

**CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES**  
**TSSF PROVINCE OF THE AMERICAS**  
**NOVEMBER 27, 2023**  
**BY ZOOM**

**ATTENDANCE:** Officers present: Charlie McCarron, Minister Provincial; Alison Saichek, Bursar; Linda Boyer, Provincial Secretary; John Rebstock, Formation Guardian; Jotie Noel, Fellowship Guardian; Anton Armbruster, Provincial Chaplain; Jeff Gollither, Assisting Minister Provincial for Sacred Ecology.

Elected Chapter members present: Jim Crosby, Adrienne Dillon, Valerie Hart, Wai-Wah Hilliam, Celso Franco de Oliveira, Bill Graham, , Janet Strickler.

**ABSENT:** Claude Berkley, Susan Pitchford, Lifelong Formation Guardian, Lynn Herne, Chapter Minutes Secretary. The Assistant Minister Provincial for Portuguese and Spanish Tertiaries position is currently vacant.

**1. Opening Prayer**

Charlie opened the meeting with prayer at 7:35 pm EST USA.

**2. October 2023 Chapter Minutes**

The October minutes were approved by consensus.

**3. Financial Report (Alison) (Financial papers attachment)**

Alison presented the final accounting for 2022-2023. The total income was \$53,277 with the majority coming from pledges. The total operating expenses was \$37,305. The expenses were lower due to the reserves from multiple years of covid restrictions. The current reserve is approx. \$16,000. Alison recommends it be used as a reserve for Chapter 2024.

The initial budget for 2023-2024 prepared at the October meeting seems appropriate compared to the final 2022-2023 budget. There are no significant changes needed. The FY 2023-2024 budget is balanced with a total for both income and expenses at \$55,125. She noted that Chapter 2023 Annual Meeting was very expensive (\$32,115.74). We overspent our budget by \$7,000. Some of our international visitors had to have overnight lodging multiple nights due to airline schedules. Almost everyone flying in needed to transfer due to few direct flights to St. Louis. The musicians added expenses with travel and keyboard rental. She recommends in the future utilizing the musical talents of some of our members.

#### 4. **Plans for Chapter 2024 & 2025**

Charlie, Alison and Linda have done some preliminary research for our next Chapter site. Most venues are already booked. Linda got a notice from Pallottine that they put us on their schedule for next year. We would need a deposit (\$3,100) to confirm.

Discussion ensued. Pallottine got generally good reviews including site cost. Other sites were considered including DeKovan Center in Racine, Wisconsin near Chicago, an airline hub; and one near Baltimore, Maryland (Bon Secor?).

Since other sites have limited openings for 2024, it was agreed by consensus that we would return to Pallottine for 2024 (Oct. 7-11, 2024). With a limit of invited guests, Alison believes costs can easily remain under \$30,000. Linda will be in communication with them, and Alison will arrange a timely deposit.

For Chapter 2025 (October 6-10, 2025), it was agreed by consensus that Chapter will seek to meet out of the USA with Canada selected. There is a highly recommended site Queen of Apostles in the outskirts of Toronto near the airport. They do have an opening for this week. It will also be easier to get a Cuban through Canadian immigration. All US members will need to have current passports. Charlie will coordinate contact.

Charlie recommends that in the future, we maintain a 2-year planning schedule of Chapter site registrations so Chapter is ensured a location. He also recommends being proactive in issues. In the future, it is expected people from other regions will be invited. We need to plan costs and budget needs.

#### 5. **Loving Community Proposal (Valerie)**

Liz Peacock and the team of Loving Community are requesting a decision on the proposal they submitted in May. They hoped a decision would happen at the October meeting. When this didn't happen, Liz asked for an update.

Valerie asked for Chapter feedback on the new training for leaders offered at Chapter. People generally thought it was good. Some thought the role-playing section seemed stilted which may have resulted from a sense of condensing some content and time spent moving to different rooms for small groups. This part may need some adjustment esp. if done by zoom. John mentioned that all in Formation sign a similar document as a regular part of the program. There is this precedent.

Charlie moved with Valerie seconding that the committee's proposal/policy be accepted for a 1-year period and then reviewed. This was approved by consensus. Modification may be needed as we live into this new process. This can be a good approach for most of our policies/processes. Liz will be asked to send the final paperwork to Charlie for distribution.

John asked to have the final copy sent asap. He will stop using the older copy and start using the one just approved for those in Formation.

## **6. Communication (Adrienne)**

Ben Gibbs has created a prototype database and spreadsheet. He tried to include all the needs of each ministry. As we live into this, there will be a lot of tweaking. Ben and the committee will meet with the Guardians at one of their meetings to introduce it and have an initial review of each section.

One identified need is a designated contact for each ministry to keep the database/spreadsheet current. Other needs that are unmet currently are international communication and the website. A special place for those in Formation needs to be created (the cause for all this work in improving communication).

Charlie has put Ben in contact with the MG who is working on an international work group on online communication. They started with Europe, and it is working well there. Together we can have communication easier with all the provinces.

Questions regarding the database include 1) Anton has been revising his database and putting it in google in anticipation of transferring it to the one being created. He asked to have instructions on how to do this and a possible time frame; 2) what documents will be on this vs. the website e.g. Chapter minutes?

Another issue raised to the communication committee is: At profession, all a tertiary's paperwork is destroyed including the form that asks for any gifts/talents the person can offer to the community. This is information that could be useful to maintain. Charlie advises discussing this at the Guardians meeting with Communications people.

## **7. Profession Ballots (Charlie and John)**

John presented 3 candidates for profession: James Stroud, Martha Mason and Edwin Vicente Ramirez Sosa. All were individually approved by consensus.

## **8. Formation Issue from Cuba (Charlie)**

Luiz Sirtoli, Armondo ? and Jorge Anibal Urrutia Castro have requested a special dispensation in the Formation process for a family unit of 3 who are 5 months shy of completing the minimum length of the novitiate. Carmen is the mother of an autistic teen. These two are moving to the USA soon and wish to be professed with their family and their Cuban faith community. They are given good recommendations by Luiz, Armondo and Jorge. Chapter approved by consensus. Charlie will meet with Luiz and the other leaders with a translator and work with them toward this goal.

## **9. Lost Tertiary (Linda)**

Ted Conwell is not responding to any of our contact information. Linda asked if anyone knows how to contact him. No one knew any information.

## **10. Miscellaneous (Linda)**

Terry Rogers noted that in our daily prayer rotation, there is a section of the RIP listing that is skipped. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month, we pray for the monthly listing. February has no 30<sup>th</sup> and so that listing is missed. She asks for some solution so that all of our deceased members can be remembered at least once a year. Charlie, Linda and Janet will research the most appropriate solution which will be included in the next directory.

## 11. MP's Reflections (Charlie)

Charlie has been MP for approx. 6 weeks. He is one who likes to have life events percolate. In the time before his election, he had 3 main events that went very well: the Provencal Convocation, IPTOC, and a retreat at Canterbury. Since the election, life has been a whirlwind: talking to his parish about retirement was more traumatic than expected; his work on the Anglican/Roman dialogue required a 40 page document with a Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for General Convention; one of his dogs died and the other diagnosed with cancer; and an ordination classmate died. As Charlie puts it, "God must really love him!"

### A. Percolation results

1. -Reflections on choosing **an Asst. MP**- He has been praying through the directory for possible candidates. Many good ones are already doing good work in other areas. This role would pre-exempt their present work. He now has a short list and will be contacting them within the next 2 weeks.
2. Need for **IT help**- He's trying to learn the basics better. His primary email address will be the MP one and his "Charlie.tssf will be sent to the backlot. Ben is helping him with email and zoom accounts. All will need to be transferred. He has learned how to make group emails starting with the Guardians.
- a. He learns best with an actual person. Locally Rich, a son of a priest, has been doing IT work with a number of church groups. Charlie plans to engage him to be his tutor. There is also the possibility of him helping Ben in the future if needed.
3. **Personal Support** - Charlie realizes the need for personal support and has a plan in place as Jotie recommended in October. He knows he will have blind spots and wants other eyes to help him navigate the future. He has a spiritual director, a SD peer group, a therapist and has gone through training to be a clergy coach. He also has a good relationship with the trainer of the trainers.
4. **Ministry Review at Annual Meeting** Charlie wants to have on the October 2024 agenda an annual review of the whole Order. He suggests inviting an outsider to lead this. Part will include good leadership and modeling it at all levels starting with Chapter. Think of the mirror Clare holds so we can both see the Order and our place in it.
- a. One part is that all Chapter needs to support Charlie and each other as much as possible.
5. **Diversifying Chapter**- According to the Statutes under Governing, both the MP and Chapter are empowered to invite people to Chapter with voice but

no vote. These invited members would be able to attend both full Chapter meetings and any subcommittee meetings of interest. He ran this idea by the former MPs who welcomed this.

Charlie recommends both groups select 2 tertiaries to give Chapter more diversity and a younger voice for a total of 4 people. He recommends they have a 3-year term in unity with the MP's term. This is a future potential Norm.

- a. Charlie's pick are :
  - i. Joseph Pae- a Korean born priest in Long Island with 2 teenagers, who has just completed 12 years as head of the Diocesan Commission on Ministry, received the highest award of the diocese, trained at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation and now is studying Franciscan Theology. He agreed when Charlie asked.
  - ii. Sarah (Layman) Grandon—a professional youth minister from Canada who is a priest & single mother. Charlie will follow up.
- b. Chapter's Choice
  - i. Charlie asks Chapter to come up with 2 other candidates who are approved by consensus. Janet will set up a google form for nominations with voting next meeting. Candidates will not be approached until after the vote. The top two will be invited. If they decline, the next highest vote getter will be asked. This process will be followed until 2 are selected and agreed.
  - ii. In discussion, 3 possible candidates have already been identified.
- c. **Orientation-** These 4 candidates will not be familiar with Chapter responsibilities and practices. Charlie will ask Masud if he would lead a zoom orientation again for these members.
6. **Guardians' Meeting-** Charlie plans to meet individually with each Guardian which will be followed by a meeting with all Guardians. This full meeting will be held quarterly.

## 12. Next Meeting- Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>.

Charlie closed with a prayer for Advent .