz Peacock

As the new Guardian of Our Loving Community, I stand on the work of the many people who have gone before me. I must say, I am very excited about this new role.

In the Winter-Lent 2022 edition of the *Times*, two articles were printed about the Loving Community Project. The one by Janet Fedders presented a brief history of the project. The other article, by Cleveland Beach, talked about our vulnerability and brokenness, and how essential it is for us to remain rooted in prayer and contemplation as we approach these issues. I refer you to these articles on pages 10-11 (tinyurl.com/2ft5ncr9).

Let me tell you a little more about the 2021 policy and why I'm so excited about it. (You can find a copy of it here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8hnjss>.) Remembering that in our baptismal covenant we promise to "respect the dignity of every human being," we don't want to be just a "safe" community. Our dream is to be a truly loving community, where everyone is respected and honored, and where no one is made uncomfortable by inappropriate behaviors or comments. To that end, the 2021 policy encourages

Remembering that in our baptismal covenant we promise to "respect the dignity of every human being," we don't want to be just a "safe" community. Our dream is to be a truly loving community, where everyone is respected and honored, and where no one is made uncomfortable by inappropriate behaviors or comments.

all members, and that includes *you*, to report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. If you are concerned about any interaction with another TSSF member, or if you sense that someone else may be uncomfortable, please speak up.

Almost anyone in a leadership role can receive a report: Fellowship Conveners, Fellowship Guardian, Area Chaplains, Assistant Chaplains, Provincial Chaplain, Formation Counselors, Assistant Formation Guardians, Formation Guardian, Chapter Members, and Ministers Provincial. They will be trained to listen attentively, and will work with all those involved to improve mutual understanding and develop an action plan. Most issues can be handled locally. More serious offenses will be referred to the Intake Officers, who will decide if an allegation needs to be escalated. If so, the Minister Provincial will be informed, and a

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*Loving Community, cont.
from p. 13*

reference panel will be formed. The reference panel consists of the Minister Provincial, the current Intake Officers, and a member of the Standing Committee.

Watch for Our New Training and Orientation Programs

We have a team in place that is working hard as I write this to put together a training program for all leaders. Formation Counselors, Area Chaplains, Fellowship Conveners and Chapter Members, you will hear from me soon. This training will provide not just the nuts and bolts of the process, but also the awareness and sensitivity to handle reports.

As a second priority, we will be designing an orientation for postulants, novices, and anyone else in the Order who would like to attend. This will cover the policy in broad strokes, with the intention of making sure participants understand that this really is a loving community, and that we want to support them and address whatever concerns they may have.

Down the road apiece, we will also be providing a video and other resources for use in fellowships and convocations. But that may be a while. I think I have enough on my plate for now!

If you have any questions or comments about the policy, or the trainings, or anything else related to how we can be a truly loving community, I want to hear from you. I am available by email (Macrina02@yahoo.com), or by phone (796-796-0672). ♦

From the Bursar

By Alison Saichek

How to Donate

As a reminder, donations by check should be mailed to **TSSF, 17040 SE Naegeli Dr. #2, Portland, OR 97236.**

We also can receive payments by PayPal or Zelle.

There is a "donate" button towards the bottom of the home page at tssf.org for making payments using a debit or credit card.

I often say how much I appreciate your cards, thanks, and good wishes. A recent one from Weston Cook was especially touching.

"In addition [to his pledge], I am adding another donation as a memorial for Sophie the dog who left us on 5 January. She was twenty years old or thereabouts, a Sheltie Collie sheepdog. Born with a stunted left front paw, she came to use about sixteen years ago after having formerly been in the hands of dog fighters. Dog fighters use small dogs like Sophie for dark and terrible things, so she was a 'rescue' in every sense of the word. Her last years were truly a long good-bye as her tiny star flickered throughout 2022, but she finally answered the Good Shepherd's beckoning in January. I miss her beyond words' telling."

Peace and all good.



TSSF Province of the Americas

Financial Summary 10/01/22 - 12/31/22

Fund Balances	<u>10/1/2022</u>	<u>12/31/2022</u>
Operating Fund	26,714.86	32,720.97
Savings Account & CD	161,622.76	161,637.77
PayPal Account	3,685.44	5,135.63
JCFU Account	7,091.85	7,691.85
MMF Raymond James Acct.	250,000.00	250,000.00
TOTAL FUNDS	449,114.91	457,186.22
Schlegel Urgent Needs Fund	14,346.69	14,346.69
Kay Miller Scholarship Fund	34,204.63	34,204.63
Medical Mission Fund	7,944.33	7,944.33
MMF Challoner Bequest/Raymond James Acct.	250,000.00	250,000.00
SERC Funds	1,875.18	1,875.18
NERC Funds	4,128.19	4,128.19
Memorials	4,672.74	2,632.74
Companions Funds	3,769.48	4,199.48
Reserve for Provincial Convocation	40,000.00	40,000.00
Reserve for IT	10,000.00	10,000.00
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	370,941.24	369,331.24
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	78,173.67	87,854.98
Fiscal Year 2022-2023 As of 12/31/22	Budget	Actual
Contributions	13,750.00	14,714.00
Other Income (Amazon Smile, Interest)	76.00	56.00
Total Operating Income	13,826.00	14,770.00
Operating Expenses		
Servants (Ministers, Chaplains, Officers)	5,600.00	404.00
Formation	475.00	386.00
Outreach (Support for other Orders & Organizations)	8,825.00	2,150.00
Communications	1,800.00	679.00
Meetings: Chapter 2021 and 2022	-	-
Overhead (Insurance, bank charges, website)	3,638.00	153.00
Total Operating Expenses	20,338.00	3,772.00
Income less Expenses	(6,512.00)	10,998.00

REVIEWS of BOOKS by TERTIARIES

Book Review

The Francis Stories, by Rose Christie-French

Reviewed by Pamela Mooman



The Francis Stories retells stories from *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* in Plain English.

ISBN: 9780-473-33218-1

Tales about Saint Francis and the early Franciscan Order are timeless and beautiful. In true Franciscan style, they can be savored from multiple perspectives, opening the wonder of those early years to everyone. Rose Christie-French, a tertiary in the Province of the Pacific, has retold the first Franciscan stories in Plain English, which makes them accessible to a large audience, including tertiaries in Melanesia, where a thousand languages are spoken. The book features illustrations by John Ngalihesi, a teenager at the time of publication from the Solomon Islands.

The Francis Stories is not about complex presentation but rather inclusion. The 21 chapters feature familiar stories shared clearly and humbly, without linguistic flourish. From preaching to the birds to brokering peace with the wolf of Gubbio, from the call at the crucifix to the final moments, this collection includes the Franciscan classics.

"St. Clare is here, too. The final chapter is a lovely story about her blessing of bread. After the loaves are blessed, the mark of the cross suddenly appears on them."

Saint Clare is here, too. The final chapter is a lovely story about her blessing of bread. After the loaves are blessed, the mark of the cross suddenly appears on them. Rose Christie-French

also includes an excerpt of Clare's well-known admonition to Angela of Prague that begins: "Place your mind in the mirror of eternity...."

The language in this book uses contemporary terms, and the overall effect is that of a storyteller sharing tales. Phrases such as "they say" along with "and it is said" help create a warm, friendly atmosphere, a feeling of being gathered around a campfire and listening to accounts of and legends about Francis and his brothers.

This volume features beautiful prayers intertwined with the stories, including Saint Francis' blessing to Brother Leo. Rose Christie-French also re-visions the "Canticle of the Creatures," changing the usual presentation into simpler phrases, but maintaining the essence of Francis' lovely song to God. Her version begins:

cont. on page 17

*The Francis Stories, cont.
from p. 16*

“All praise, glory, honour, and blessing
is yours, Good Lord, through all you have made.
Our Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and the Stars,
Our Brother Wind, Sister Water, Brother Fire,
and Sister Mother Earth, who feeds and clothes us,
give praise to The Lord.
All our brothers and sisters who are
the birds, animals, plants, fishes and insects,
Give praise to The Lord.”

This contemporary retelling of *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* is an unpretentious and refreshing way to experience the beginning of the Franciscan Order.

Rose Christie-French and many others in the Province of the Pacific support tertiaries in Melanesia by sending art supplies, donating these books, and in other ways.

To learn more about Rose Christie-French, please see the interview which follows.



In an article published in the Fall 2014 Franciscan Times, pp. 13-14, Rose Christie-French offered a week's worth of liturgical collects as printed in The Book of Common Prayer and in Plain English, and she explained what Plain English is: "Lest we view the use of Plain English as only an altruistic action for the sake of foreigners, it has been repeatedly demonstrated over the years that the use of Plain English also benefits native English speakers and improves the readability of such texts. Moreover, sometimes we can hear new meanings in prayers that have become a bit rote when we read them or say them in just a slightly different wording."

A Talk with Author Rose Christie-French

Retelling Franciscan Tales for Melanesian Tertiaries

By Pamela Mooman

What inspires you about St. Francis?

For New Zealand tertiary Rose Christie-French (professed in 2000), when she began translating classic Franciscan tales into Plain English, it was the storytelling traditions of 13th century Italy.

Rose, who worked for 25 years as a teacher of English as a Second Language, started this work in 2007 while counseling a Melanesian novice named Betsy. Melanesians speak English as a second language, and sometimes as a third or a fourth.

She recognized that reframing the stories in a simpler syntax and vocabulary helped her novice understand the rich Franciscan heritage:

“The Melanesians are a very oral people and set great store in fine storytelling. So, I spent many delightful hours with Betsy and her lovely family simplifying the stories of Francis, which she in turn would tell back to me. She was excited that these stories were simple enough for her to tell in her own language.”

cont. on page 18

*A Talk with Author Christie-French, cont.
from p. 17*

Seed for a Larger Project

Rose attended the TSSF Province of the Pacific Chapter in 2010, where Brother Ambrose of Melanesia pleaded for help providing and circulating more materials in simpler English for Melanesian tertiaries and novices.

"This was something I could do well," Rose said, "and I had many of the stories all ready to go that I had done for Betsy."

The idea for her first book, *The Francis Stories*, was planted in a similar vein. She has subsequently written *Followers of Francis* (2017), *Six Short Plays* (2019), and *Exploring the Bible* (2020).

Putting *The Francis Stories* Together

Rose began her project by reading multiple versions of *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*:

"I focused on the tales that most novices get to know and love. In this book there are 21 stories, from the leper, the wolf, and the preaching to the birds to the more challenging cabbages, the hungry friar, and Brother Fly."

The Francis Stories also contains two short essays, a chronology of St. Francis' life, two stories about St. Clare, and Franciscan prayers. Rose reveled in the lush garden of prayers available:

"I concentrated on the prayers of the saint himself, and I didn't attempt to simplify these. I was especially charmed by the way that one Victorian writer of *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* used the phrase "in which such and such happens," which I used for my chapter headings as well."

Drawings to Enliven the Text

John, one of Betsy's children, was excited about Rose's project and showed her some drawings he had done for *The Francis Stories*. Rose was impressed and commissioned him to complete the rest of them. (The TSSF Auckland New Zealand Group paid John for his work.)

"The Melanesians are great colorists and do some extraordinary art in religious contexts," Rose said, "so we included paints and crayons

with every parcel of books [we sent] in the hope that some books would become works of art in their own right."

Rose's son, Rowan, illustrated her subsequent books. He drew figures as if they were part of stained-glass windows in Rose's book, *Followers of Francis*.

Franciscanism in Plain English

Rose wanted *The Francis Stories* and her subsequent books to be comprehensible for multi-lingual Melanesian tertiaries and novices, so she wrote them in what is now termed Plain English. However, she said her translations of classic Franciscan stories have an added bonus:

"It is accessible for all and offers a new way of looking at familiar concepts. A win-win! A delightful discovery for me was that the Melanesians are well versed in religious language, so I did not change concepts like the Blood of The Lamb, atonement, and The Holy Spirit!"

Distributing Books for Melanesia and the World

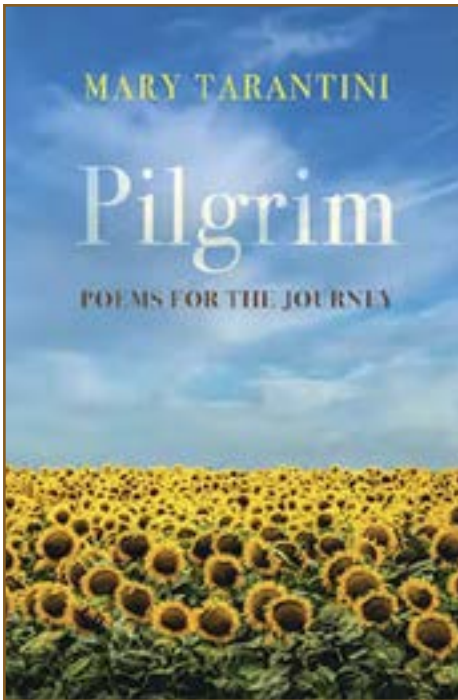
Rose lives in Auckland. The Auckland Group of TSSF and the Province of the Pacific raised funds and bought copies of *The Francis Stories* to send to Melanesian sisters and brothers. This was also the procedure with Rose's subsequent books. Rose said every tertiary and novice in Melanesia has access to or owns her books written in Plain English.

"This was indeed a labor of love and has been immensely satisfying."

Rose wrote her books with joy out of love for her Melanesian sisters and brothers. She said that Melanesia, comprised of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, struggles with infrastructure needs, including housing, education, and transport.

"It is a country of many far-flung islands, so one of the problems is isolation and travel. They are an amazing and resilient people, and it has been a real honor to do something like this for them."

To purchase any of Rose's books and learn more, contact Rose at rosechristiefrench@gmail.com. All her books are \$US10. Plus postage and packing.



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Book Review

Pilgrim: Poems for the Journey, by Mary Tarantini

Reviewed by Pamela Mooman

Mary Tarantini's collection of poetry entitled *Pilgrim: Poems for the Journey* features references to Franciscanism. These poems, however, give the sense of peeking in through a window rather than starting with a focused image, as often only portions of the hearts of subjects are revealed. The poems in this book often explore musings about experiences, including past pain and losses as well as current imaginings.

Mary uses different rhyming schemes and poetic rhythms to explore her subjects. For example, in "The Time It Takes," she blends different references to fit her chosen standard rhyme scheme technique:

"Socrates conjectured

Who knew not what he knew

I thought I saw and understood all

But the sky is only the shadow of blue"

Mary uses a different rhyming technique for "Stubborn Is a Kind of Power:"

"My favorite is the blue eggshell

Tiny—broken—below a tree

Wings stretched new upon a bough

Life escapes its own debris"

In "Humility," she offers a clear Franciscan reference:

"Better, don a coarse brown tunic

Walk barefoot down the road"

However, in "The Mystery," Mary experiments with images rather than rhyming technique.

"The majesty of silence is this

A pebble on the road

The warmth below the ground in which

A seed is newly sown"

She offers an ode to Creation in "Holy Is" and lets Franciscans take the stage in "A Minor Life."

Mary's poems explore her life, passions, heart, and spirituality without giving too much away. Perhaps they call us to travel deeper inside ourselves and listen to what God is saying to each of us.



*Poems for the Journey, cont.
from p. 19*

From the Editor

Here's a whole poem that Mary sent to the *Times*. She tells us that she wrote it about the first time she fell in love with Francis while watching a movie called *Francesco** during her junior year abroad in Italy.

I fell in love with Francis
(Francesco he was called)
In a foreign land
Upon a silver screen
In the hushed silence of a darkened room
I fell into the brilliant dream
A dream austere, eternal
Awaiting in a beggar's bowl
Letting go all ties that bind
To be in spirit small and whole
Humility is a cover
For truths too deep to ponder
Like an embrace – or a kiss
Overwhelm our souls with wonder

(*1989 movie with Mickey Rourke as Francis, Helena Bonham Carter as Clare. It is in our library.)

MILESTONES

Welcome the Newly Professed

Newly Professed

Joanna Dunevant



My Admission to Profession service on February 18th was a deeply touching and unforgettable experience. I was introduced to TSSF by a former spiritual director, and I soon found myself in Formation, which I enjoyed thoroughly.

I am currently serving as convener of the Lady Jacoba Fellowship, having served as co-convener during my Novice Two year. I am also the newest Novice One mentor.

A lifelong Episcopalian, I am currently a member of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Williamsburg, Virginia. I serve on the Pastoral Care Commission, the Altar Guild, as a Lay Eucharistic minister, a lector, and acolyte. I am also in Year Three of EfM.

I am a retired nurse with experience in settings ranging from the emergency department to hospice to home health. I live with my partner, our Airedale terrier, and two cats.



Newly Professed

Joyce Dupont



Becoming a professed Franciscan has been a hope of mine for many years. Since Saint Francis had committed his life to God through Jesus, my focus was to keep the pattern growing. I then learned about his life and how he loved our earth, animals, those in need, and peace. His care and dedication to be as sincere as possible was, and is, what God would love.

My interest in TSSF began a couple decades ago through another member, Rick Bellows. As I learned about St. Francis by reading and attending fellowship meetings, I realized how his dedication to Jesus was my interest as well.

Over the last couple of years, I had to care for my severely ill husband, but I still had the desire to serve as St. Francis had. My hope is to follow those who, as Jesus inspired Francis, look to God to lead the way to a better world for all.



Newly Professed

Pamela Mooman



After a formation experience that was tumultuous, educational, deep, and wonderful, I was professed to the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis on 19 Feb 2023. I am so joyful to be your sister in Christ! In addition to TSSF, Jesus called me to give myself in consecrated celibacy — a happy calling! I gave my vows of consecrated celibacy to Jesus and the Episcopal Church on 9 Oct 2022.

During my novitiate I began working with John Brockmann and the TSSF editorial staff to produce the *Franciscan Times* and other documents, and this work continues. I am thrilled to be able to use my professional experience in writing, editing, and communications to serve TSSF.

I also began a blog, *Earth-Friendly Living, Franciscan Style*, that is focused on sustainable living from a spiritual perspective. It is lovingly infused with definite Franciscan flavor. I like to focus on solutions, on what we can do now, right where we are, to serve God and all creatures. Hopefully I can use my past and what I have learned to serve others, both in TSSF and the wider world. I am prayerfully asking God where I can be of most service to TSSF now, in addition to helping with *The Franciscan Times*. I know guidance will come.

I hold both undergraduate and graduate degrees focused on writing, and I have worked as a writer and editor my entire adult life. My published work includes journalism, features, poetry, and essays, and I served as poetry editor for the *Pitkin Review*, a literary publication. In addition to TSSF voluntary editorial work, I work as a contract writer for BKA Content. I rejoice in providing writing and editing services to the local parish when asked.

Writing, music, and gardening have been lifelong blessings to me. They are forms of prayer. God gave these gifts, and I find deep joy and fulfillment in offering them back.

*Pamela Mooman, cont. from
p. 21*

I came to the Episcopal Church via 40 years in the wilderness. I was raised in the Church of Christ, and painful twinges of those first stern teachings still prick from time to time. I often pray the Psalms, especially those of David, which, through the grace of God, kept me alive during painful times. God's light never went out for me, even in the blackest darkness. Slowly, gently, God guided me to TSSF and to the Episcopal Church. God guided me home. For this I am deeply grateful.

May Jesus give all of us His blessing and His peace. Amen.



Rest in Peace

Rest in Peace

Allan K. Hall

Professed 39 Years



From Janet Strickler

We got the news of the death of Father Al Hall, a longtime member of TSSF and Lilies of the Field Fellowship in Colorado. He had contracted pneumonia earlier in the month and was at home with hospice care, and stepped into the realm of glory on Christmas Eve after watching the service with the family on Zoom. He was 98 years old and had celebrated the 37th anniversary of his ordination a few days before.



From Allnutt Funeral Home

Allen was born on October 16, 1924, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He received his Master of Divinity from Nashotah House in 1985.

He enlisted in the Army in 1942 and served in Europe during WWII. He was married to Mary Lou Becker in Portland, Oregon, in 1947. They are the parents of three daughters.

He accepted a Regular Army Commission, retiring as a Major in 1967, with service in Germany, Korea, and the Panama Canal Zone. He was employed by IBM as a Software Engineer, from 1967 to 1982. He was ordained a Priest of the Episcopal Church in 1985, serving the Episcopal Churches of St. Andrews, Fort Lupton, and St. Elizabeth, Brighton, until his retirement in 1990.

During 1988-89, he was the exchange Vicar of the Parish of Glenmark-Waikari of New Zealand. During his retirement as a parish priest, he served as interim rector and supply priest at several parishes throughout Colorado. He resided in Greeley, Colorado, from 1990 until November 2018, then resided at The Bridge Assisted Living in Longmont, Colorado.



Rest in Peace

Francesca Wigle

Professed 33 Years



Francesca and granddaughter Molly, Christmas 2017.

From Verleah Kosloske

Francesca Wigle was fun-loving and adventurous. She led a full, rich life, but I know only the bits and pieces of her story that she shared on her trips to Washington, DC, to attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days and Franciscan Action Network meetings. Her parents named her Jean Ann, and she lived in Pocatello, Idaho, as a child. After the Peace Corps, she traveled across Europe and lived for a while in Paris. She taught school for about 30 years. With her energy and good humor, she must have been a fun teacher.

When I met her, she was already retired and living in Austin, Texas, where she loved her dog; her neighbors who shared her duplex; her church, St. Hildegard's; her fellowship; and her "ladies at the jail." Francesca was careful to avoid being arrested at demonstrations because that would have interfered with her weekly visits to teach and minister to the ladies at the jail. I used to drill her about the arrest protocol in DC — you get two warnings, do not touch the police officer's car, dog, or horse (no matter how cute the animals are).

She set a rigorous walking regimen for herself and her dog, and the two of them met their goal, although the dog sounded the less enthusiastic of the two about it.

Francesca was always searching for good Franciscan books for the reading group she led, Canticle Campus. She was professed in TSSF for 33 years, and she affirmed her Franciscan vocation by changing her first name to Francesca.

She helped people remember how to pronounce her last name Wigle with a long "I," by saying that it would have to have two "g's" if it were to rhyme with "giggle." Francesca treasured her daughter and son and took great joy in her granddaughter. In fact, she moved to El Paso to be able to spend more time with her granddaughter. Everywhere she went, Francesca talked to strangers.

She loved meeting new people and sharing her warm, generous spirit with them. It was hard to make plans to meet Francesca at a particular Metro stop, because frequently she met someone on the subway and walked out a different entrance because she was busy talking with her new acquaintance. Everybody remembers Francesca for her infectious Texas farewell, *"Pace e bene, y'all!"* ♦

Francesca collected many honors during her life. Following are two such tributes.

In 2017 Francesca was honored as a volunteer with Truth Be Told. The story at right is from the Truth Be Told blog.

Honoring Francesca Wigle by Melissa Klein

*"Going out to the jail was my favorite day of the week."
— Francesca*

Francesca began training me as a PEACE program facilitator in January. From the minute I met her, I knew she was a special person. Her contagious smile, childlike spirit, and perpetual laughter stood out in the Travis County Jail like a snowy day in Texas. She greeted everyone like an old friend — the officers, security guards, and the mothers with their little babies waiting in the visitor line. Everyone she talked to smiled back; it seemed

cont. on page 24

RIP Francesca Wigle, cont. from p. 23

like they just couldn't help it! With this attitude, Francesca melted through layers of sadness, resignation, boredom, and frustration that marked so many of the faces as we walked toward 12A, where the maximum security women waited for our class. It was such a joy to watch her seamlessly weave together the day's topic with personal insights, while leaving space for the ladies to reflect and express their own original thoughts and feelings. Francesca's unique way of getting through to people allowed her access to those women's hearts in a way that was meaningful, moving, and inspiring. I believe she has made a lasting impact on those women. I hope I can carry on her legacy by bringing laughter, joy, creativity, and insight into the jail to help illuminate the most difficult of circumstances.

Francesca's nomination read as follows:

"It is rare to meet a person who spreads their light and love with every person they encounter. In 2013 I met a person I just described. I knew right away that Francesca Wigle was a very special soul. She brings with her a joy that is contagious to the women. The women feel her non-judgment, her caring, and her genuine interest in their lives. Unfortunately for the sheriff's office, Francesca is ending her time here. She will be missed incredibly."

Francesca began volunteering with Truth Be Told in 2011 and then assumed the lead role as facilitator for the PEACE program at Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC). She quickly became a donor as well, thereby supporting the organization in numerous ways. Francesca was one of five nominees to receive a certificate and acknowledgment for her work at Travis County Sheriff Office (TSCO) during its Volunteer Appreciation event. We will miss her greatly and hope that she will carry on her legacy in El Paso.

<https://truthbetoldcommunity.wordpress.com/2017/07/05/honoring-francesca-wigle-by-melissa-klein/>



Francesca at Martin Luther King Day in Austin, Texas, in 2016. She was a committed activist.

House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature

A A Ordaz Perez H.R. ANo. A1822—
passed 6/2/2021

Whereas, The efforts of dedicated precinct chairs such as the Honorable Francesca Wigle help us continue to fulfill the promise of our democracy, and Ms. A. Wigle is deserving of praise for devoting her time and energy to furthering this worthy goal; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby commend the Honorable Francesca Wigle for her service as an El Paso County precinct chair and extend to her sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

Resolved, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for Ms. Wigle as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.

*Rest in Peace***Jane Ergood***Professed 15 Years****From Jagers and Sons Funeral Home***

Dr. Jane Ergood, 87, of Athens, Ohio, passed away peacefully on Thursday, September 22, after suffering Parkinson's and related health issues.

She had two sons and five grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Bruce Ergood, whom she married at the Yale Divinity School Chapel on August 25, 1956, and was the love of her life.

Jane was a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Yale School of Nursing and the University of Pittsburgh (where she received her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology). She taught nursing at Clark County (OH) School of Nursing, the University of Florida, and the University of Toledo, and was the first female director of Planned Parenthood Southeastern Ohio. Jane continued her career as a Clinical Psychologist in the area.

Jane enjoyed the Quaker meetings and the strong friendships she developed after her husband died. Jane was accomplished at playing the piano, was involved with the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Church of Epiphany in Nelsonville.

She spent many years in western Honduras (with Bruce) and was passionate about sharing her nursing skills by teaching local residents about basic health issues through affiliation with the Episcopal diocese there.



From *Franciscan Times*, Fall 2014, p. 18

One Body — Mission in Honduras, by Jane Ergood

We all have associations with the words “ministry” and “mission”; sometimes we think of the “Great Commission” — to go forth and preach the gospel in all lands. One Ohio church member told me she opposed missions because the word brought visions of westerners putting grass skirts on natives, and otherwise destroying a living, indigenous culture. If we check the dictionary meaning of ministry, we are led into a more familiar definition — bringing a service or aid to an individual or group.

Perhaps that is where, and why, so much of our daily and/or national efforts seem so unproductive: we do not consider ministry to be “transformational,” and something that affects the giver as well as the recipient. I suspect that both Jesus and Paul knew that relationship. I suspect that knowing that “giving to another is like giving to Christ” (Matthew) can change the giver and the receiver, not just provide aid to the other, and that NOT giving also has an effect on each. I suspect that the writer who knew that “faith, hope and love abide” had had a great deal of experience in all three areas, and was himself always being

cont. on page 26

RIP Jane Ergood, cont. from p. 25

transformed by his experience — not just once on the road to Damascus. I know that the little work I have done in this ministry in Honduras has changed both me, and my perception and appreciation of, Paul the Apostle, and the Gospel.

I know that the little work I have done in this ministry in Honduras has changed both me and my perception and appreciation of Paul the Apostle and the Gospel.

Although my husband Bruce and I began our work in Honduras in 1998, our Latin American service experience began, separately, in Mexico in the 1950s. This became our initial personal bonding experience while he was a Divinity student. Before he returned to school for a Ph.D. and college teaching, and we had two children, it also provided a basis for both language/communication and professional experience in the U.S. with poor, rural populations and also civil rights. It was also basic to our community work with Central American political refugees.

After Hurricane Mitch and consultation with SAMS (the then South American Mission Society) and with financial support from the Diocese of Southern Ohio, Bruce accompanied the then-Bishop Frade's team to assess the Honduras church's needs. Twice subsequently we took church work groups on weeklong projects to Honduras, and twice we "filled in" for several months while missionaries were on medical leave. The second time, I coordinated medical and construction brigade visits from the U.S. to the Deanery of El Paraiso (now Yuscaran). While this involved learning computer skills, it also involved trekking out to the rural areas to meet with the Dean, Reverendo Dagoberto Chacon, and holding conferences about project decisions on the hood of the car. We began to: 1) wonder who would be there when the medical brigade left and 2) realize we were "in sync" with Reverendo Dagoberto's commitment to faith and works, as well as his team approach; we knew we were "at home."

Our sense of a call, but confusion about the "how," was furthered by our summer visit to the Silver Bay YMCA Conference Center in the Adirondacks, where a doctor at Friends Yearly Meeting gave a weeklong seminar on training rural community health workers, or *Guardianas de Salud*. When we returned to Honduras in the fall, a priest and his wife contacted us and said they wanted to assist us. God seemed to be underlining His point, and this was doubled by a Honduran conference on sustainability. With the help of God, the priest's wife, and the Deanery staff, we began our training groups. (It is important to note that there are three vehicles in the whole Deanery, two belonging to clergy, and three doctors in the same area.)

There are three parts to our work in Honduras. The first and main part is training health workers for rural villages where there is no doctor, and often no access to medicines and facilities. We train 6-15 people in a retreat center for five days. At the beginning, there is a discussion around the scriptural basis for caring for one's neighbor and what it means to be a "Guardiana," and each day starts with devotions. Students leave with experience in giving injections (medications do not require a prescription in Honduras), making dehydration syrup, common diseases and treatments, a book in Spanish titled *Where There Is No Doctor* (with discussion and instructions for treatments, drugs and drug actions, community attitudes, and basic sanitation), and a medical bag (stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, thermometer, antibiotic ointment, bandages, etc.), and a diploma. Despite the rigor of the program, the complications of: obtaining cooks, firewood for traditional stoves, malfunctioning plumbing, lack of fans and screens and occasionally water and light, or frogs in the open bathrooms — some of the funniest moments of my life have come from our evenings together, particularly with "Los Locos de Chaguite", or the skit with Señor Bobo (who doesn't want his wife listening to the Guardiania, or taking birth control pills), or the Public Health Nurse (who should have been a stand-up comic) lecturing. And the band! With Bruce on clarinet, Rev. Rafa on fiddle, and some local musicians and homemade instruments playing — may Heaven hold such laughter!

cont. on page 27

RIP Jane Ergood, cont. from p. 26

These men, women, boys and young girl graduates go back to their villages prepared to assist their neighbors in varied situations. To give you an idea: one, who lived four hours off the highway, was called to see a man who had been injured by a tree he was felling. She was unable to do much but clean him, stop the bleeding, cover his wounds and send him four hours away to the capital, Tegucigalpa. Three months later, he returned to the village and thanked her for saving his life. Another story: this year, a cook, and Guardiania, recounted how her training had recently helped her save her son, who had been bitten by a poisonous snake, before she could get him to a hospital. And finally, one night, a Guardiania and pastor's wife, was awakened by a knock on her window: a man's wife was in labor and the Guardiania was the only one available. She picked up her book and helped deliver a healthy baby. Not all situations are dramatic, not all outcomes are physical. One woman testified that, because her "Savior thought (her) worthy to be a Guardiania", she was able to leave an abusive relationship. She was not the only one to say or do this after training. (Psychologists often say that competence, not praise, raises self-esteem, and these individuals feel empowered by their abilities and the encouragement they receive.)

The second emphasis of the program is on community involvement and cooperation. We utilize lecturers from the community or US brigades whenever possible. The priest who is head of the Deanery gives the lecture on Family Planning emphasizing family values and futures — an important challenge in poor and predominantly Catholic areas, where marriage is not common and birth control is controversial. Individuals from the medical team usually give at least one of the three or four yearly Continuing Education lectures (Reuniones), and the veterinarians have discussed animals and home sanitation. Dinner is supplied at the Reuniones, and the December meeting is usually a party. (*Ole!*) Interestingly enough, this year Bruce asked the Guardianias to write a bit about what they thought was different about their lives now, compared to ten years ago. Most of the replies indicated they thought there was more

unity"; we notice more cooperation and less "rudeness" at our meals and meetings.

Our third project, (*muy pequeño*), is in "micro-impresas" or small business, which we started to help the "sustainability" of the program and travel. We began with buying chickens and building pens; however, the profit margin or ratio of work/return was too small. We then started loans for pigs and providing sacks of concrete — the wood, roof and labor were the farmer's Guardianias or laico's responsibility. Money is also loaned for small stores, which many people have in their homes in rural areas: soda, maize, toilet paper, chips, etc. Loans are "no interest", but must be paid back in one year; all have been. Now Episcopal Relief and Development is working in the area. In one case, they have given a sow and we have helped with the pen materials. As one farmer/laico said as he and Bruce worked on the pen: "I used to feel I was isolated. Now I know I'm a link in a chain".

As one farmer/laico said, "I used to feel I was isolated. Now I know I'm a link in a chain."

That is transformation, as are the changes expressed previously by the Guardianias. And transformation works both ways — WE also are changed — in our beliefs, actions, and spiritual understanding. As part of our ministry, we also attend three or four church services per week: Bruce helps with the music; almost all the hymns are different from the USA. I often assist at Communion: "El Cuerpo de Cristo, pan de cielo; La Sangre de Cristo, caliz de salvacion." People come to us for advice: a pregnant daughter, a marital problem. My sister dies while I am teaching — someone listens. WE are transformed together. We are neither "Haves or Have Nots", Yankees or Hondurans, but One in Christ—a new creation. We will never be the same again.

Marc Nikkel in his book about serving in the Sudan (*Why haven't you left?* Church Publishing Inc., 2005) wrote: "Pray.... for an apprehension of the blood that reconciles tribes and races and religions. Pray for resurrection." That is the final and real transformation.



Rest in Peace

Will Hamilton

Professed 1 Year



From the *Asheville Citizen Times*, December 1, 2022

Dr. Will Hamilton, 79, passed away peacefully on November 23, 2022, in Asheville, North Carolina, surrounded by family and loved ones. He was a pillar of the Asheville and Fairview communities, doctor to many families from birth through death, who shared his broad range of interests from theology and spirituality to stargazing, birding, and hiking, and especially art and music, with his family and many friends. He always had an open heart, genuine interest in people, and a twinkle in his eye.

“Dr. Will” was born in Bristol, England, on July 5, 1943. He met Susie Clarke in London where they married and started a family in a home where they provided shelter and space for individuals in need of help and healing in London. Their first two children, Annie Louise and William, were born there.

In 1976, they moved to Fairview and after graduating from the first class of the MAHEC residency program, Will ran the Valley Clinic in Bat Cave, North Carolina, where he integrated natural birthing into conventional medical practice. It was here that his third child Elizabeth was born. He later ran a medical practice out of his log cabin home in Fairview, where his fourth child, Elspeth, was born during a snowstorm. His youngest, David, was born in Fletcher. Will practiced medicine for many years at an office in the heart of Fairview and eventually co-founded Parkway Family Physicians with Dr. John Wander and Dr. Robert Barker.

Throughout their lives, Will and Susie lived with openness and generosity, embodying a ministry of hospitality and Christian love through hosting a wide variety of international students and many who needed a warm bed and family.

Throughout their lives, Will and Susie lived with openness and generosity, embodying a ministry of hospitality and Christian love through hosting a wide variety of international students and many who needed a warm bed and family. Their home became a place to stop by for a hot meal, fresh bread, or a cup of tea. Or a place to get a few stitches, an ear examined, or helpful medical

advice. Many of his patients came to the house, with gifts of potatoes, moonshine, boxes of meat, cakes, pies, even bee hives.

Dr. Will thrived during his retirement years. Initially, he devoted himself to caring for his wife Susie as she declined from dementia, all the while he was an active part of the community. He was a follower of Saint Francis and was received into the Franciscan Third Order in 2021. In November of 2021 Will met Mattie Decker. Over the past year they have shared life and many connections with Will’s family and their church family at the Church of the Transfiguration in Bat Cave. Just recently, they spent two weeks on a pilgrimage on the Isle of Iona in the Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland, led by John Philip Newell.

Will spent his lifetime seeking God and building a sense of community in churches, hospitals, and neighborhood gatherings.

Will is survived by his four children and ten grandchildren. His wife Susie and son William preceded him in death. ♦

*RIP Will Hamilton, cont. from
p. 28*

From Will Hamilton's Profession *Franciscan Times*, Summer 2021

I was educated in English boarding schools from ages 8-18 and attended Anglican services the whole time. I did not realize it at the time, but these services must have made a deep impression on me, because about 20 years ago I began to yearn for the liturgy and to sit in the quiet corner of an English country church. Following two incidents of a profound awareness God gave me of His presence at the ages of 17 and 20, I became an evangelical in a conservative denomination for many years. I was not equipped for the political and theological struggles involved in the leadership role I found myself in, which I found very depressing.

My departure from the conservative denomination I found myself in was precipitated by the invasion of Iraq, which was supported by most of the leadership of that denomination. About that time, I discovered St. Francis, and my love for him has never diminished as I have devoured much literature about him.

I discovered the Third Order about the time I joined a local Episcopal Church some three years ago. I don't know what gifts I can bring to the Order. Perhaps writing. I am currently intrigued by how the *Book of Common Prayer* emerged out of the tumultuous lives of the Tudor kings and queens and Thomas Cranmer and want to write on this subject. It will take time.

It is comforting to have the Rule that has emerged during my novitiate. I look forward to meeting more of those in the Order, including those in the Caribbean and Latin America. ♦

*From the moment Will joined
our fellowship, he added joy
and fun!*

**From Amy Nicholson, Land of
the Sky Fellowship**

From the moment Will joined our fellowship, he added joy and fun! Although serious about his charism, he truly followed the Holy Spirit's guidance. As the sole caregiver of a beloved wife who had advanced dementia, he said he didn't mind — and he could tell the same joke each day as he put her socks on, and she always laughed! He was an inspiration, a faithful man of God, and we miss him greatly. ♦

**From Alice Baird, Former
Land of the Sky Fellowship
Member**

Will had an impassioned commitment to social justice, and it was obvious from the first that he didn't just talk the talk — he *lived* it! When he first began coming to fellowship meetings, he brought his wife, who, it was clear, did not know where she was or why. He simply refused to entrust her care to anyone else and attended to her with great gentleness and kindness. Immediately we knew he had a true Franciscan soul! ♦

PSALMS OF THE BELOVED: Poems from a Psalm Cycle

By Anton Armbruster

Psalm 3: A Hollow Cacophony

Beloved, nearer to me than my own heart:

Many are the noxious distractors that assault me.
Gathering like clouds of hungry gnats on a hot summer evening,
They unsettle me and make me mad.
Hollow sounds of small leaders, knotted hearts, undead empty bags of greed.
Pretending to care while children go hungry.
Politicians who say nice words without real intent,
Artful dodgers, in love with the sound of their own voices,
When will you silence them!

Selah

The dictators of noise overwhelm the silence,
I grieve at the power they wield in a Nation easily duped,
A nation of followers ready to give up democracy for hollow promises,
And I have no authority save a single vote in an unthinking crowd.

Selah

I recognize my need to control, my rage at the inability to move opinion,
I acknowledge that I cry out to you as you listen in deep time to grander schemes,
Yet I know you are with me, in my very cells, recreating every moment,
So, I wait, I call out, and I pray for sanity and reason where there is little of it.

Selah

Faith tells me your plan will reveal the truth in your own time,
I wait.
Faith tells me that good will overcome evil and darkness,
I wait.
Faith tells me that love is the force that will win the day and so, truly,
I wait.
I lose patience with all the waiting.
Grant me patience to have ever deeper faith!

Selah

Come to my aid in this time of noisy fear and wide-angled anger:
In this time of solemn mourning at the loss of vision,
In a dark time of expediency and materialism,
In a time of chaos and the loss of even simple dignities.
I pray for steady quiet and true inner peace, Beloved,
Fill me with the strains of infinite melody and draw me to you.

Selah



Psalm 6: A Weary Cry

I'm tired, Father, tired and troubled, weighed down by the wounds of time.

I'm tired, Mother, and my strength runs out as the days grow long.

I can hardly recall the days of hope in my fellow Man, when one could look up to model leaders!

How long, Beloved, how long will this insult to goodness last?

I know your patience is infinite, and I can't imagine a love so great as Yours.

You call me to live up to your sacred spark and I lean in every day,

But I falter. I fall short and am weak.

Again, and again, I come to you to Confess,

and the great round of my innate foolishness persists anyway!

A proliferation of grey hairs marks this time of deep worry over a plenitude of things.

The planet, the Nation, retirement, health concerns and worry for the future of my children and children's children.

The chief enemy lies within me, in the tell-tale signs of growing anger and cynicism;

Yet, I return to you, Beloved, each day and each night!

I bring to you my doubts and even my unbelief,

and I reaffirm my sense of wonder at your miracles.

Uphold my Heart, raise up my Spirits and clear my vision to see through the fog of discontent.

My love of you is inadequate, but my wish to love is deep; help me find the Christic Love to which you call me.

I call to you beyond my own sense of worry and anger,

And I pray for those who try my patience and threaten the fabric of decency.

Move their hearts to contrition that they might serve us all as faithful stewards.

Heal them of their narcissism, materialism, prejudice, and vicious pride

So that that our children can once again be hopeful and rejoice in the Light of their innocence!



BREAKING NEWS!

Forming the Life of a Franciscan – Podcast Version!

Do you enjoy listening to audio books or podcasts? Have a commute or long drive ahead of you? If so, you can now listen to TSSF's formation book of community wisdom, *Forming the Life of a Franciscan*.

Over the last few months, several Third Order members have recorded readings of all the chapters, which we have now turned into a new podcast!

Aimed at people joining the Third Order, and encouraged for occasional study once you are professed, these audio recordings contain wonderful truths and positive challenges in walking a life of faith—ideal for anyone in TSSF looking to reconnect with or deepen their Franciscan vocation and practice.

Several chapters are already available with 2 new chapters being released each week.

For more information about the Podcast see the TSSF website Podcast page [here](#), or click the buttons below to subscribe to the Podcast in these Apps.

