



The Franciscan Times

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

Pace e bene

Summer 2023

Photos from the 2023 TSSF Provincial Convocation Phoenix, Arizona



Clockwise, from top left: Minister Provincial John Heberton, preaching; keynote speaker Ilia Delio; Bishop Protector David Rice, preaching Franciscan style — barefoot; a group shot on the lawn; Janet Strickland, repairing; and center, an inspiring wall mural of St. Clare, seen in the soft evening light.



The Franciscan Times

is a publication
of the Third Order
Society of Saint Francis
Province of the Americas.



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Save the Dates

May 3-5, 2024

for the

TSSF Western Convocation

in

Encino, California

at the

Holy Spirit Retreat Center

Contact Laura Mahaney
lolako@yahoo.com

Journey Together, Journey Alone: My Notes from the 2023 TSSF Provincial Convocation

By Harry Coverston

Sixty-six people, including seven from outside the country, braved the intense summer heat to attend the 2023 TSSF Provincial Convocation, held from June 4 – 9, 2023, at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. The Franciscan Times excerpted these reflections from [Harry Coverston's Facebook pages](#). Though lengthy, there is much here that is spiritual, thoughtful, personal — and worth reading.

Early Morning Prayers

The back side of the sprawling complex of the Franciscan Renewal Center contains a natural wildlife area interspersed with walking trails, a series of Stations of the Cross, a labyrinth, and a meditation chapel. It was here I'd begin my first full day in Scottsdale, hoping to get in some fresh air. It was already quite warm, 84° F at 7 a.m., a temperature which would rise to a high of 104° F before the day was over.

The view of the mountain range in the distance is quite inspiring. And so I decided to offer my morning prayers there, removing my shoes to pray, reflecting my awareness that this is holy ground, as all of Creation is holy, but a place seen as particularly sacred to the Franciscans who missionized this area and to the indigenous peoples, who would eventually be displaced by the Spanish colonists who accompanied the Franciscans.

The soles of my feet are accustomed to the moist soil of my subtropical jungle in Florida. This soil was anything but pliant, hard-baked clay strewn with pebbles. I began my prayers bending over to touch the soil, conscious of the familiar aches my nearly 70-year-old body recognizes, praying there will be no new aches to account for:

Good morning, Mother Earth (touching the soil)

Good morning, Father Sky (reaching up to the blue sky streaked with cirrus clouds)

*Good morning, All My Relations (turning clockwise to come into consciousness,
aware of all the living beings, the sounds they are making,
the smells of the flowering trees they emit)*

*Good morning, Brother Ass (hands hovering over the seven chakras,
ending with both hands covering the heart chakra)*

Bowing clockwise to each of the four directions:

Good morning, East (where life originates)

Good morning, South (where life flourishes)

Good morning, West (where life comes to fruition)

Good morning, North (where life comes to rest)

Returning to the beginning, saying

For as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. World without end, Amen.

Opening my arms to embrace the Creation, saying

Good morning, All That Is. My God and my All.

You who are the Source of all that exists, the Ground of all Being, the Destination of all souls:

Thank you for another day.

I open my heart to you and I give my life to this day.

Make me an instrument of your peace. Amen.

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Liturgies That Speak to Our Souls

The liturgies we are celebrating this week are incredibly moving. Utilizing forms from Anglican prayer books used in New Zealand, Canada, and the UK, our worship has been vibrant, wakening sleeping souls, and healing wounded hearts. Tonight’s brilliant all- women altar party led us in a Eucharist that included a necrology, the recitation of names of those Third Order Franciscans who had died over the past six years. All around us brothers and sisters spoke the names of the deceased from the lists they had been given. It was an ethereal moment, bringing an awareness of both our great losses as an Order as well as the fact that we stood surrounded by the souls of the departed.

Among the prayers tonight we spoke the following words:

Eternal God, Source of all being, we give you thanks and praise for your faithful love. You call us into friendship with you and one another to be your holy people, a sign of your presence in the world. When those we trust betray us, unfailingly you remain with us. When we injure others, you confront us in your love and call us to the paths of righteousness. You stand with the weak, and those, broken and alone, whom you have always welcomed home, making the first last, and the last first. Therefore, we raise our voices with angels and archangels, forever praising you and singing....

Beautiful language, beautiful services, beautiful music, a wonderful way to cap off Day Two of the Convocation.

Taking Jesus Seriously

The new liturgical prayers we are using at Convocation take the historical Jesus seriously. In our sermon tonight by our worldwide Minister General we were exhorted to consider the footprints of an ascended Jesus, as depicted in a woodcut by Albrecht Durer, footprints which lead his followers into the world to follow the example of Jesus as did Francis of Assisi.

Our Eucharistic prayer laid out that path as follows:

At the right time you sent your Anointed One to stand with the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed. Jesus touched lepers, and the sick, and healed them. He accepted water from a woman of Samaria and offered her the water of new life. Christ knew the desolation of the cross and opened the way for all humanity into the redemption of your reconciling love.

This is no pie-in-the-sky Jesus pointing those who got the theology right toward mansions on streets of gold in the next life. This is a Jesus whose heart was broken in the face of the suffering he observed and whose life was devoted to healing that suffering and confronting the injustices that generated it.



This is a Jesus worth taking seriously. And this embodies a way worth following. It’s been a long day. And we adjourn to our beds with these beautiful words lingering on our hearts.

Outside, the Jesus whom the Guadalupe bore watches over us.

Taking the Creation Seriously

I am struck by the level of awareness of the pre-Colombian history that is acknowledged at this convocation. The speaking of aboriginal peoples’ names and the awareness of the extant indigenous peoples’ claims to lands now occupied by us, descendants of the colonizers, are a routine part of our gatherings. But I am also struck by the references to the need to hear indigenous wisdom today in order to heal the deep wounds to the Creation its human

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Provincial Convocation, cont. from p. 5

animals have inflicted upon it, all in the name of “civilization.” All of this ties into our Franciscan charism.

Here are some thoughts from the session on the Franciscan principle of Simplicity:

- Living simply is more than just a self-focused concern for all the stuff in one’s life. It is ultimately a question of how can we live in a way that helps others survive?
- In order to hear things through Franciscan ears, we have to add the voices of indigenous peoples around the world.



In the courtyard outside my room is a statue of Kateri Tekakwitha, the first indigenous saint in the Americas. Tonight, as we Franciscans meditate on a day packed with thought provoking sessions, Kateri keeps watch.

Relaying the Holy Which Lies Beyond Words

Outside the Church of Our Lady of the Angels is a tiny, round chapel. Windowless, dark, cool in this desert heat, a series of eight booths with a seat just big enough for one human occupant. All arranged around a central point, a crystal cylinder contained the reserved sacrament, the bread in which the Real Presence of the Body of Christ can be found. It is a deeply holy space, breathtaking in its simplicity and its spiritual energy.

At the immediate level, it is little more than a silver container within a glass-and-wooden container, illuminated, the only light in a darkened circular space. At a deeper level it points well beyond itself to a reality that defies our human capacity to delimit.

The liturgies of our Eucharists this week have similarly evidenced this struggle to point toward realities beyond words, offering us new ways of expressing ancient understandings. They include:

Eternal God, from whose gentle hands none can snatch us away: give us faith to believe that we are known and loved with a passion strong enough to bring the whole world back to you, through Jesus Christ, who is one with the source of life....

In the abundance of your love you have caused all things to be; from dust and spirit you have woven our humanity; in all our wanderings you never cease to call us to fullness of life. You gave us Jesus, son of Mary, the bread of life broken for the world; he fed us and feasted with us, he healed us and suffered for us; his dying and rising have set us free from the poverty of sin and the famine of death.

Therefore, with all whom you have made, cherished and called, with all who hunger for your kingdom and will not rest until all your children are fed, with the broken saints and redeemed sinners of all the ages, we take up the song of our praise.

The peace of the Trinity is uproar and color, dissent and challenge, wandering and exile, invitation and inclusion, drawing our bodies and spirits into the riotous harmony of God.

From Prayers for an Inclusive Church, by Steven Shakespeare

Radical Inclusivity



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Ministers Provincial Report to Convocation: Rebuild the Church

By Ken Norian and Peter Stube

At the 2023 Convocation, left to right: Peter Stube (Co-Minister Provincial), Bishop David Rice (Bishop Protector), Anton Armbruster (Provincial Chaplain), Ken Norian (Co-Minister Provincial), and John Hebenton (TSSF Minister General).



From Ken Norian

Good morning, everyone! We had an opportunity last evening to say hello and mingle with most of the folks here, but Peter and I would like to formally welcome you to the Third Order Society of Saint Francis of the Americas Provincial Convocation.

The last provincial convocation was six years ago – and it’s mind-bending to think about all that has transpired in those years. Just over a year ago the pandemic was still a big concern and we weren’t sure that this gathering would be possible. So, thanks be to God that we’ve been able to turn a corner and come together this year.

Also, a little over a year ago, Peter and I had no idea that we’d be here as “co-acting Ministers Provincial”! God works in mysterious – and wonderful – ways. I’ve been tending toward organizational matters; Peter has been focusing on vision and program development. As Peter has written, “we have found our skills to be complementary and our work relationship collegial, perhaps even a bit playful.” We are grateful for your trust and your prayers as we do the work that has been given us to do for Francis, Clare, and Christ.

Nine years ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby invited those engaged in the religious communities of the Anglican Communion to a day of “Religious life and renewal.” His invitation to us was to participate in the rebuilding of the Church. The call

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*Ministers General Report, cont.
from p. 7*

to rebuild the church is central to the Franciscan vocation. St. Francis received this vision to rebuild the church as he prayed among the ruins of the Church of San Damiano. Francis and Clare lived during the time in history when both Church and society stood in need of renewal and guidance, and they and their communities were instrumental in bringing new life to both. (The two addresses of the archbishop will be posted on the TSSF website for your study and advice.)

In October of 2015, in Chicago, Tom Johnson, then the Minister Provincial, articulated a vision for the Third Order Society of St. Francis, Province of the Americas, based on Archbishop Welby's charge. In October of 2016, Chapter began to consider how we might ready ourselves to answer this challenge. We considered a paper from the incoming Fellowship Coordinator observing that fellowships, provincial convocations, and regional convocations are the three places where we, as a dispersed Order, gather. Therefore, these are the places where lifelong formation is needed to prepare us for this mission of renewal and rebuilding. A small committee began to work together to recommend ways for this to happen.

At the 2017 Chapter meeting in Cincinnati, this small group was joined by Brother Damian from the First Order; Bishop Scruton, who was our Bishop Protector at that time; and Mike Carsten from the OFS. We spent our time reflecting on what had brought us to the Third Order and explored the charisms to offer the Church going forward. Among the charisms we identified were the Rule of Life, the Principles, the deep sense of commitment we have toward each other in the fellowships, and the call to works of compassion and justice. A report was given to Chapter, and after much careful consideration the report was adopted.

From Peter Stube

Ken Norian, then Minister General of the Third Order, asked that the report be brought to Inter-Provincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC) held in England in the fall of that year, and Masud Ibn Syedullah and I made a report to the Ministers Provincial and other leaders from around the world. We discovered in delivering the report that international Franciscans had been exploring the same things with the same concern, to be at the fore of renewal and the rebuilding of the Church. IPTOC formed a task force to explore ways of training local leaders and potential leaders in discernment of vocation, affirmation of each other, and how best to reflect the Principles and Aims and to develop a framework for intentional fellowship in local groups. This group will make a presentation to IPTOC when it meets in September.

Conversations over the past six years have been rich, as we have listened to the voices from all five Third Order Provinces around the world, including indigenous voices. We have discovered a

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profound need to pay attention to what unites us and the various ways we learn. The common ground we have established over the last six years can be summarized as follows:

- **A Vision:**
To enable tertiaries to live their Franciscan Vocation through Contemplation, Community, and Missional Action.
- **Plumblines (What are the ways we will accomplish this?):**
Study, Spiritual Discernment, and Lifelong Formation.
- **What we desire for the Order:**
 - Ever deepening prayer and contemplation
 - Wholehearted unity with the Holy Trinity
 - Always providing space for the Holy Spirit to maneuver
 - Living out Francis' inclusivity
- **Franciscan Charism:**
Offering to all the Franciscan charism as it appears in the Principles, Writings of Francis and Clare, and other Franciscan writers.

That this work may continue, in each Province a Guardian for Lifelong Formation has been appointed to each Chapter. They meet quarterly via Zoom to share ideas, propose studies, and encourage each other. They discuss the ways their people learn, including their indigenous people. And they report back to their own Chapter the findings.

Structural Changes in Chapter

Under **Janet Fedders'** faithful tenure as Minister Provincial, the work of Chapter was expanded. She implemented monthly Chapter meetings, identified gifted people in the Order, and encouraged them to use their gifts. There was a burst of new programs and professions during her tenure, which continues.

With the influx of new tertiaries and this increased activity, we on Chapter have spent the last year identifying structural changes. We have appointed two Assistant Minister Provincials with specific tasks; Janet appointed **Jeff Golliber** as Assistant MP for Sacred Ecology, Ken and I appointed **Charlie McCarron** Assistant MP for Spanish and Portuguese-speaking Tertiaries. Charlie is liaison for our sisters and brothers in South and Central America and has already made a trip to Brazil.

Susan Pitchford is the new Guardian for Lifelong Formation and now sits on Chapter. She also chairs a task force working on preparing materials for lifelong formation in our fellowships, many of these written by our gifted thinkers:

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- **Gary Russell** in Economics
- **Masud Ibn Syedullah** and **Celso Franco** in Colonization, and
- **Jeff Golliher** in Sacred Ecology.

All of these documents are or shortly will be available on the TSSF website. Susan's Goal is to invite tertiaries with gifts in contemplation, community, and missional action to join these others in providing resources that fellowships may choose to use.

The other Pastoral Officers —

- **Anton Armbruster**, Provincial Chaplain
- **John Rebstock**, Formation Guardian, and
- **Jotie Noel**, Fellowship Guardian

— have all been engaged in renewal of their various areas. Most have streamlined and revised their areas of responsibility and expanded their reach by adding another one or two persons to their leadership teams.

Three new initiatives are in progress:

- There is a wonderful initiative that has begun for Franciscan families, which is convened by **Derek Fetz**.
- **Liz Peacock** has been appointed Loving Community Guardian for Safeguarding the Order. We are grateful to her for her willingness to facilitate this.
- In addition, the National Association of Episcopal Church Communities (NAECC) has suggested that the dispersed orders might consider filling a vacuum left by the First Orders to provide days of prayer and retreats to our seminaries. The Brothers and Sisters no longer have enough people to engage in this work, which keeps the church communities before future clergy. We are just beginning to identify tertiaries who have the gifts and skills to do this work.

In addition:

- **John Brockmann** continues to do a wonderful job with the *Franciscan Times*, which keeps us in touch with each other and with the larger Order.
- **Ben Gibbs** and **Jeff Bonner** have run our website and email blasts respectively. We would be nowhere without these folk.

It is our hope in the year ahead to encourage our new tertiaries to find their niches as understudies or leaders in the work we do as an Order that reflect most closely their own needs and longings.

You will have an opportunity to listen to and talk to the Guardians about the work they are doing. I encourage you to weigh in faithfully. Spiritual discernment takes place best when all are heard, and we then prayerfully hear what the Spirit is saying to us. We so value your advice. Enjoy the week, find time to pray, sing, study, and be restored for the work of rebuilding and renewal that is before us. ♦

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

Physicist Michael Ramsey-Musolf Receives One of Physics' Highest Awards

Reprinted from *University of Massachusetts, Amherst Academics Online Bulletin*,
March 21, 2023



The Rev. Michael Ramsey-Musolf. To his knowledge, there has not been an openly gay, Episcopal priest-scientist recognized at this level for their scientific work.

Michael Ramsey-Musolf, professor of physics at UMass Amherst, director of the Amherst Center for Fundamental Interactions and a T.D. Lee professor at Tsung-Dao Lee Institute/Shanghai Jiao Tong University, has been recognized with the American Physical Society's prestigious Herman Feshbach Prize in Theoretical Nuclear Physics. The award recognizes "outstanding research in theoretical nuclear physics" and is considered one of the profession's most prestigious awards.

Ramsey-Musolf, who has co-authored over 200 scientific articles, focuses on the intersection of nuclear and particle physics with cosmology. "Where does matter come from, and how does nature put it together," he asks. "And why does the universe have more matter in it than anti-matter?" The answers to those questions address a fundamental question about the universe: how did we get here?

Where does matter come from, and how does nature put it together...And why does the universe have more matter in it than anti-matter?" The answers to those questions address a fundamental question about the universe: how did we get here?

Ramsey-Musolf's recognition speaks to his "seminal contributions in precision electroweak studies of nuclear and hadronic systems, making fundamental symmetry experiments powerful probes of strong interactions and new physics." His work entails combining exquisitely precise theoretical computations, development of new theoretical methods and delineation of the broader scientific implications of related experimental work to set the future direction of the field. As a result, both the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science and the National Science Foundation have established fundamental symmetry tests as one of the cornerstones of nuclear science in the U.S. While the Feshbach Prize honors scientific achievement, his prize biography highlights Ramsey-Musolf's long-standing mentoring of and advocacy for LGBTQ+ physicists.

"I came out as gay as a Ph.D. student," says Ramsey-Musolf, "and had no role models. I've worked to make the path easier and less

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*Michael Ramsey-Musolf Award,
cont. from p. 11*

isolating for future generations of physicists.” He helped found the organization LGBTQ+Physicists and has mentored over 60 Ph.D. students and post-docs.

“By all accounts, Ramsey-Musolf is the first openly gay physicist to receive such a prominent and international level of scientific recognition, effectively shattering the discipline’s “lavender ceiling,” says Anthony Dinsmore, head of the UMass Amherst physics department.

Since 2019, Ramsey-Musolf, who is also an ordained Episcopal priest, has maintained a joint appointment between Tsung-Dao Lee Institute/Shanghai Jiao Tong University and UMass Amherst. “It’s so important to keep grassroots scientific inquiry and collaboration alive,” says Ramsey-Musolf, “and to connect the physics communities in the West and China.”

*Michael Ramsey-Musolf
Comments*

Michael added in his letter: “To my knowledge (and please correct me if I am mistaken) there has not been an openly gay, Episcopal priest-scientist recognized at this level for their scientific work. Other Episcopal priest-scientists, such as Katharine Jefferts Schori, John Polkinghorn, Arthur Peacocke, and William Pollard, I believe were primarily known for their work on theology or the science-theology interface (I was heavily influenced by Peacocke’s *God and the New Biology*). So I think this case is somewhat unique.

I just returned from the American Physical Society meeting where this award was made, and it was truly a gratifying moment. I am hoping that, going forward, there will be creative ways to put this recognition to service of the wider church and the mission of justice and full inclusion. Ideas are welcome!

I need to be faithful to Jesus’ exhortation not to hide a light under a bushel basket. This is God’s light, which I am blessed to share.

As so many of you have known me for quite some time, I feel uncomfortable inviting the spotlight on myself. So it took me some time to send this message. In the end, I need to be faithful to Jesus’ exhortation not to hide a light under a bushel basket. This is God’s light, which I am blessed to share. ♦

Entering a Window of Opportunity: Celebrating & Tapping the Resources of Episcopal Religious Communities

By Br. Ronald A. Fox, BSG



Twenty-two members of the National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NAECC), representing 12 different communities, met for their annual leaders meeting at the Pallottine Center in Florissant, Missouri, from May 8-12.

According to NAECC President, the Rev. Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF, the members gathered for Evening Prayer on Monday, May 8, and then began each morning before breakfast in small groups with Lectio Divina. Masud gave a president's address on Tuesday, noting that "we are at a new time in our history, given that the General Convention, for the first time, authorized a Religious Life Sunday on the 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany." The first one to be celebrated took place this year.

Masud noted that the establishment of a Sunday to acknowledge and celebrate religious communities within the Episcopal Church provides a new window of opportunity for religious communities to make themselves known and to offer the Church a vast range of resources to support its life and mission. He invited the members of NAECC to begin earnestly to use this window of opportunity to think outside of the box regarding ways to publicize their presence and offer their gifts and talents to the Church. He noted that communication about and within NAECC is important, and he

suggested that the communities gathered begin with the website (www.naecc.net/). He said that the website is NAECC's major electronic way of communicating.

Discussions about the future continued throughout the week, along with a daily Eucharist celebrated by NAECC members, including Masud; the Rev. Canon Beth Tjoflat, Little Sisters of Saint Clare (LSSC); and the Rev. Kate Maxwell, Order of St. Benedict (OSB). The preachers were the Rev. Canon Peter Stube, TSSF; Mother Kate; and Br. Ronald A. Fox, Brothers of Saint Gregory (BSG).

At the business meeting, Bill Farra, Society of the Community of Celebration (SCC), was re-elected treasurer. The Community of Dorothy the Worker was approved to move from "Observer" status to "Associate" membership. NAECC has three categories of membership: communities recognized by the House of Bishops Committee on Religious Life, communities seeking recognition, and communities not seeking canonical recognition. A relatively new community in the Diocese of Long Island, the

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NAECC, cont. from p. 13

Franciscan Community of Compassion, was approved for associate membership. Three friars from the Order of St. Francis attended for the first time.

Communities represented included Anamchara Fellowship, the Benedictine Priory of St. Mary, the Brotherhood of St. Gregory, Society of the Community of Celebration, Community of Francis and Clare, Community of the Mother of Jesus, Community of the Gospel, the Little Sisters of St. Clare, the Rivendell Community, the Third Order, Province of the Americas, Society of St. Francis, Companions of Dorothy the Worker and the Order of St. Francis.

NAECC and the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) had met jointly for a number of years, but CAROA had specific items of interest pertaining to traditional communities that needed to be discussed and met separately. For now, the two organizations will meet on their own “for the foreseeable future,” but will continue a strong working relationship with the executive committees, various committee work, and regional gatherings. ♦

The NAECC website can be found at [National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities \(naecc.net\)](http://National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (naecc.net)).

Their Facebook page is at [National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities | Facebook](#)



Photos from the NAECC Leadership Conference held May 8 - 12. Clockwise, from top left:

Members of four different Franciscan Orders; Peter Stube preaching; Masud Ibn Syedullah, NAECC President, celebrates the Eucharist; discussion during a plenary session; the various Franciscan Orders participate together in an ecumenical Eucharist.



The Loyal Dog of Gubbio

By Charles Demers

This is a children's story which combines the Wolf of Gubbio with the Prodigal Son. It was made as part of a multi-media project by a Christian artists' collective of which I was a part, which has now run its course; this was our final project together. Each of us responded to two panels of a large mural by one of our members (<http://www.bettyspackman.com/a-creature-chronicle.html>). Knowing about my Franciscan formation, Betty assigned me a panel featuring images of St Francis, a wolf, and a small dog. This was the result.

Little Ligio was the most loyal dog in all of Gubbio. He kept his master's goat from wandering past the old wooden fence. He guarded his master's grain from mice in the storeroom.

And when the master's children were frightened of ghosts, and spirits, and all of the things that they couldn't see in the dark, Ligio would jump up onto the foot of their bed. Ghosts and spirits weren't as scary when Ligio's warm fur was tickling their cold feet.

But it wasn't just the children of Gubbio who felt frightened. For a very long time, all the people of the town had been afraid of a big, ferocious wolf named Lupo.

Lupo had teeth as sharp as winter icicles. He had eyes as red as summer sun. And every night, Lupo howled like a windstorm from inside his deep, dark cave. Lupo had eaten many of the townsfolk's chickens. He had eaten many of their cows. In fact, Lupo the fearsome wolf had even eaten some of THEM.

And so, the people were terrified. Ligio, the most loyal dog in Gubbio, wanted to help. But this wasn't like guarding against imaginary ghosts or spirits.

This time, the monster was real.

One day, a little Friar came to Gubbio. He was a funny little man who had only a tunic, which

even the PEOPLE of the town could smell — never mind Ligio!

The Friar told the people that he was going to talk to Lupo. Everyone told him that this was a bad, bad, very, very bad idea. But the little holy man in the smelly tunic just smiled.

Then he walked out into the wilderness to find the wolf.



Ligio was curious. Quietly, he followed the Friar.

The Friar jumped over a little stream — and so did Ligio.

The Friar pushed through a patch of thorn-bushes — and so did Ligio. The Friar walked into the deep, dark cave — and, after a great big gulp, so did Ligio.

In the dark, Ligio could hear a growl that sounded like thunder. The *grr-grrrrrr* growling got bigger and bigger. Ligio began to fear for the holy man. But then the Friar spoke.

“Brother Lupo! You have done terrible things to the town of Gubbio. But I know that you're hungry, lonely, and afraid.”

Ligio couldn't believe it — the growling stopped!

“Brother Lupo, come with me. You will say you're sorry to the townsfolk. After that, they will feed you once every day. You won't have to be hungry, lonely, or afraid anymore.”

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Loyal Dog of Gubbio, cont. from p. 15

Inside the deep, dark cave, Ligio watched Lupo prowl right up to the Friar. He opened his mouth wide. He slipped his great big tongue out past his great big teeth and... he LICKED the Friar's fingers! The holy man scratched Lupo behind the ears, and together they left the cave and walked towards Gubbio.

Ligio sat in the cold, cold dark and the dark, dark cold of the cavern. He couldn't believe what he'd seen.

Lupo had licked the Friar's fingers the same way Ligio licked his master's fingers! The Friar had scratched Lupo's ears the same way Ligio's master scratched his ears!

But Lupo was a monster — and Ligio was the most loyal dog in all of Gubbio! Shaking his head, Lupo began to walk home. He trotted out of the cave. He pushed through the thornbushes.

He jumped over the stream. But when Ligio arrived back in Gubbio, he couldn't believe his eyes.

In the town square, all of the people were gathered around the Friar and the wolf. Lupo was eating a fatted calf — and the people weren't frightened or angry. They were cheering!

Ligio growled. In all his years of being a good and loyal dog, he had never been given meat like that! Not for chasing mice or herding the goat, warming feet or scaring the ghosts.

He turned on all four of his paws, and stomped-*stomped-STOMPED* right out of the

gates of Gubbio. He lay down next to the stream.

In the water, Ligio could see his reflection. He looked very different from Lupo. Ligio's ears were floppy, and Lupo's stood straight up. His fur was brown, and Lupo's was silver. Ligio was little, and Lupo was big.

But Ligio kept looking. He was different from Lupo, but there was something about them that made them look the same, too. What was it?

Suddenly, Ligio smelled something funny. Then he saw the Friar's reflection next to his. He turned, and saw the man standing next to the stream.

The Friar knelt down slowly next to the little dog. "Brother Ligio," he said. "You are a guardian of goats, grain, and children. You are a loyal friend and helper." The Friar looked over at the town, then back at Ligio. He smiled. "But we had to celebrate and rejoice today, because this brother of yours, Lupo, was lost and has been found."

Ligio looked up at the Friar. The Friar looked down at Ligio. Then the Friar gave Ligio a long and wonderful *scritch-scritch-scratch* behind the ears. The Friar was even better at scratching than Ligio's master.

The most loyal dog in Gubbio wagged his tail, and looked down into the stream once more. He saw his reflection. He also saw Lupo. Then he dipped his tongue into the cold, clear water. The picture broke into a hundred ripples. He took a long, loud drink before he walked back into town next to the little holy man.

The End



MILESTONES

Welcome the Newly Professed

Newly Professed

Jodi Benson



My profession has been long in coming; I was baptized at St. Francis Church in Potomac, Maryland, many years ago, so it seems I've come full circle. My husband, Craig, and I have been married 35 years, we have one son, Jonathan, who moved to be near us five years ago with his wife and three labs. We also have three labs, so our backyard is very crowded when they visit.

I serve my parish as singer, altar guild, and eucharistic minister, but most of my work is "ministry of the moment," meaning I serve wherever a need arises: sewing, giving rides, teaching ESL and GED classes, and helping people fill out complicated forms.

I struggle with bipolar disorder, and am currently writing a book titled *Psalms for the Desperate*. Here's a sample:

The Blending of Depression and Joy

In the midst of the most severe depression there is joy. The depression itself brings me to the edge – the edge of what I can bear, and the edge where I recognize my utter helplessness to change my life on my own – the edge where I finally see God. I don't enjoy being depressed – but I do not fear it anymore because I know that the further down I fall, the stronger the presence of God to lift and carry me.

It's like the story of the footsteps. There is only one set of footsteps at the most difficult times in my life because that is where He carried me.

Depression causes a gradual casting aside of what is unimportant, unessential. For me, depression means more silence, less reading for distraction, more centeredness, a putting aside of issues like what am I going to wear, and what should I do with my hair.

Depression is a brush fire that burns off the weeds that grew up around the good seed to choke it. The fire kills the weeds but leaves untouched the more deeply rooted seed of God's word.

cont. on page 18

Jodi Benson, cont. from p. 17

The most difficult step for me is to hold onto the presence of God – to remember the loving He has for me – when the depression eases and I take an interest in “normal” life again. It is much easier to pray in a barren time when my needs are strong, than when I am happy, my life is full, and I no longer recognize my urgent dependence on God.



Newly Professed

Maggie Grinnell



My name is Maggie Grinnell. I first became interested in the life of St. Francis thirty years ago when I entered into a recovery program. One of our main sources of literature comes from a book on the 12 steps. Included in this book is a chapter on the 11th Step which is

“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for God’s will for us, and the power to carry that out.”

The St. Francis prayer is highlighted at the beginning of the chapter. I also fell in love with St. Francis after seeing the movie *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*.

Fast forward a bunch of years, and I was introduced to Janet Strickler, who attended St. Stephens Episcopal Church and also Common Cathedral. I had the good fortune of watching her become professed. It was then that I became curious about the Third Order of Franciscans, and talked to her about my interest in perhaps becoming one. It took another year before I formally made my desire known and started the process. My life has been so enriched by being and becoming involved with the Third Order.

*Jesus and Francis were both
“hands-on people.”*

There are many parallels between Jesus and St. Francis with which I resonate. Jesus and Francis were both “hands-on people.” I am fortunate to work directly with individuals who are struggling with issues dealing with their recovery. This is where I find my passion; walking with them as one who has struggled with addiction in my past. Both Jesus and Francis acted out of love, and not judgment. Both acted and lived in community with others. Also, both of them knew when their “cup was running empty,” and knew the importance of withdrawing to a deserted place where they could pray and have a more intimate communion with God.



Newly Professed

Jane Hoppe (Wiggins)



To let you know who is joining your Province, I briefly describe my world view, personal background, and my Franciscan Journey.

World View

I believe we are meant to see God in all peoples, and this understanding of our connectedness leads towards a striving for social justice as well as caring for all of God's Creation. I was thrilled several years ago to hear of the Third Order Franciscans from my good friend, Nancy Dotson. She described to me how our Franciscan community strives to exemplify St. Francis's beliefs through our principles, aims, and notes!

Personal Background

I am retired after 40 years of nursing, mostly as a family nurse practitioner (FNP). I am blessed with a large, loving family and am already a great-aunt 15 times over. I've raised three terrific children and enjoy time with my five amazing grandchildren.

Franciscan Journey

I was raised in the Episcopal Church as a Priest's Kid (PK), and I've attended parishes in eight different states and served on three different vestries. Currently I'm a lector, Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM), and on Flower Guild at St Thomas. I'm ready for my fourth year of Education for Ministry (EfM), have been active for years in my Cursillo Agape group, and will soon join a Zoom Franciscan fellowship, Holy Quiet. I also enjoy volunteering at Comanche Elementary (an underserved school) and with their food pantry.

These past few years I feel blessed to have met so many wonderful professed Franciscans and novices! I was privileged to be professed during my time at our Provincial Convocation in Arizona. I'm also looking forward to living out my Rule of Life and being of service to my fellow Franciscans.



Newly Professed

Laura Mahaney



When I was in my teens, I saw the movie *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* and fell for Francis, who found that God is in the beauty of nature, not the grandeur of man-made institutions. Many years later, I prayed to him for the healing of a pet suffering an internal injury. Miraculously, my pet was healed, and I dedicated my life to Francis — a life for a life. Several more years later, I was perusing the website for the Franciscan Sisters in San Francisco. I found the link for TSSF, and I was like, "What? I can dedicate even more of my life to Francis!" So here I am.

What? I can dedicate even more of my life to Francis!

cont. on page 20

*Laura Mahaney, cont.
from p. 19*

The isolation of COVID was a strange time to do Formation and practice faith. I found myself going between churches to find one that provided the fellowship I craved. It was distressing, and my spiritual director challenged me to plant myself in the community that was most fulfilling. Upon reflection, I realized that it was in the San Bernardine Fellowship and the Franciscan community as a whole that I was spiritually fulfilled. I had found my people and support. It is from this Franciscan family that I go out into the world—or a church—to serve, and to which I return.

Thank you all for accepting me as one of your own.



Newly Professed

Pam Stewart



My journey with St. Francis began when I visited St. Mark's Episcopal Church in San Antonio. I wondered about two individuals wearing habits and was told they were in the Anglican Order of Preachers. Only being vaguely aware that the Episcopal Church had religious orders and communities, I went to The Episcopal Church website and discovered a world of which I was only dimly aware. I read through the descriptions of each of the orders/communities and, when I reached the Third Order of St. Francis, I knew I had found my people.

As a retired naval officer, I have been struggling with the deeply painful realities of war and civil strife.

As a retired naval officer, I have been struggling with the deeply painful realities of war and civil strife. I first engaged these raw feelings during the St. Ignatius Spiritual Exercises, 19th Annotation. I found comfort that these two great saints, Francis and Ignatius, had been soldiers first. I began my journey with the Third Order as COVID was beginning its onslaught. The comfort I found in this community, for both my past and my present, was deeply transforming.

I have just completed a two-year generalist program in spiritual direction and the first year of a three-year program to become a director of the Ignatian 19th Annotation Exercises. This is a journey I did not foresee in the early winter of 2020, but the one to which the Holy Spirit has led me.



Newly Professed

Michelle Visser



Intered Formation only about a year after being confirmed in the Episcopal Church and was professed to the Third Order on May 28, 2023. Both felt like a coming home or, perhaps, the flowering of a seed planted long ago.

In my early twenties I lived in Italy, and that's where I first heard about St. Francis. Although I didn't understand much at the time, I visited Assisi, La Verna, Gubbio, and a hermitage where, on a cold, winter day, a barefoot friar kindly allowed us in to see one of the rock caves in which St. Francis had sometimes slept. These places made a deep impression on me, but I was totally unaware that it was (still) possible to follow St. Francis as a lay person. A dear friend at church introduced me to TSSF, and it was a revelation!

Formation was a deeply humbling and profoundly joyful experience. As the mum of an active 15-year-old, I found my ministry in working with the teens that enter my sphere through my son. I try to be a safe adult for those who don't have many (a surprising number it turns out); I provide healthy school lunches for kids who don't have them (also a surprising number it turns out); I arrange social and cultural outings to encourage them to interact with each other and with other adults away from screens. Over the last year, I have taken different small groups to go ice skating, to visit the zoo, to farm on an organic farm, to learn salsa dancing, to learn swing dancing, to eat and converse with adults at dinner parties, to shop at thrift stores, to bake cookies, to work out at the rec center, and to walk and watch birds at a nearby lake.

In time, I look forward to finding new ways of serving my community and my Franciscan family. ♦

*Rest in Peace**Rest in Peace*

Patricia Lynes-Tway

Professed 41 Years

*Rose Funeral Home Obituary*

She was 72. She was a Former Assistant to the Bishop at The Episcopal Church in Southeast Florida (1980-90). Former Executive Director at M.A.T.S (Ministerial Association Temporary Shelter) (1990-92). Former Medical Social Worker at Superior Home Health Care. She was a former Gyro-Psych Case Manager at Morristown Hamblen Hospital.

She took her life profession vows in 1982 as a Franciscan. She was ordained as a Deacon at St. Faith's Episcopal Church, Miami, in 1984. She was a True Servant of God. She loved all creations great and small, loved to paint, read, and learn everything she could, taking art and Spanish classes up until a year ago. She loved spending time with her granddaughter and playing with her great-granddaughter. She was loved and adored by all her Youth Ministry family in South Florida.

cont. on page 22

Patricia Lynes-Tway, cont.
from p. 21

Rev. Padraig McGuire on Facebook

Pat passed away in her sleep at home on Thursday, June 15. Pat was a deacon of the Episcopal Church (ordained 1984). She was a mentor, spiritual advisor, colleague and friend. She had what many would call “a hard life,” but it was hers to live — and live it she did! I am ever so grateful for the time we shared.

*Her favorite quote was from Virgil:
"Endure, and save yourselves for
more favorable times."*

Daughter Heidi on Facebook

She had only been home 10 days from her more than five months stay in several rehabs and hospitals.

Her favorite quote was from Virgil: “Endure, and save yourselves for more favorable times.”



Rest in Peace

Alice Cortz

Professed 40 Years



(From “Bill and Alice Cordtz Voted ‘Healdsburg’s Cutest Couple’ for 2012” by Keri Brenner, Healdsburg, California Patch Staff)

The Cordtzes, who are retired, were pictured in a circus set-up in their contest photo. They said they staged a circus to entertain their grandchildren using marionettes that Bill Cordtz had in storage from when he was in high school in the San Diego area.

The pair moved to northern California in the early 1970s, and at different times lived in Geyserville, Cloverdale, and then Healdsburg.

“This is the most beautiful place on Earth,” said Alice Cordtz, who also worked as a technician in libraries at the University of California in La Jolla, and when the couple were in the Peace Corps in Belize and the South Pacific more than 15 years ago.



cont. on page 23

Alice Cordtz, cont.
from p. 22

From Peace Corps Annual Report, FY 1987, FY 88, p. 13

"I have without a doubt the best job in Tonga. I work in four libraries and meet interesting people daily. I bicycle around Nuku'alofa, the capital, where we live, and feel fit and healthy. There is no division of age among the volunteers—we are all one group, not young or old. My grey hair is respected along with my years of knowledge, and I feel needed and useful."

Additional History

Alice was also Provincial Secretary and editor of the *Information Sheet* (now called *Hot News*) from November 1983 to January 1985. When Ken Norian, former Minister General and current co-Minister Provincial, was an inquirer, his first communication with TSSF was with Alice.



Rest in Peace

Caitlin Danisher

Professed 3 Years



By Beverly Hosea

Caitlin was a unique and precious child of God. Her deep love for Jesus was reflected in her poems and original music, as well as her great compassion for others who suffered abuse, mental illness, abandonment, and discrimination. That compassionate heart grew out of her own experience of abuse in childhood and growing into adulthood, a wounding which she faced fearlessly and with a humility that St. Francis would have recognized immediately. Her honesty was a witness to the healing that our Lord had graced her with, and that encouraged my own faith and willingness to let God's grace work in my own life.

The last time that I saw her was at the St. Clare Fellowship Zoom meeting on June 23 when she shared one of her poems of faith and love for Jesus. In poor health, she still radiated an aliveness despite unremitting pain. On Monday, June 26, she was found unconscious and admitted to the hospital, and on Tuesday, June 27, after her friend and a chaplain prayed for her and told her in her unconscious state that she could let go, the ICU monitors indicated that she then indeed let go, a final witness to her faith and desire to be in the inner presence of God.

Another friend had just been reading the following passage from 2 Timothy when she received a call that Caitlin had died, and she marveled how apropos it was in describing Caitlin's life and faith.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7-8



Rest in Peace

Sister Maggie, CSF
(Sara Margaret Simpson)

Professed 16 Years



Above, Sister Maggie in the garden at the St. Francis House garden in San Francisco. She is standing by the 10-foot-tall rose bush that serves as a symbol of the community's faith in God's abundant future.

Photo, top right: Sr. Maggie, creating. "The work itself, the act of making, is a prayer."



Sr. Maggie, CSF (Sara Margaret Simpson) died the evening of May 13, 2023, at the age of 76, in the 16th year of her Profession of Vows in the Community of St. Francis.

(The poem below is from the CSF website)

One Stitch at a Time, One Bead at a Time

why do I create?

ask me why I breathe...

making things

a necessary part of living

from earliest childhood

drawings, doll clothes, doll furniture

made from whatever I could find

scraps of fabric, boxes, rocks and sticks and leaves
eventually learning to sew, to knit

learning to "do it right,"

to focus on the product

but always the process is most important
the making itself, not the thing that is made

the best products are organically grown,
an interaction, a dance: process defines work defines process
one making feeds another; as I work with paper and thread,
focusing on colors and lines,

a retreat meditation writes itself, unbidden, in my head

cont. on page 25

*Sister Maggie, cont.
from p. 24*

all is meditation
hands, breath, eyes, mind
the flower work: knitting, crochet, beadwork
one stitch at a time, one bead at a time
the mind attentive to the work, the technique,
care for how it is done
the work itself, the act of making, is a prayer.

From Martha Knight

I lived as a novice CSF with Maggie at St. Francis House, San Francisco, for a year. I fondly recall that year as the beginning of my Franciscan vocation. Maggie was pointedly honest and straightforward, never beating around the bush. I remember vividly our walk to catch the bus every Friday to Martin de Porres Catholic Worker House to feed the homeless. When I left CSF, she hugged me, telling me to join TSSF, for which I am ever so grateful. I made my profession in 2012. Sr. Maggie honored my time in CSF by making a Tau cross for me out of my habit. It is something I cherish.



Rest in Peace

**Marie de Volnice
Almeida (Brazil)**

Noviced in 2020



From Luiz Sirtoli

This Facebook picture was posted on June 8th by Revda. Volnice Almeida, three hours before passing away from a heart attack, at the hospital in Marechal Candido Rondon, Puerto Rico. Her death leaves the communities of Marechal and Palotina without a priest.



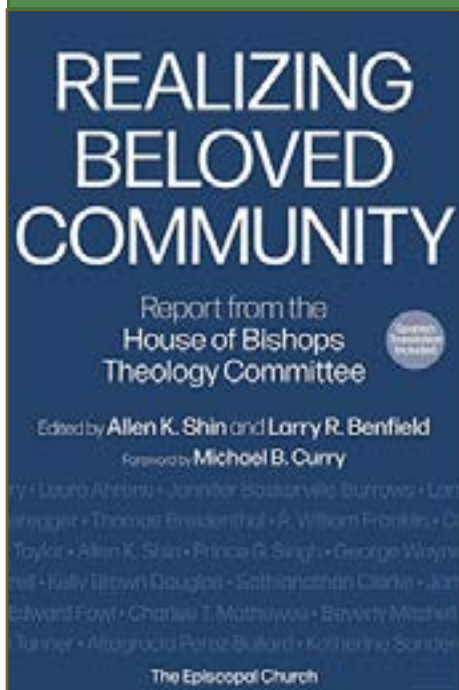
*May her soul
and the souls of all the faithful departed
through the mercy of God
rest in peace.
Amen.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review

Realizing Beloved Community: Report from the House of Bishops Theology Committee

Review by Peter Stube



Edited by Allen K. Shin and Larry R. Benfield, Forward by Michael B. Curry

Church Publishing, 2022,
Hardback \$64.24, pbk \$28.95,
Kindle \$20.99

...we have not yet thoroughly embraced our Baptismal Covenant to resist the “spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God.” Chief among these spiritual forces, Curry says, is the cancer of racism.

Our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry commissioned the House of Bishops Theology Committee to create this exceptional and courageous work to give direction to the church about how to move more fully into the vision of becoming *Beloved Community*.

In his preface Bishop Curry reminds us of our nation’s founding vision, *e pluribus unum*. “Is the vision of one nation under God from many diverse people, with liberty and justice for all possible?” he asks. This is a question not only for us, but for the whole human race.

Curry observes that Christ has shown us God’s way of life. We are to live in right relation with God and with God’s creation under the rule of God. God’s plan in creation is a loving, liberating, and life-giving one, which we have not yet lived into. In addition, we have not yet thoroughly embraced our Baptismal Covenant to resist the “spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God.” Chief among these spiritual forces, Curry says, is the cancer of racism. If left untreated and allowed to spread, Curry observes, it can hurt, harm, and destroy communities, societies, and the children of God.

Curry proposes three steps to address the healing process necessary if we are to live out faithfully our Christian calling to justice with compassion. These principles he describes, I believe, are worth the price of the book:

1. Diagnosis
2. Treatment
3. Ongoing monitoring

The House of Bishops Committee is made up of an impressive community of bishops, theologians, and contributors, who represent the very best the Episcopal Church has to offer. The theology of *Beloved Community* is so important that the authors immediately addressed the matter at hand.

White Supremacy

The first chapter is entitled “White Supremacy and the Beloved Community: The Sin of White Supremacy.” The writers carefully define their terms. “White supremacy is not the only grave sin that the church must address...at this moment in history it is the most salient and pressing issue that society faces.” They recognize that “white supremacy” is loaded with baggage and evokes various emotional reactions. They observe that we live in a culture that both structurally and ideologically privileges whiteness in virtually all facets of society.

The careful analysis in Chapter One traces the historical development of the current sense of American exceptionalism and

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...reparation is a necessary just response by a Beloved Community in response to its participation in the sin of racism.

white supremacy that so dominates our systems. They trace the development of anti-blackness, again demonstrating a thorough grasp of history. Most painful, perhaps, is their survey of the Church's complicity in these matters from the very beginning. This analysis is followed by careful Biblical and Theological exploration of the concept of Beloved Community.

The Second Chapter is entitled "Beloved Community: How We as the Episcopal Church Learn to Listen." This section begins with a bold quote, "We as a Church are so deeply enmeshed in the whiteness of our society that our capacity to listen has been compromised, rendering us selectively deaf to many of the voices we should hear." While this statement may be off-putting for some, it is an important spiritual discipline to listen carefully to their analysis and respond faithfully to the call to Beloved Community.

Reparations

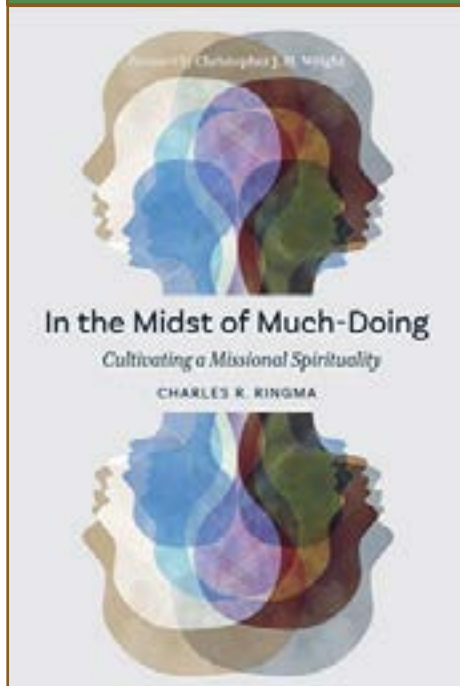
Chapter Three is entitled "Reparations and Beloved Community." The bishops themselves have been working on the issue of reparations. In this chapter the authors trace the journey thus far, beginning with three significant resolutions passed at General Convention in 2006, including one on how the church can be a "repairer of the breach." They adopted this work as a theological imperative as we move into a more just future. They recognized that reparation is a necessary just response by a Beloved Community in response to its participation in the sin of racism. What follows in this chapter is a very careful look at Scripture, tradition, and reparations.

Chapter Four looks at "The Doctrine of Discovery and the Beloved Community." This chapter explores the premises that have resulted in colonization and the secular Doctrine of Discovery, a doctrine the church has benefitted from profoundly without much consideration of whether it resonated with Scripture, theology, and the purposes of God. It is a brief, but powerful chapter with a very useful bibliography for further study.

For tertiaryies to note is a reference to the work of Fr. Masud Ibn Syedullah in the first appendix. There are also examples of the work of reparation that have already begun at places like Virginia Theological Seminary, Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing, and the Diocese of New York.

This work itself is only 89 pages. Half of the book is a translation in Spanish. It is readable, prophetic, and should generate careful conversation. Many Franciscans have been involved with *Sacred Ground*, the study on racism from The Episcopal Church which can be found on the National Church website. This is a complimentary reading to *Sacred Ground*. This book is a must-read for Franciscans, as it clearly articulates a call to justice, mercy, repentance, and restoration, which we value profoundly.



Book Review**In the Midst of Much-Doing:
Cultivating a Missional
Spirituality****By Charles R. Ringma**

Langham Global Library, 2023,
Paperback \$47.99; Kindle \$23.99
ISBN 978-1839732430, 570 pages

Publisher's Description

How are we to sustain activism and compassion amidst the never-ending crises of the twenty-first century? While the concern for social justice is deeply biblical, cynicism, burnout, and despair are all too common side effects when action is divorced from contemplation. To effectively serve as the hands and feet of Jesus, the Church must attend to the revitalization of its inner life through the spiritual practices which feed, support, and sustain the work of the kingdom. Rather than the fragmentation and dualism that have led denominations to choose between prayer and service, evangelization and justice, the Church must integrate heart, mind, and body in order to fulfill its calling to transform the world from within. Drawing from Scripture and a wide range of Christian traditions – from the monastic to the evangelical – this book inspires its readers to integrate spiritual renewal and prophetic witness for the glory of God and the good of his creation.

Endorsements**Brother Christopher John, Minister General, First Order Brothers, TSSF**

Theology tends to work in the separate silos of its academic disciplines, but Franciscan tertiary and theologian Charles Ringma argues here for the integration of mission and spirituality. This important and original work draws on a wide range of sources, biblical and historical (including Luther, Francis of Assisi, the Anabaptists and Liberation Theology), but above all, the author reflects on his own life engaged in a range of ministry in cross-cultural missional contexts.

Moses Yamo Masala, Anglican Bishop of Rorya, Tanzania

Worthy reading for anyone who is seriously interested in the integration of church, prayer, and mission; and who is deeply concerned to explore what a missional spirituality could look like. The book will contribute towards the formation of practical integration of church, prayer and mission.

Mark Coleridge, PhD, Metropolitan Archbishop of Brisbane, Australia

Charles Ringma says that this is no work of academic theology, and in a sense that is true. Yet it draws upon a wide range of theological voices of many backgrounds, and that gives the book an intellectual solidity. However, it is more invitational than instructional, more exploratory than expository. Above all, it is a work born of personal struggle through a now-long life, which gives the book something of the feel of spiritual autobiography, weaving together many threads of a life that has been not only long but remarkably varied. ♦

Book Review

Project 562: Changing the Way We See Native America

By Matika Wilbur

Review by Janet Fedders & Jeff Golliher



By Matika Wilbur, Ten Speed Press,
2023, ISBN 978-1984859525,
hardback \$50

Quite a few months ago, a Provincial study group decided to have a look at the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace.* Put together by the Iroquois Confederacy, it was designed to turn harmful forces into benevolent ones. The study group was moved by the depth and level of compassion shown in the Great Law. There are ceremonies of Condolence and Welcome that could be of use to our society today.

Then recently, Jeff Golliher, Assisting Minister Provincial for Sacred Ecology and leader of our Standing with the Indigenous Committee, recommended a book that he had seen and thought was worth reading, *Project 562: Changing the Way We See Native America*. Native photographer and writer, Matika Wilbur, took on the task of recording the self-disclosed lives of people representing many of the 562 native tribes (officially recognized as of 2012) in the United States. Originally, she thought it would take two years to meet her challenge, but her work wound up requiring a decade to finish.

The large-format photographs throughout the book are stunning. Even more important are the textual descriptions that representatives of many of the tribes gave concerning what is important to them. The entire book includes nearly 180 narrative accounts. Wilbur made the editorial decision not to change the wording, so the whole collection of personal stories and testimonies is very direct and richly diverse. Yet there are some common themes — more than we can adequately describe here.

Jeff and I were especially taken with the universal understanding, rooted in experience, that the land we live on and the bodies we inhabit are totally connected — the underlying idea also being that what is done to Mother Earth is being done to us. We are part of, not separate from, the Great Mother.

Protect Native Women

Quite a few of the tribes decried the system of “blood quantum,”** as still intertwined with colonial entitlement. There are also vivid descriptions of activism, especially dealing with violence against native women. In one section titled “Protect Native Women,” Wilbur writes, “If you read nothing else in this entire book, read this: Native Women deserve safety.” She cites the extremely high, ongoing incidence of sexual violence, rape, and murder, which is rarely reported in the press. She also cites the work of Sarah Deer of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma, who explains that in the entire colonial history of the United States, the rape of native women was a tool of conquest.

Another of the most striking accounts involves the importance of the “Two Spirit People,” who bridge the difference between male and female. Two Spirit People are the healers, the medicine people, and leaders in their tribes, because of their connection with the Spirit World. One Yupik native said that Two Spirit

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people are healers because they could see into both worlds and almost hold hands with both. Two Spirit People could look into the Spirit World because they were in between everything. One tribe even says that the male-female configuration is not binary but rather a spectrum.

Because of the incredible beauty of this book, one might be tempted to say it's a coffee table piece, but its importance goes way beyond that. The book's subtitle, "Changing the Way We See Native America," describes so well its stated purpose as well as the accomplishment of this much-needed work.

* https://web.pdx.edu/~caskeym/iroquois_web/html/greatlaw.html

** www.theindigenousfoundation.org/articles/bloodquantum

In the "Conversation with Charles Roland" that follows this review, we offer a TSSF extension of the *562 Project*. All of the tribes in the book are ones that are officially recognized in the United States. What insights might an encounter of a South American indigenous tertiary develop with North American indigenous kin and their folkways? ♦

Conversation with Brother Charles Roland from Guyana

By Janet Fedders

Retired priest Charles Roland in Guyana is a member of the Akawaio tribe. He is currently living in Jawalla Village in the interior of the country. In June, he traveled to Arizona (quite a long journey from Guyana) to attend Provincial Convocation.

Afterwards, Charles went to Minnesota where he was invited to speak at the University of Minnesota. While in Minneapolis, he attended church with the Lakota People and visited a sacred site, as well as an Indigenous food kitchen. Charles described the Lakota mass as "inspiring." When I asked him why, he answered, "their language and the way they pray." Charles said that his people have the New Testament in Akawaio language, but not the prayers, *etc.* as the Lakota have. He wants to bring back to Guyana the way they pray for the land, the air, the water, the sun, and the turning to the compass points. The act of smudging also meant a great deal to Charles.

Another inspiration for Charles was a visit to Owamni Yomni, a sacred site of the Dakota and Anishinaabe Peoples. Located at a waterfall on the upper Mississippi River, the whirlpool is a place of peace and well-being, a meeting ground for the Indigenous. Chef Sean Sherman has created a restaurant there, serving de-colonized food. Indigenous language is also being revitalized there. Charles said that God was fully present at this place. There was a palpable sense of the sacred there, and it reminded him of a similar sacred Akawaio place called Amakokopai, which is a hill in Guyana that is home to the Alleluia Church. One must purify oneself before going there. Worship at Amakokopai consists of dancing, "always with one's face to the earth" because the earth is holy. The dancing is done barefoot on the bare earth.

Charles feels solidarity with Native Americans in their protests over land and mineral rights. These are the same concerns for the Akawaio, where gold and diamond mining in their lands have polluted the rivers, killed the fish, and changed local culture, especially for the younger people. ♦

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Some comments offered in presentations today:

- The Franciscan charism is lived out through community, contemplation, missional activity. It is a radical inclusivity modeled by Francis and present in the life of Jesus in which all people in the community have been called to offer the gifts they've been given.
- This is an ideal moment to be Franciscan, a time when we are called to be deeply concerned about Creation, deeply concerned about justice, and deeply concerned about matters of inclusion.
- Ultimately, we worship at Jesus' table. He – not we – gets to decide who comes to the table.

In an exercise on gratitude today, we were asked to list all the letters of the alphabet down the length of a paper and then supply a word for each letter which pointed to something in our lives for which we were grateful. We were told that we didn't have to worry about Q, X and Y.

But, given the Franciscan calling to radical inclusiveness and justice, I wrote that Q stood for Queerness, this being day 6 of Gay Pride Month in a time when LGBTQ people are increasingly the targets for exclusion and injustice.

This night I served at the Eucharist as a minister of healing anointing and distributor of the communion bread. I wore my clerical collar and one of the rainbow-colored stoles that connects me to both my time in Latin America as well as my own Queerness

For that opportunity I am deeply grateful.

Gratitude

One of the presentations we heard yesterday was on the importance of gratitude. I have found in my own life that the older I get, the more I become aware of the many people who have touched my life, helping shape the person I am today, without whom I would not have survived to the ripe old age of 70, whose attainment I celebrate in September. What I understand about myself, the world I live in and the God who lies beneath, within, and beyond it all is a result of many life lessons, some of them beautiful, some of them painful, many unexpected, but all of them essential in helping create the *me* I am at this moment. Countless hands have touched this life, sculpting the unique living work of art that presents itself this day.

At the end of the presentation, we saw the short video linked below entitled *Grateful, A Love Song to the World*. It is really beautiful and completely blew me away. And so I offer it to you as one of the three things I am grateful for as I begin this day. The lyrics to the chorus say it all:

All that I am

All that I see

All that I've been and all that I'll ever be

Is a blessing

It's so amazing

And I'm grateful for it all, for it all.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sO2o98Z-pzg8&t=2s&pp=2AECkAIB>



Life Journey

This morning it was cool enough in Paradise Valley to walk the trails at the north end of the Franciscan Renewal Center complex. I came upon the labyrinth and decided this was the place for my morning meditation.

I had not anticipated the sign which suggested a way of meditating along the walk through the labyrinth's twists and turns. Labyrinths are laid out with twists and turns reflecting the unexpected path our lives take and offer us a chance to reflect on them. The instructional sign suggested that the pilgrim begin the walk thinking of their earliest memories and working through the successive years of one's life as they headed toward the concluding point at the center of the labyrinth.

As I walked its passages this morning, the desert breezes warming my skin and face, the sun rising above the ridge to the east, I thought about my life from my earliest memories of my little brother's

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second birthday (I was 3) and the people who were there gathered around us. From that point, a flood of faces and memories washed over me as I walked, consciously changing contexts and sites at each turn.

If a life review is what we have to look forward to at the time of our death, I think I had a foretaste of that experience in the early morning hours here in Paradise Valley.

Deo Gratias.

By the time I reached the center point, I had worked through my grade school and high school days, the halcyon days of community college, the coming to consciousness that began in undergraduate at U of Florida, the scars left on my soul from teaching middle school in a hostile environment in Inverness, followed by teaching SED (Serious Emotional Disturbance) kids I came to love as a minority teacher in a middle school in Gifford. At the midpoint of my current lifespan, I was in law school headed toward challenging encounters in public law among farmworkers in South Florida, juvenile delinquents, and the mentally ill in Florida. Then, as I walked toward the exit, in rapid succession there were the times I spent in seminary, graduate school, college and university teaching, and parish ministry. I arrived at the exit feeling a sense of elation and exhaustion from a life engaged with abandon.

I was nearly breathless as I finished my labyrinth walk. If a life review is what we have to look forward to at the time of our death, I think I had a foretaste of that experience in the early morning hours here in Paradise Valley.

Deo Gratias.

Unexpected Joy

I am not sure what I expected from this Third Order Franciscan Provincial Convocation. I felt a great deal of resistance to attending this event. But I have discovered that when I feel this resistance prior to a big trip, it is almost always a sure sign that the resisted encounter is exactly what my soul needs at that moment.

My life experiences in dealing with institutions of education and law taught me that caution is

a healthy beginning point in those encounters. My idealism and unbounded energy often went unrewarded in engaging the work of helping people to become educated and trying to ensure that our justice system really means what it says when it speaks of "liberty and justice for all."

But few guardians of institutional power and privilege have proven more capable of inflicting pain in my life than those of the religious institution I felt called to serve. I was not sponsored for ordination by my homophobic home diocese, attending seminary on my own dime, having to find a diocese to take me in, paying off my student loans mere months before I would retire 23 years later. And with a couple of exceptions, I have never been paid for my service to the church since my priestly ordination in 1995.

So, my resistance to coming to a gathering like this was not hard to understand even as I am clear it was my ties to the Franciscans that kept me from simply walking away from the Church altogether all those years when I was forbidden to exercise my newly minted priestly orders. I have always loved Francis and Clare, find the Franciscan way provides meaning to a life that has long sought to value creation, serve the vulnerable and speak out for justice. As my brother Ken Watts once put it, I was just relieved to know there was a name for this kind of craziness.

And so, I came to convocation, partly out of a sense of duty as the convenor of a fellowship, partly out of curiosity, partly as a bucket list checkoff, but always with a sense of tentativeness, not knowing quite what to expect, dreading the worst, hoping for the best.

The truth is, I have found this convocation life-giving in a way I could never have anticipated.

Perhaps I worry too much. The angels who whisper in my ear tell me that regularly. And they are usually right. The truth is, I have found this convocation life-giving in a way I could never have anticipated. I find I am truly among my tribe here. The pace of the meetings and worship has been overwhelming. But the content of the sessions, the sharing of the small groups and the beauty of the worship services have been absolutely stellar.

I will go home Saturday exhausted but happier than I have felt in a long time. In truth, this convocation

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was **exactly** what my soul most desperately needed. And for that I am profoundly grateful.

Turning Homeward

As I enter my morning meditation this day, standing barefooted on the hard-packed soil of the desert in this place well named as an arid zone, I begin as always oriented to the rising sun in the east. But I find my soul ever so subtly turning to the south and east where my home lies.



This is such a beautiful place. But it is not home.

It has been a wonderful week. My heart is full, my mind energized, my soul renewed. I so badly needed this time with my Franciscan tribe to be reassured I am not alone in swimming upstream in a world and church which far too often seems hostile to the values we share: care for Creation, justice to govern all social relations, and inclusion of all living beings within the scope of our concerns.

It will be hard to leave these gracious souls. But home, my husband, our fur babies, my beloved Jungle, and the circles of beloved community among whom I live and work in Orlando all call me home.

It is also time to once again engage our callings as Franciscans to be agents of peace and good in a world facing many crises. Our charge as Third Order Franciscans is to heal the wounded Creation, to confront the injustice that too often seems to be engaged with impunity today, and to call into

question the exclusion of the most vulnerable members of our life world from our considerations. We have much to do.

Even as my heart has already begun the long trip home, I am highly aware of the many gifts I have received here.

So many gifts. It is at times like this that I realize what a fortunate man I am.

Devotion

Amidst the trails through the desert scrub at the rear of the Center here, there are a number of open-air shelters with chairs for weary pilgrims to rest for a while. This morning I found one I had not previously seen, entered, and sat down with my coffee.

As I sat and mused about the xerophytic flora all around me, some of which actually grows in Orlando, I suddenly noticed the makeshift shrine at the corner of the shelter. Some might dismiss it as tacky, folk religion at its worst.

But as I looked at the handmade objects and the many stones left there by pilgrims, it suddenly dawned on me that this was a reflection of deep devotion. And I think that merits some consideration.

The objects on the shrine I saw this morning were placed there out of devotion.



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They represent hearts and souls turned toward the objects of their devotion, special prayers for ailing loved ones; love for Francis, Clare, and the saints of the Franciscan Orders; loyalty to Jesus whose way they seek to follow; gratitude to the Holy One who lies beneath, within and beyond the good Creation of which we are an essential part, but only a part.

**Down to the Lowest Level**

Franciscan scholar Sister Ilia Delio presented a mind-blowing presentation Thursday that spanned everything from the Big Bang to the pending Singularity. Among my eight pages of furiously scribbled notes, here are a couple of salient points she raised:

“Consciousness is the fundamental aspect of the cosmos. Everything has consciousness, thus consciousness is inside reality, down to the lowest level of the physical world.

God is present in everything in unique, distinct ways. Every twig, every leaf, every flower speaks to us of the infinite love of God.”

Sr. Delio emphasized the relational nature of all Creation and its Creator. Everything we do, think, and say affects everything and everyone else. This should give us pause to consider how we see our world, beginning with its most vulnerable living beings who, like us, have consciousness and bear the image of our Creator.

Everything is necessary for the image of God to be complete. Everything reveals the infinite love of our Creator.

Fractals of Divine Light

For many years I have used an analogy of the image of God where I compared the image borne by every living being to a facet of a gemstone. Each facet is valuable in its own right, reflecting the light from its highly polished surface. It is of value in itself, but ultimately essential to the gemstone. For when the facets are all assembled, the gemstone itself – the image of God – comes into focus in all its brilliance.

Sr. Ilia Delio gave this explanation a whole new spin Thursday. Here are some of her comments:

“Franciscans define the common good differently from others. Every single being is the singularity of divine love, a fractal of divine light. Regardless of race, gender identity, origin. It is only when all of these fractal lights come together that they radiate in incredible beauty. But every fractal contributes to the wholeness of divine light.....

To see the face of another is to see God. To reject another human face, reducing them to an object, is to reject God. To destroy another human face is to destroy the face of God. The human face is the radiance of divine life.”

That ought to give us all plenty to think about.

Franciscans define the common good differently from others. Every single being is the singularity of divine love, a fractal of divine light. Regardless of race, gender identity, origin. Sister Ilia Delio

Closing Moments

It has been a long, demanding week. There have been many moments of learning, listening, being present with those who were strangers a days ago. Five days later we are sharing some of the most intimate secrets of our lives, baring our souls with those we have come to trust, come to love, come to admire, come to cherish as siblings in this dynamic Order following Jesus in the way of Francis, Clare and a host of oddball saintly figures who share this charism of God’s Holy Fool.

What a privilege it has been to be present here.

At tonight’s closing Eucharist our Order will profess two new life long members, renew the ongoing process to profession of two novices and

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hear the annual renewal of life vows of countless already professed brothers and sisters. We have spent a week together sizing up the urgency of our calling to help heal the creation, to work for justice and to be voices for inclusion of all living beings in our circles of caring.

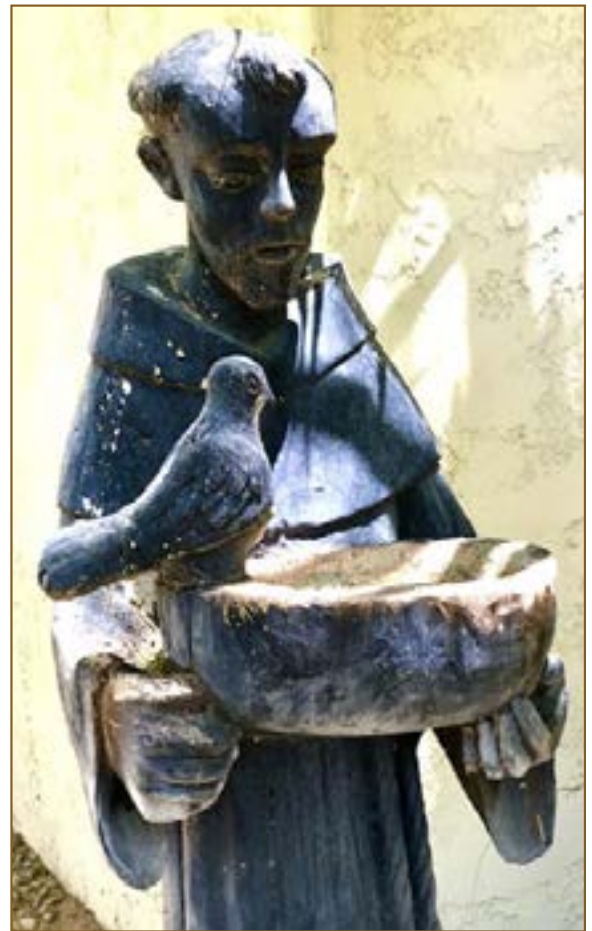
At the end of our closing Eucharist we would hear these words:

“And now, O Lord, make us instruments of your peace; as we make our way in the world, help us sow your pardon, love and renewal. Empower us by your Holy Spirit to love mercy, to do justice, and to walk humbly with our God, following the examples of Francis, Clare, Louis, and Elizabeth, who with all your saints magnify your holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Tomorrow we depart to once again engage that calling.

Francis of the Desert

This week Francis and Clare called a band of their followers to the desert to spend time in silence, to be present with the Holy in this hot, dry stretch of the Creation, to engage our minds, hearts, and souls, and to bind us ever more tightly together to one another. It has been a godsend for those of us who responded to this call. And we return to our daily lives a bit weary but ready to once again engage a world in sore need of care for Creation, healing for the great suffering which too often goes unnoticed, and giving voice to the needs of those denied even a basic respect for their humanity.



What a privilege it has been to be present here.

Thank you, Francis and Clare.

As ever, you are sources of Peace and All Good. And we pray that you will be present with us as we return to our homes to resume our callings to be instruments of peace.

