



Musings from Our Minister Provincial, Charlie McCarron

Our Province as a Garden of Transformation

Gardens are places of creation and growth, mirroring the act of divine creation. They exemplify the natural cycle of life, where seeds sprout, plants bloom, and fruits ripen. It is where things wither and pass away and the place where new life bursts forth. This process of growth is often associated with spiritual transformation and the unfolding of one's inner potential.

When the Spiritual Direction program I'm taking part in asked us as students to name a creative practice that supports our spiritual lives, I named my garden and the time I spend tending it, and the times (not often enough) that I simply rest there. It has resonated deeply, therefore, when I hear tertiaries describing the call of our Province to be a "garden of transformation" (I think this phrase can be traced back to some of Peter Stube's thoughts). This description evokes the imagery of growth, renewal, and cultivation within the context of spiritual development.

Just as a garden is a place where seeds are sown, nurtured, and eventually bloom into vibrant plants, our Province can provide an environment where tertiaries are encouraged to grow spiritually. Through teachings, rituals, and the nine shared spiritual practices of our personal rules, Tertiaries can experience personal growth, deepening their understanding of their faith and their relationship with the divine.



Provincial Renewal

Gardens are often associated with cycles of renewal and regeneration. In the same way, our Province can serve as a space for individuals to experience renewal — to shed old habits or beliefs that no longer serve them and embrace new ways of living that are aligned with the spiritual values of our Principles.

Just as a gardener carefully tends to the soil, plants, and flowers in a garden, our Province can provide accompaniment and support to its members as they navigate their spiritual journey. Through fellowship, mentorship, prayer for one another, and collective worship, we can receive the nourishment and encouragement we need to thrive as we journey together on the Franciscan path.

A Nurturing Place To Grow

Ultimately, the metaphor of a garden of transformation suggests that our Province is a place where profound change can occur. It is a space where we are invited to undergo spiritual metamorphosis — to let go of our old selves and be transformed by the power of faith, love, and divine grace. To (in a metaphorical way) follow Francis as his father's clothes fell from his body before the bishop and people of Assisi.

In essence, describing our Province as a garden of transformation emphasizes its role in facilitating spiritual growth, renewal, and profound personal change among us. This description highlights the nurturing and supportive environment that a community

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**Where to Send
Changes**

Name & Address Changes
Convocation Dates
Profession & Novicing Dates
Notification of Deaths
contact
the Secretary of the Province.

Find contact
email addresses at
<https://tssf.org/contact/>

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such as ours can provide, as well as the potential for individuals to blossom in diverse ways and flourish within the context of shared faith and fellowship. It would be nice if this garden would be easy to tend, and to be consistent and responsive in all the structures that form a “trellis” for our garden plants. However, all this is not easy.

Achieving greater responsiveness in a large, multicultural, multinational, and diverse community spread across numerous church jurisdictions may indeed necessitate even more complexity than we may think.

Cultural Differences

In a multicultural and multinational community, such as ours, it’s essential to be sensitive to the diverse cultural norms, values, and traditions of different groups. This requires the Province to develop strategies for cultural competence, including language support, cross-cultural communication training, and awareness of cultural nuances in decision-making processes, and in statutes and norms in each region while also navigating any conflicts or inconsistencies between them.

Multiple Languages

Communication becomes more complex in a multicultural and multilingual environment. The Province may need to provide translation and interpretation services regularly and consistently to ensure effective communication. Additionally, we must develop strategies for inclusive communication that resonate with diverse audiences while maintaining clarity and coherence.



Opening a Door to Diversity

Building a sense of community and belonging across diverse cultural, national, and Church polity backgrounds requires

intentional efforts to foster inclusivity and participation. This may involve organizing multicultural events, intentional diversity in patterns of prayer in our gatherings, and where possible, community service projects that bring varied populations and viewpoints together. All of this will impact how we choose to spend the gifts we are given. As Billy Graham, the American evangelist, used to say, “A checkbook is a theological document, it will tell you who and what you worship.” In a step toward this, our Chapter and I, have invited more newly professed tertiaries to increase the voices heard during our deliberations.

Differences in cultural norms, values, and life experiences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings or conflicts within the community. The Province must develop effective conflict resolution mechanisms that promote dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual understanding while respecting the dignity and gifts of all individuals and regions involved.

Governing a Growing Province

In a decentralized structure with multiple church jurisdictions, leadership and governance become more complex. The Province must balance the need for centralized coordination and direction with respect for the autonomy and diversity of local communities. This may involve more ways to facilitate collaborative decision-making processes that involve representatives from different regions, cultures, identities, and language groups.

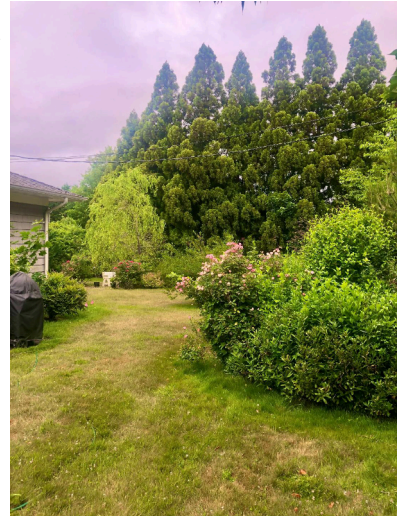
Our statutes highlight that as we live into our diversity, most ministries are better served through a team approach. This team approach includes the functions of the Minister Provincial. Therefore, our statutes now have a formal position of Assistant Minister Provincial, or AMP, mirroring similar ministries in Formation, Chaplaincy, and Fellowships. Jotie Noel has graciously accepted a call to serve as our AMP. We are also grateful that Valerie Hart is offering her gifts and talents in the ministry of Fellowship Guardian.

Overall, achieving greater responsiveness in such a complex and diverse community requires a nuanced understanding of cultural, religious, and contextual factors, as well as a commitment to inclusivity, equity, and dialogue across differences. It also requires

Our Province as a Garden of Transformation (cont. from page 3)

flexibility, adaptability, and humility in navigating the inevitable challenges and tensions that arise across the boundaries of Anglican provinces and in multicultural and multinational contexts.

Therefore, as I envisage our Province as a garden of transformation, I'm not picturing in my mind the formal gardens of Hampton Court or Versailles. What I picture is a classic British cottage garden such as my grandfather's garden in Lanarkshire, marked by billowy ornamental grasses, jumbled perennials and shrubs, and fences clustered in a way that make it seem like the roses are taking over.



Looking at these near-wild gardens, you might not realize that it takes careful planning and regular upkeep to maintain that carefully careless greenery. You might not realize that time and effort are necessary if you want each flower and shrub to thrive and succeed. So it is with the garden we have all been gifted with in our Province, and each of us is called to be a gardener.



Valerie Hart Appointed As Fellowship Guardian

It is an honor to be chosen to be the Fellowship Guardian. Joti Noel did a wonderful job, and I pray I can do as well in supporting Fellowships.

I was born in Ohio and raised in the Episcopal Church. I went to undergraduate and graduate school in Pittsburgh, PA, where I became engaged in Eastern spirituality and worked as a psychologist specializing in stress related disorders.

When the family moved to the San Francisco Bay area, I taught transpersonal psychology and, to my great surprise, received a call to the priesthood. I retired after 20 years of active ministry, bought a small RV, and spent almost two years traveling around the country with my Golden Retriever. While driving across the wide, open plains I discovered a call to the Third Order Franciscans and was professed in 2018. I have enjoyed supporting the community as a Formation Counselor, Assistant Formation Guardian, Fellowship Convener, member of Chapter, and now as Fellowship Guardian. I currently live in Orange County, CA.



Loving Community Project to be Launched

by Liz Peacock

Get ready for liftoff! Chapter has approved final changes to the Loving Community project document, and it has been posted to the website (<https://tssf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023-Loving-Community-document.doc.pdf>). With that piece in place, we're ready to move forward.

Even if you have already signed an earlier document, you are encouraged to read the new one because there are significant changes from previous versions. If you would like to have a new signature on file, just sign it and send it to Liz Peacock (address in the directory) so she can update your records.

Loving Community Project to be Launched

(Cont.)

In this project, leaders in the Order play a special role in this program. They will not only be responsible for reporting serious offenses, but perhaps more importantly, they should be alert and responsive to any interaction that may be experienced as inappropriate or abusive. The initial phase of the program is designed to help prepare our leaders to handle anything that might come up.

Very soon, leaders will receive detailed instructions from the Guardians about next steps. For in addition to signing the new Loving Community document, all leaders will need to sign up for one of the training sessions that began in March. Several Praesidium courses will also be required.

Once the initial batch of trainings is completed, we will move on to the next phase of this project. We feel it is important to offer an orientation to all postulants and novices. The orientation will help them know this truly is a safe place, give them an opportunity to learn the policy, and provide resources that they can use if they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation. We are looking for volunteers to help design and offer such an orientation.

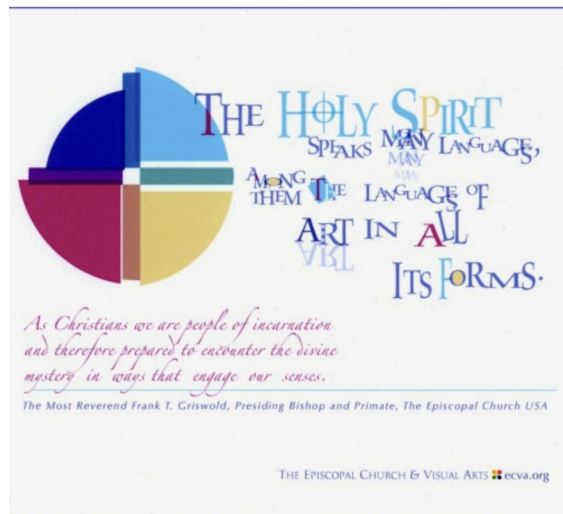
If you are interested in serving in this way, please contact Liz Peacock (address in the directory) for further information.

The Episcopal Church and the Visual Arts

John Brockmann



Rick Bellows, a photographer and poet is a registered artist in the organization, Episcopal Church and Visual Arts (ECVA). According to its website, this is their mission:



The mission of Episcopal Church and Visual Arts (ECVA) is to encourage artists and organizations to engage the visual arts in the spiritual life of the church. ECVA values the significance of visual imagery in spiritual formation and the development of faith, and encourages those who are engaged in using the visual arts in spiritual life.

Episcopal Church and Visual Arts (ECVA) strives to encourage:

- visual artists in our church to use their creative gifts for the glory of God;
- individuals to explore the opportunities visual arts offer in their spiritual journeys;
- parishes and cathedrals to incorporate visual arts in their total programs; and
- conversations and research in issues related to the visual arts, theology, and culture.

Part of the website is devoted to Visio Divina.

The link to their website is [ecva.org](https://www.ecva.org). To see Rick's most recent exhibit from Spring 2023, use this link: <https://www.ecva.org/exhibition/power-series/bellows-series.html>. And if you would like to see another TSSF artist's work, follow this link for barbara bennett's page <https://theartistsregistry.camp7.org/Sys/PublicProfile/287902/57342>

Rick encourages all TSSF artists to also become registered artists with ECVA.



**TSSF Southeast Regional Convocation
April 19-21, 2024**

Bonaventure Fellowship will host the first-ever HYBRID Southeast Convocation at Pinnacle Retreat Center in Clayton, Georgia, a beautiful facility nestled in the foothills of the Georgia mountains. <https://pinnacle retreatcenter.com/>

Those choosing to attend on Zoom will have the same fellowship and small group experiences as in-person participants. Here is the link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85176051158?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85176051158?pwd=TkVzY1J1aExqODBoTmZpczdjN0FYZZ09)
 Meeting ID: 851 7605 1158
 Passcode: 11111



Our keynote speaker is none other than our own Victoria Logue, who will share her reflections on Humility, Love, and Joy.

Victoria Steele Logue, TSSF, is a writer, retreat leader, and certified labyrinth facilitator who has been a life professed tertiary for more than 16 years. Her latest devotional writing is "Feast of Feasts", which journeys through Advent to Epiphany in the Way of St. Francis. She co-authored the devotional with her husband, Frank, who is currently in the process to become a tertiary himself. Her more than 20 published works include both fiction and non-fiction, and she has written for newspapers, magazines, and the internet, including a couple of spiritually-related blogs, for more than a decade.

To get the registration form, please email Liz Peacock (address in the Directory). If you are attending on Zoom, you don't need to register or pay, just use the link above - but we would appreciate your donation toward the scholarship fund and other expenses.

We look forward to seeing all of you in April, 2024, either in person or on Zoom!

Bonaventure Fellowship



**When I Follow:
a poem**
by Mary Tarantini

When I follow will I drown
 In the sorrow of the ages
 Or trip and lose my senses in
 The dark and lonely spaces

Will the world move just one
 breath
 From its groaning to be free
 Or will I flounder when the
 harvest
 Sinks below the sea

How often have I heard it said
 The mountain is at your
 command
 Yet thoughts bombard my surety
 till
 My brain is fully crammed

One deed is worth its weight in
 gold
 And carries with it all our dreams
 So kiss the leper at the gate
 And follow always to the
 extreme

Milestones: Welcome the Newly Professed

**Martha
(Marty) Mason**

My Franciscan journey began around 2014 when Nancy Chiafulio invited me to attend a meeting of the Wolf of Gubbio Fellowship in North Carolina. She said she thought I'd like it. I attended the monthly meetings with her until her death in 2019. We had a routine — after the Fellowship meeting, we'd eat Reuben sandwiches from Mike's Deli (she and Mike were from New Jersey and enthusiastically discussed food I'd never heard of growing up in Missouri).

After Nancy was Professed in January 2016, I requested an application for admittance into the Third Order, which I promptly filed away in that great somewhere. Even after she passed away, I continued to attend Fellowship meetings. In the summer of 2021, I located the application form (through divine intervention) and submitted it. Sadly, the Wolf of Gubbio Fellowship was dissolved, and the three remaining professed members and I were reassigned to other Fellowships. I'm currently a member of the Lady Jacoba Fellowship, and we are a very cohesive and loving group of Lady J sisters.

It's taken some time for me to fully appreciate the richness of the progression from Postulant—Novice-1—Novice-2—Profession. The intentional community we created in our pre-Profession studies provided a firm foundation for my continued spiritual growth. The Novice-2 study of the Franciscan Ways of Service let me explore several opportunities where I could continue to learn and to live my life as Jesus and Francis taught us. I am eternally grateful for the Franciscan journey Nancy knew I would like.



James Stroud

In December 2023 I had the honor of being Professed into the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis. Little did I realize when my wife and I ended up by accident in Assisi, Italy in 2011, how much Francis' spirituality would end up affecting me. Even more, how shocked I would have been if someone would have told me that less than a decade later, I would begin my own Franciscan journey.

I have always enjoyed working within Apologetics (having reasons for your belief (1 Peter 3:15) to help close gaps between Christians and skeptics as Francis himself did. TSSF has, however, helped me “get out of my own head” and breathe in the simplicity of what Christianity is — not an equation to be solved or unraveled, but a journey or pilgrimage to walk. I am quite grateful to be making this pilgrimage with my fellow brothers and sisters within the Third Order.



Milestones: Welcome the Newly Professed (cont.)

Max Sklar

I am honored to be professed as a member of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis. Pace e bene carissimi fratelli e sorelle, peace and all good my most dear siblings!

Saint Francis has been with me since I started discovering my Christian faith after I graduated from college. My mom gave me a biography of Francis for my birthday, and his story was an inspiration to me for here was someone who showed by a living example what it means to follow Jesus' words. The authenticity of Francis showed through the particular medieval context, and the Canticle of the Creatures especially went straight to my heart.

A few years later, when I was starting seminary at Yale Divinity School, I knew I needed a way to keep me committed to the Gospel life and needed a community of like-minded folks to keep me accountable, especially amidst the distractions of the academy. I hoped I could find such a commitment through the lens of Franciscan spirituality. A quick internet search revealed that there was such a community, and in the Anglican communion, no less! I applied as an inquirer for the first winter semester of seminary and haven't looked back since. Throughout the process, I have gone deep into Franciscan spiritual practice and met some of the most amazing, inspiring people I have had the privilege to know. I have also discovered deeper aspects of Francis and Clare that continue to shape my ministry and help me grow as a follower of Jesus.

I grew up in Salem, Massachusetts and have lived in or near there most of my life. Last Saturday I had the honor of being ordained a priest at Saint Peter's-San Pedro Episcopal Church. In keeping with our community and my own love of languages, the ceremony was multi-lingual, including English, Spanish, Arabic, and Hebrew. I am recently returned from serving in a Palestinian Christian church in Ramallah on the West Bank, and much of my work since I have returned has been teaching and preaching about Palestine and offering words of radical peace in a troubled world. In this I have found continual inspiration from Francis, who crossed into "enemy" territory to see the sultan and praised the Lord through those who pardon for the sake of divine love.

[Editor's Note: Minister Provincial Charlie McCarron wrote in his February 14 email message to the Province that Max along with two others has been invited to participate in Chapter's deliberations and discernment.]



Annemarie London

I believe I have been in the Tobago TSSF group since 2021 but it feels like I have been a Franciscan all my adult life. During Formation, my eyes were opened a bit more concerning the animals and environment around me, and this has been an enlightening experience. I thank God for this wonderful opportunity. I'm privileged to belong to my TSSF family.

(Annemarie is part of the Tobago Trio who were just recently elected to profession (Denease Hercules, and Helen Nathan will hopefully be included in our next issue.) Their professions almost double the size of the Tobago Fellowship!)



Milestones: Rest in Peace

Bett (Betty) Wood— Professed 30 Years

Bett Wood died Jan. 4, 2024 at 94 just shy of her 31st Profession anniversary.

She served in many roles in our Province: Chapter member 2008-12; Area Chaplain 2012 (helped the Louisiana Fellowship get started in 2012); and, along with Ed Newbury and Bill Graham, Bett began the Prairie Wind Fellowship for western Nebraska and Wyoming.

Bett had a degree in music from Oklahoma College for Women and was a member of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church. She traveled extensively around the world.

Bett is survived by a son, Paul; a daughter, Joanna; four grandchildren; and five great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her first husband, Robert Whitney in 1962; her second husband, Robert Wood, in 1993; and a son, Brian in 2022.



*Bett (front right) with other
tertiaries at Anita Miner's
Ordination to the Diaconate*

From Adrienne Dillon

Bett Wood was one of "my" novices in the 1990s. She was in her sixties at a time when many were entering formation at an earlier age. Yet she was not afraid to try new things. She began a jewelry business, acquiring jewelry and handicrafts from Mexico and Central America and selling her wares at General Convention and elsewhere. She began to advocate for those suffering from HIV/AIDS, which at that time had a high death rate.

Bett was a joyful person who liked to write and to talk. Her reports were detailed, and I enjoyed every word. When we spoke on the phone, I knew the conversation would last at least an hour. After her first novice year, I handed her over to Judy Gillette, and the three of us remained friends through their lifetimes. I can only imagine the conversations Bett and Judy are having now!

From Anita Miner

My friend Bett Wood was a hoot! She laughed, she was quirky, she was serious and not so serious, and she was kind. I remember meeting Bett when she was leading the Brother Wind Fellowship and I was the Fellowship Coordinator (now called Guardian). We traveled together to TSSF meetings, always leaving a day open for fun in New York City. Of course, she knew the City well because she and her husband lived on the campus of Columbia University during his career. On a campus tour once, she even pointed out the campus apartment where she lived and the university's chapel where she sang.

Bett was a true musician; she was an opera singer and proud of it, and she was a lady with a deep voice. Her speaking voice was so clear, almost crystal clear and precise, and it made you pay attention. I don't know for sure, but I'm guessing she sang parts in an innumerable group of operas.

She honored me by attending my Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate in Salt Lake City in 2011. She was one of five Franciscans who attended: Joan Verret, David Burgdorf, Joy Levetan, and Simon Fong (Hong Kong). At the reception afterward she was in full musical swing.

One of her ministries was to go to Guatemala and Mexico to buy jewelry from indigenous people and then sell it at exhibit booths at various diocesan conventions and even General Convention. The last time I saw Bett was at the 2015 General Convention in Salt Lake City. We celebrated at special meals during that time with other Franciscan attendees. Bett's silver jewelry and other unique items for sale were of fine quality. I bought a marcasite ring from her that I cherish. Each time I wear it, I have sweet memories of Bett.

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP: Bett Wood (cont.) I first met Bett at a convention for the Diocese of Nebraska (maybe in Scottsbluff) about 40 years ago. At that point she had just joined the Third Order. I was present when Bett made her TSSF profession and took part in the ceremony. Her priest then was Karen Wade who has been in Rockport, MA for a number of years.

From Bill Graham

I still remember the first time I met Bett. She greeted me with something like "It's good to meet another Franciscan."

Bett, Ed Newbury and I formed the Prairie Wind Fellowship of the Third Order about 40 years ago. Most of our meetings were either in Cheyenne, Wyoming where Bett lived or in Kimball, Nebraska where Ed was the rector of an Episcopal church.

Ron Nuss-Warren, one of the three founders of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans was an active member of our Fellowship. Ron lived-in Cheyenne when we first formed and later moved to Scottsbluff. Other active members of the group were Leslie Zimmerscheid of Cheyenne and A. J. Severns of Scottsbluff, a Franciscan bishop from a tiny Orthodox denomination. Bett was also close to Judith Gillette and visited her in Reading, Massachusetts (MA) a number of times. Bett's son Brian (now deceased) often drove her to our meetings.

Bett had a career as a professional singer. After retirement, she ran a small business selling silver jewelry which she purchased in Mexico and various textiles (especially stoles) which she bought in Guatemala. Just before I moved to MA six years ago, she also sold stoles from the Middle East. She liked to travel and her business made just enough money to pay for her trips and enabled her to have a booth at the Episcopal General Convention. I have several of the stoles which I purchased from her (at about a quarter of what they would cost from church supply companies). My daughter, my wife, Kathy, and I often spent time at her booth so she could get a break.

Bett was a dear friend for many, many years. I last spoke with her on the phone about two months ago.

From Jotie Noel

I met Bett Wood in Shakopee, my first Provincial Convocation. I was amused by her presence, those huge dark-rimmed glasses and her incredibly friendly personality. We sat together and chatted often. She was intrigued with my accent, a peculiarity I hid when traveling, and, when back on my Newfoundland Island, a forgotten trait I did not know I had. I recall conversation and great joy as we traveled to an indigenous Mission Parish for a service and a meal. She appreciated the assistance and attention to ease her mobility. She talked about Cheyenne, Wyoming as if it was one the greatest places on earth! And why not, it was after all, her home. She had a sense of time and place, a sense of belonging that is shared with islanders like myself, maybe that is why we enjoyed each other's company!

We met again in Kentucky, my second Provincial Convocation, renewing old friendships and catching up on family and Franciscan news. I recall she had a companion traveling with her to assist her needs. She stood out in the crowd with her smile. I told her those dark-rimmed glasses gave her a classy rebellious appearance. If you knew Bett, you knew she took that as a compliment. She communicated that Kentucky would be her last Provincial Convocation, and we would not likely see each other again. We exchanged emotional good-byes, and then she offered me a gift. Apparently, she had "an arrangement" with a Palestinian women's co-op selling their stoles. She gifted me with a white Jerusalem Cross stole. I call

(Cont.) Page 10

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP: Bett Wood (cont.) it my "Franciscan Jerusalem Stole" because there is a great deal of brown on it, a color one does not see on clergy stoles here in Newfoundland. Knowing it came from a Palestinian women's co-op makes it all the more unique. Naturally, as priests adorn their vestments with a stole, they are reminded of their office representing the faith community to God and vice versa, pronouncing absolution, and presiding at the altar.

Every time I choose to wear my Franciscan Jerusalem Stole, I am reminded of my office as priest and of sister Bett Wood who generously offered this gift as a token of our friendship and love in Christ and Francis. Rest eternal grant unto her, O Lord; and Let light perpetual shine upon her! Amen.

Some articles from Bett over the years

"Surprised By The Results" (*Franciscan Connection*, Autumn 2018, p. 5.)

How is God using me in ministry in my old age? I have been giving a lot of thought to this, and have been surprised by the results. It seems that what God most wants from me is talk! One on one, in groups, sometimes public speaking, casual compliments to strangers in passing, but always positive, kind, supportive, upbeat, joyful, witty, hopefully wise words.

God Provides The Words

"But God, that is too easy! Shouldn't I do something more challenging? Even heroic?" I felt like the leper who was told to go wash seven times in the Jordan. I thought, "too easy." Well, I should at least try. A soft answer turns away wrath. Often, if I can get people to laugh, their problems are half-solved. An unexpected compliment brightens someone's day. A sincere apology, when called for, benefits both me and the recipient. I feel this is a mild form of loving my neighbor. And often, when I am uncertain, if I just open my mouth, God provides the words. He also lets me know when I should keep quiet (that is harder)!

Blessed In So Many Ways

Looking back over my eighty-eight years, I know I have been greatly blessed in so many ways! God's love is so powerful, and the more I share it, the more it grows. I give Him thanks in all things, even my current physical limitations have been a blessing. I have felt real spiritual growth during the time I was most limited. So, I thank you for posing the question. It has been helpful to me as I put my focus on God's many gifts. It was good to be at the recent Convocation in Kentucky. I hope to be able to get to the next one!

"Provincial Convocation Was Best Ever" (*Franciscan Times*, Fall 2013, p. 15)

...What made this convocation [Shakopee, Minnesota] so special? All of the above, and much more, of course. But after several days' consideration, I truly feel that it was the people who were the most important element.

I believe that, beginning with the 1997 gathering in New Orleans, we have been continually growing in Community. We saw the beginning of that growth then, and it has continued at every convocation since. By now our strength and cohesion as an Order is solid and exciting, and it will continue to grow. I can hardly wait for the next one! Each provincial gathering had its own character, and all were different as they should be. And each one has been able to build on the previous ones to learn from them and add to them.

If I tried to name all the people who contributed so much to the event, it would take several pages. Everyone added a lot just by being there. I love you all.

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP: Bett Wood (*Franciscan Times*, Summer 2008, p. 12-3)

(cont.)

“A Rule of Life 101”

“You have a Rule of Life?” “What is that?” “Can just anyone have one?” How do you start?” “Can you help me write one?” “Will you do a workshop about it for us?”

Well, yes, I suppose I could do that.

So, we get a group of people together—ideally for a Quiet Day project, lasting much of the day, but sometimes only an hour is available, and I do the best I can.

Those sessions are never the same twice, because they are designed to fit “all sorts and conditions of persons”. Everyone brings his or her own questions and needs and ideas to offer, and there is a great deal of interaction.

To begin with, none of the participants so far have wanted to join any Order— just want the discipline involved in the effort. So, the categories are not the same as I am accustomed to. The first step for me is to come up with a number of categories that should be flexible enough to work for anyone. Studying the elements of our own Rule, I found a pattern beginning to emerge.

What I eventually came up with was a re-categorization that made sense, to me, at least.

The first thing to emphasize for the group was that a Rule of Life is NOT the same thing as New Year’s Resolutions. Haven’t we all, at some time or other, made very grandiose resolutions that we cannot possibly keep? “I will save the world. I will end war. I will put an end to pollution. “

And the second week, when all that is done, I will - - - - -”

That’s an example of a Rule that is too broad.

Conversely, it can be too narrow -”I will never wear wrinkled clothes. I will keep my house spotless at all times. I will never ever get annoyed with people. I will lose forty pounds before Easter.”

These examples are totally unrealistic, and will lead only to frustration and a feeling of failure.

The categories I came up with are:

1. Time for God
2. Time for self
3. Time for family
4. Time for community
5. Time for the larger world.

Time for God is obvious and can include Holy Eucharist, Penitence, Meditation, and Personal Prayer. It can also include taking time to be thankful for a rainbow, a flower, a kitten, a friend, whatever.

Time for self was a surprise to some, since they had always seen that as selfish and not useful. But it really is important, and includes many things some routine, some inspiring. Matters of health, hygiene, grooming, eating properly, and getting enough sleep, exercising, working at enjoyable jobs, reading, personal growth, relaxation, travel, spending time with friends—all these things are important, and contribute to our abilities to love, to laugh, to help others—ah! do we begin to see some overlapping here?

Time for family. First, define family. It may be blood or legal kin, church family, those who share the same interests. Do your best to enjoy

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP: Bett Wood (cont.) everyone who falls within that circle, even when they are being difficult. EVERYONE is difficult at times. Even Me.

Time for community. Here too, we need to define our community. "Who is my neighbor?" And this category can include bringing things for the Food Pantry, giving someone a ride, smiling at a stranger, giving blood, voting—the possibilities are endless. And we all feel better when we help someone else. Remember, "inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these..." "

By now everyone sees how much overlap there is in these categories.

And finally, Time for the larger world. Recycle. Donate to charity. give your excess clothing, books, anything you no longer need that someone else could use. Conserve things: water, fuel, energy, food, learn more about the people in the world who are in desperate straits, and reflect on how incredibly rich we are by comparison. Ask "What can I do?"

The Rule should not be too strict nor too easy—it should fit YOUR life and needs, as well as your talents and abilities. Is it doable? Are parts of it challenging? Are parts of it natural? It will want to be altered or updated from time to time. As circumstances change, we learn gradually that parts of it may not work, and some things become too easy and need strengthening.

If the time permits, send people off for maybe a half hour to work on writing their own rule. Then get together again and those who are comfortable with the idea can share what they have learned about themselves, and what differences they might be able to make in their lives.

Then there is ACCOUNTABILITY. It helps to discuss your progress with a friend you trust and respect. Discussion, or reporting on a regular basis is really helpful. And once you find the right person, keep that same person – that's one way to keep ourselves honest!

Above all, remember that the examples I have given are just that, examples. You will find your own expressions. The important is to review it at least once a week. See how it is working for you. Notice the things that help and the things that don't quite fit. Make changes as needed and don't feel guilty about it. Guilt is not one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To all you, my Franciscan brothers and sisters—this is NOT intended to replace our own Rule of Life. It is intended to answer questions from those who are not called to an Order, but who do feel the need of a specific Rule. I pray it may help to fulfill that need



**V. Tupper
Morehead,
M.D.—
Professed 18
Years**

Amy Nicolson

Our dear brother Tupper Morehouse passed (his transitus) at 8:30 pm on November 17, 2023 in the arms of his wife, Sheila as she sang to him.

Tupper attended Montgomery Bell Academy, Davidson College, and the University of Tennessee. He worked for a Private Practice as an OB/GYN. If you want to see Tupper in action for public health, you can watch this video from 2007.

<https://youtu.be/UiLOswpOmV8?si=OOz2eAlllbmc1Jlv>

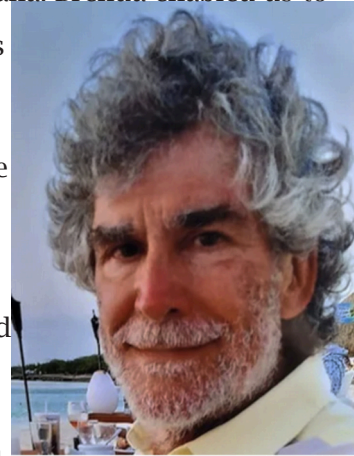
Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Tupper's Reflection on the TSSF Medical Mission To Guyana, 2004

(from the *Franciscan Times*, Summer 2005)

Thank you, brothers and sisters of the Third Order, for enabling myself, my wife, Sheila, and Milan Schmidt, M.D., to visit the villages of Imbaimadai and Jawalla in Region 7 of Guyana. As you know, Imbaimadai is home to Charles and Celian Roland, and Jawalla is home to Winston and Dorina Williams. Brenda Mae Stewart of Kingston, Jamaica, worked tirelessly over the period of a year to make arrangements with TSSF, the Guyanese government, The Church of the Province of the West Indies (The Most Rev. Drexel Wellington Gomez, Primate), and the Diocese of Guyana (The Rt. Rev. Randolph Oswald George, Bishop) so that a short-term medical mission trip might become a reality. Brenda met us at the airport and attended to every detail of the mission. She also arranged for us to meet another tertiary, Eunice Edwards, of Guyana. Brenda enabled us to have a discussion with the Chief Medical Officer of Guyana, and invited Bishop George's wife to have tea with us.

As I reflect upon our time in Guyana, I am moved by the presence of the Holy Spirit in community. I live in Norris, a small town in the Appalachian region of Tennessee, yet I have brothers and sisters in Guyana, Jamaica, and throughout North and South America; these brothers and sisters love me, pray for me, and welcome me into their homes as part of their family. This family of tertiaries extends around our fragile planet Earth, and this family holds me in its arms of steadfast love every day of my life. As I pray daily using the Third Order, Province of the Americas, Society of Saint Francis Directory, I am aware that the spiritual presence of our community is as vital a part of me as my own breathing.



Love in community allows a white, privileged physician raised in affluence in the U.S. to let go of fear and become completely dependent upon his Amerindian brothers and sisters living in the interior of Guyana, the poorest country in South America. Although to visit a faraway place without central air-conditioning and heating, roads, automobiles, television, electricity, plumbing, potable water, or anti-terrorism squads might make some Americans uncomfortable, I felt no fear. Rather, I felt the love of God in community with Franciscan tertiaries in Imbaimadai and Jawalla, and I was continually cognizant of the ongoing prayers of my brother and sister Tertiaries back home in the States. In spite of the obstacles of hurricanes, rearrangements in travel, sleeping in airports, getting medications through airline security agents, it was love in community that fortified me with endurance, faith, humor, and persistence.

That same love in community causes me to reflect upon the reasons why our brothers and sisters in Guyana and throughout most of the world must live without clean water, housing, food, education, and access to healthcare. Simple things, like immunizations, mosquito nets, vitamins, toothbrushes, soap, clean water for washing and drinking, flooring, shoes, antibiotics, antifungals, alcohol, anti-parasitics, contraceptives, condoms, and tuberculin skin tests are not available to these, our brothers and sisters.

Is it just our money that is required of us who live in America, where 80% of the world's resources are controlled by 6% of the world's population?

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Tupper's
Reflection on
the TSSF
Medical
Mission To
Guyana, 2004
(cont.)

I have been enlightened by our brothers and sisters in Guyana, and I have realized that what is required is both our presence and our money. I don't know why it took me fifty years to realize this. Although our visit was short, the places and faces, the smiles and the laughter, the praying and the singing, the simplicity of realizing that each day is a gift—those things will last forever for both those tertiaries in Guyana and for we tertiaries from the States. I understand the sacrifices that American tertiaries had to make to enable Sheila, Milan, and me to visit Roland, Celian, Winston, and Dorina. Some may have fasted, some may have begged, some may have dipped into savings and retirement accounts, some may have passed up buying a needed item, in order to make this outreach possible. We thank all of you. And we particularly thank you for your prayers, which took away our fears and eliminated all of the obstacles. We are a community without boundaries, and indeed our love and joy destroy all barriers between people. The Good News of Jesus of Nazareth and the Good News of Father Francis is "There is another way to live." In a culture where "Leadership" workshops, trainings, and classes abound, let us remember that Jesus and Francis call us to follow rather than to lead. Thank you all and thank you, community, for being countercultural, and providing the fellowship meetings, the retreats, the convocations, and the Principles which have given me the freedom to follow Jesus and Francis, rather than to lead Jesus and Francis. Pace e bene.

**Celian Maria
Roland—
Professed 22
Years**



From her husband, Rev. Canon Charles Roland of Jawalla Village, Upper Mazaruni, Guyana.

Celian Maria Roland, 70 years old, died on February 3. I will miss Celian greatly since she was a strength and support to me during her life. Ten years of illness ended when the Lord took her. She died peacefully. She is in a better place in paradise in the presence of the Lord.

From John Brockmann

Celian was a woman of many talents. In 2003, when Barbara Bennett visited Guyana and Jawalla Village, she noted that Celian was a trained cook, and she was able to translate the sermons of visiting TSSFers into the native language of Akawaio. Celian also spent evenings spinning cotton on a rudimentary spinner operated by her thigh and her nimble fingers. Once spun, the cotton was used to make a hammock.

Celian Roland was also elected captain of Kurupung ("Guyana: Fragile Frontier" by Marcus Colchester, *Race and Class*, [Vol 38, Issue 4] April-June 1997).

From Terry Rogers

I met Charles and Celian Roland several times when they came to Little Portion for Chapters. One year, as I recall, there had been a terrible hurricane in Guyana. Celian had been in some danger but survived. However, her profession cross had been lost. I had the feeling it would be complicated and take quite a long time for her to receive another one through the mail in Guyana, so I took mine off and gave it to her (knowing it would be much easier for mine to be replaced). I was so happy to do this, and I have always felt connected to her because we have shared the same profession cross.



Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Donnalee
Hart—
Professed 14
Years**

From Anker-Lucier Mortuary Obituary

Donnalee (Abheda) Hart, 75, died on the winter solstice of 2023 at her earthly home in Laytonville, California under hospice care. Donnalee was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and came to Honolulu, Hawaii, as a child, where she graduated from Punahou School. She attended Merritt College in Oakland, California, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and the University of Birmingham in England, specializing in Eastern European and Russian studies.

Donnalee was also always attuned to helping people one-on-one. She became an LVN and then attended Bastyr University to become a Naturopathic Doctor (ND).

She was a life-long, enthusiastic learner. Abheda received her Hindu name at Amritapuri ashram in India, where she was studying at the time of and during the pandemic. She was a long-time Deacon of St. Francis in the Redwoods, Willits, California (ordained November 2012) and a Third Order Franciscan. [During the pandemic, Donnalee was quarantined in Kerala, India, for months but actually delivered her sermons from Kerala.] She was active in the Laytonville community prior to the pandemic and a bright light wherever she was.

From the Northern California Women's Herbal Symposium, Fall 2019 Teachers



Donna is an herbalist, homeopath, and NCWHS crone; a recently retired Naturopathic Doctor; former home birth midwife, and a Laytonville community gal. A passion to go deeper still into the roots of life and love has taken her to India for most of the past two years. She's back bearing gifts.

“Dynamic Relationship between Cursillo and TSSF?” by Donnalee (Franciscan Times, Eastertide 2010)

I was deeply involved in Cursillo in the mid-eighties to mid-nineties as a music leader in both English and Spanish, primarily in the Diocese of Southern California, also a little in Diocese of Olympia. Didn't connect (at last!) with TSSF until 2006, so the experiences were not simultaneous. I'm very out of touch with what is happening today in the Cursillo movement, and didn't think I had much to say on this until today's Principle hit me between the eyes with memories of Cursillo. It seems to me that the chief form of service which [Cursillistas] have to offer is to reflect the love of Christ, who in his beauty and power, is the inspiration and joy of their lives.

Offering God's unconditional love to others, pouring it out in a flood that could not be ignored, meeting together in small fellowship groups in which we endeavored to help one another live the gospel in every aspect of our day-to-day life, praising God with all our heart and soul and mind... It was an Acts of the Apostles way of life (including bystanders thinking we were drunk or something).

So much of my Cursillo experience was very Franciscan. Our joy was incredible, our commitment to Christ intense, our prayer constant, our fellowship challenging and encouraging. It offered so many of us the support we yearned for to help us live our faith deeply and vibrantly, a way also to bring renewal into our local congregations, which many of us were experiencing as lukewarm at best. As is so often the case, what was “wrong” with Cursillo was intimately entwined with what was “right.”

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Donnalee
Hart—
Professed 14
Years (cont.)**

Not surprisingly, some people found us obnoxious, uncouth and extreme. To some extent this was an excellent sign that we were close in the footsteps of our Lord (and Francis). It is equally true that we were deeply in need of more humility and courtesy. Sometime the vitriolic response we received in our local congregations was really shocking and painful for everyone. Too often we all (Cursillistas and non-Cursillistas alike) engaged in blaming and criticizing each other, rather than seeking to understand what God was showing us about ourselves.

Frankly, my experience (so far!) in TSSF fellowship, precious as it is to me, falls short of the “standard” of radical, committed Christian fellowship in community that I experienced in the 4th Day groups of Cursillo. And, odd as it sounds, many Franciscans seem more than a bit fussy in comparison.

At the same time, much of what engages me now in my faith journey was not present at all in Cursillo at the time, for example strong concern for social justice and care for creation (are there “Green Cursillos” today I wonder?) And I would be very put off by the narrowly fundamentalist approach to scripture that we embraced then.

The more I think about all this, the more I see the possibilities for a dynamic relationship between Cursillo and our life in TSSF. I look forward to hearing more on the subject! I also hope we can begin to heal rifts that are doubtless present in our fellowship over Cursillo.



By Amanda Sisk TSSF, Granddaughter

**Jeri Willen—
Professed 23
Years**



When I received my Franciscan calling, I did not think of my grandmother, Jeri. It did not occur to me that I was approaching an Order to which she belonged. And yet, there were the little concrete statues of Francis at our childhood home with her, the many rescued creatures, the frequent discussions of the ongoing life, and a dim awareness of her returning home at odd hours from tending the dying in hospice. It did not occur to me then or later that we would so tend to her.

In the weeks before her death, I witnessed an example of being made into the image of Christ. At times it was subtle. At others, it was overt: even when in pain, Jeri was found bringing comfort and joy to those around her. She shared a belly laugh with me hours before lucidity would fade, and I am reminded that she once told me that she was with me the first time I laughed so heartily when I was one of two infants perched on her dressing room countertop. It was also in those hours that she said ‘yes’ when I asked whether she would like to pose for one more portrait: we drew each other throughout the years.

Jeri Kathryn Willen died at her home in Conroe, Texas on August 8, 2023 at the age of 88. I would later look closely at the final painting on her easel, and, in her sketchbooks. I found bold portraits of people she had known well before my twin and I were born. My twin and Jeri are/were writers, and the creative soul bond that they continue to share is equally strong. Jeri’s husband, sister, four daughters and spouses, eight grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and a number of friends are still living the bodily life.

Jeri had an interest in God from an early age onwards. She was born and raised as an Episcopalian in the Midwest and would
(Cont.) Page 17

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Jeri Willen— Professed 23 Years (cont.)



begin her Franciscan walk some years after being widowed with four daughters to raise and after remarrying. She earned a master's degree in psychology from Purdue University and her master's in divinity from the Houston Graduate School of Theology. She worked for social service agencies, taught about death and dying (published an article in the *American Journal of Hospice Care*), led EFM, and facilitated a long-running Bible study at her church, Saint Dunstan's Episcopal Church. Knitting was something that she did from an early age onwards and could do while reading a book and falling asleep! She knitted baby blankets in particular and other things (among them, I still wear a Möbius strip neck warmer from a book of patterns that my geophysicist/musician grandfather gave to Jeri). In her final years of life, when I served as one of her caregivers, my grandmother patiently taught me to knit my very first (and maybe only) blanket.

What I did not know until her memorial service was that Jeri had a calling for the priesthood. When women were just being permitted this path in the Episcopal Church, a Bishop had blocked her vocation. She made a comment to me during hospice that I found puzzling until her priest used the eulogy to explain how my grandmother still served as a priest to all she met despite this experience. Jeri loved interacting with people, especially babies. Dogs, bright colors (especially red), hummingbirds, water in landscapes, veggies (especially black olives), and chocolate were joys too. Her openness with us about Sister Death from about our age of four through her hospice care helped to anchor my twin and myself in the sacred joy of being a part of our grandmother's journey Home.

One specific example of Jeri's love that has stayed with me all these years is as follows. We would rescue crayfish from the swimming pool in the backyard and somehow place them into our wee plastic buckets, from whence they would dramatically reach up with their pinchers. During one such adventure, we went right into the house to show *Gma* our catch, bare-footed in bathing suits with a trail of water behind us, and found her in the midst of a visit with perhaps the ladies she played Bridge with or from church. She stood up as her usual self, came over to lean down and admire the creature(s), and then lovingly sent us back outdoors without instilling in us any shaming sense that we may have done something wrong. I wonder what the ladies thought as they saw these wild creatures appear — all of us — in their gathering! A steadfast "suffer the little children" was just one part of Christ's in-dwelling love in Jeri.

As I continue in my Franciscan calling, I will think of my grandmother: how she lived, how she died, and how she is telling us to this day not to weep, but rejoice.

You can see her funeral and funeral sermon at <https://vimeo.com/event/3636596>

In the eulogy, her rector refers to Prayer #63 in the BCP that she especially loved, and he saw that it summarized much of what she believed:

63. In the Evening

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. *Amen.*

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Eight Meditations by Jeri Willen

*Yours are the
heavens; the
earth is yours;
you laid the
foundations of
the world and
all that is in it.*

*My heart is
smitten like
grass, and
withered; I
forget to eat
my bread.*

*... let man
consider the
steadfast love
of the Lord.*

*... For
steadfast love
is great ...*

*By the waters
of Babylon,
there we sat
down and wept*

Sent in by her granddaughter, Amanda Sisk, TSSF

Psalm 89:11

When we lived in Georgia, the neighbor across the street had a beautiful weeping willow tree. Often, I looked from my front window to see that tree. I envied my neighbor and longed to have such a tree of my own. At last, I saw that I derived as much pleasure in being able to see and enjoy the grace and beauty of that tree as did the neighbor on whose front lawn the tree lived. Now, having grown older in years and in wisdom, I understand that neither I nor my neighbor owned that tree; it was God's tree.

If all nations and all rulers and all people could truly know and believe that the world and all that is in it belong to God and to God alone, there would be far less cause for war and enmity of any kind.

Psalm 102:4

As we take in another Lenten season in Houston, when the azaleas bloom, the grass starts to grow and the trees begin to leaf out, it can be hard to picture grass as smitten and withered. But each of us has a Lenten season: a wintertime when our hearts or bodies are smitten by forces beyond our control; a time when the beauty around us withers and our attention turns inward upon ourselves to a spirit bruised by disease or despair. Distracted by sickness, we can quite literally forget to eat our bread — to bring Jesus to dwell in us by consuming the bread of his body, one of the promises of Easter.

The psalmist recognized the power of the Lord to bring him out of his Lent just as he recognized the Lord's love that would hold dear the stones and dust of his body. The psalmist was confident that the Lord would care for him in his time of need just as He cares for Zion and for generations of His people yet unborn, all the while enduring and unchanging. God surrounds us with beauty to draw our hearts outward and upward toward Him while He offers us the ultimate healing found in communion. We can take the Lenten opportunity to recognize and reflect upon our sickness and imperfections, but the price of our salvation was paid long ago and the promise of Easter is fulfilled every day.

Psalm 107:43b & Psalm 108:4a

At the wedding Saturday we heard again the timeless words of Paul about love, what it is and what it is not, and on Sunday we saw "Porgy and Bess," which ends with Porgy setting out to find Bess, who has gone a thousand miles away with Sportin'Life. He says, "I ain't care what she say, I ain't care what she do." The unconditional, steadfast, constant quality of the love of God is echoed by human love, however imperfectly.

The steadfast, uncompromising, unyielding love of God for us, his frail creatures, is an overwhelming truth. Days go by when I give only perfunctory attention to my Maker. There are times when I am unlovable, even to myself. Not everybody likes me. Yet God goes right on loving me, no matter what. This firm resolve on the part of God is something I can grasp only with humility and thanksgiving.

Oh, Lord, my heart is grateful for your unwavering love. Please teach me to love and to be loved. Amen

Psalm 137:1-6 (7-9)

Years ago, one of the popular singers of the day based a song upon this single line. Late in his concerts, when the audience was growing

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Eight Meditations by Jeri Willen (cont)

tired and restless, he would divide them into thirds and teach them to sing this line as a round. I can still hear the steady, focused voices of adults: harmonizing if they could, singing even if they could not, and always concentrating on coming in with their part in spite of the whirlpool going on around them. As he taught the song to his audience, the singer even cautioned them to listen carefully, or it would end up sounding like “you are in a washing machine.”

We associate with water in many different ways. We can row on its surface or pour it out in our tears. Our bodies are filled with it. In small amounts, it takes the shine off of our shoes, refreshes us, cleans us, or seals us as Christ's own. In larger amounts, it sweeps aside our possessions or tears great chasms through solid rock. Whether as a trickle or a flood, in a still, small voice or in thunderous peals, water comes to us relentlessly, just as the words of the round come back over and over, in a never-ending cycle. While we cannot withstand its force, at the same time we cannot live without it. It is the first item of hospitality offered to us in restaurants. We literally thirst for it.

When we grow tired and restless, God is still there trying to teach us His words and music. We can contribute to the riotous cacophony of the washing machine or we can seek to learn our part and to come in on our cues. We can try to assert our own melodies above the din or we can contribute our own voices to the richness of the song. If it is among our gifts, we can even harmonize. If we try to deny our need, our souls will betray their thirst and force us to search for it. If we try to dam the flow, it will only become a flood, wearing through the stone in our hearts.

Dear Lord, teach us your song that it may refresh us, bring forth our gifts, and fill us so much that there is no room for the noise and temptations of the world. Amen.

Philippians 2:5-11

*... He humbled
himself and
became
obedient ...*

It is hard to be humble when you live in Houston (or even Humble!), just as it must have been hard for the residents of Philippi. Like the Philippians, we live in a large, vibrant city with many opportunities and many resources. We have active, growing churches, prestigious universities, and strong and creative businesses. We repair the inside of human hearts and we send men and women into outer space. We rebound from hurricanes, and we pull through tough economic times. Even the trees and flowers seem to echo our vitality by refusing to succumb to winter. It is easier for us to understand what it means to do justly and to love mercy than to see how we are to walk humbly with God.

To be humble does not mean to humiliate and debase ourselves before God but rather to subordinate ourselves to God and to abase ourselves before him. Not to grovel, but to defer. To see ourselves not as loathsome, but in proper relation to God. Not to deny that God has gifted us, but to recognize those gifts and put them to their proper use. God does not call on us to bury our “talents” in the ground but to invest them to His glory.

The world has many ways of luring us away from God. Sometimes it appeals to our weaknesses and failings. At other times, it entices us with our blessings, deceiving us into believing that they are our own doing rather than the gifts of God. Humility means not thinking of ourselves too highly. During the church service, we remind ourselves to be humble and to recognize the source of our bounty with the phrase “All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.” This frequent

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Eight Meditations by Jeri Willen (cont)

repetition is good for us because, like the Philippians, we sometimes forget that our need is to have God increase in our lives while we decrease.

Dear Lord, help us to walk at your side in the path you have set before us without straying into the many detours paved by the world. Let us not shirk from the obstacles ahead but proceed with confidence, knowing that you will fortify us according to our needs. Amen.

Waiting December 24

The children were little. They slept, but waiting on Christmas Eve they were too excited to sleep deeply. The milkman came very early. He greeted me with a rich, deep "Merry Christmas!" The four youngsters had to be convinced that no, Santa had not yet come, and no, it was not time to get up to see what he had left for them. They must continue to wait.

There are a zillion times of waiting in life. The only thing I have found good about waiting is that I am learning patience for all that waiting.

To be patient is to wait with comfort, to wait with ease, to wait with the belief that what I'm waiting for will come. The red light will change to green, the baby will arrive, the line will move, Christmas will come tomorrow.

It is not easy to be patient. To be patient takes practice. To be patient takes help. The greatest help comes from God.

Let us pray to God now, and ask Him to help us to wait:

Dear God, we must wait for so many things. It is hard to wait without getting upset. Please help us to be patient. Please help us to be patient while we wait, no matter what it is that we want to have happen. Help us to remember that the One in control of all things is you, God. That is hard to remember, so please continue to help us to remember. Help us to remember, too, that you are with us in all things as we wait. Give us patience, and give us peace. Amen.

Thursday

We were getting ready to head for the airport. The last thing for me to do was to put on my earrings. I'd carried them in my hand from the bedroom, through the family room and the breakfast room and into the kitchen—but now I couldn't find those earrings. We looked everywhere for them but the time was growing short. I said, "Oh well, I'll put on another pair. God knows where the missing pair of earrings is. They'll turn up later." It was time to carry the trash out of the house, so it was being gathered up. There were the missing earrings on top of the trash in the kitchen waste basket! Thank you, God!

What an example of turning it over to God and letting him handle it. Lost earrings are not a major thing, of course, but we can turn other things over to him, and he will handle them for us. Not everything happens so quickly, nor is everything that God is doing so easy to see. Some things, in fact, seem like disasters. We must look closely to see what God intends by such things. We must also give thanks to God for what he does and is doing for us.

Let us pray

Holy God, we give you thanks for this day and for all your good work in it. Thank you for even the little things. Help us to let you be in charge. Help us to see the good in each day. Help us to know that you are here with us each day. Amen.

(Cont.)

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Eight
Meditations
by Jeri Willen
(cont)**

Sunday

There is so much anxiety today, so little peace. It may be, though, that most of us carry anxiety that we don't have to have. There is peace available. We just need to let go of the anxiety and take hold of the peace. That is much easier to say than to do. Once I attended a retreat where the leader instructed us to pack our worries in a pretend suitcase and toss the whole thing into the fire. There really was a fire in the fireplace of the lodge we were staying in. We could take all the time we needed to pack our suitcases and then take them to the fireplace. Actually, we wrote down all our cares, anxieties, worries, and frustrations on pieces of paper. The packing was the only pretend thing about it. Then, one by one, little by little, we burned all our tensions. I did this exercise another time with a real little fire in a metal pan on top of a table in a classroom. Great. What a relief. I'm all free and at peace now. But not true for everybody. Suitcases were repacked, anxieties were restored. Some people simply could not be at peace.

That's a sad way to be. How much better to give our anxieties to God, to trust God to help us through the problems, to know that God is in control. We are not. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Amen.



Joanna died February 9.

From Her "Welcoming the Newly Professed", Lent 2023

My Profession service on February 18, 2023 was a deeply touching and unforgettable experience. I was introduced to TSSF by a former spiritual director, and I soon found myself in Formation, which I enjoyed thoroughly.

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

A life-long Episcopalian, I am currently a member of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Williamsburg, Virginia. I serve on the Pastoral Care Commission, the Altar Guild, as a lay Eucharistic minister, a lector, an acolyte, and newly elected to the vestry. I am also in Year Three of Education for Ministry (EfM).



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

[Editor's Note: Joanna wrote an article that you can read on our TSSF website, "Reflections on the Principles of The Third Order of the Society of St. Francis and the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous." (You can view it here: <https://tssf.org/resources/articles-videos/>)]

**From Cathy
Carlson Reynolds**

Fly with the angels, Joanna!

I met Joanna in 2019 in an EfM class and later when she asked me to be her spiritual director. Knowing I was a professed Franciscan, she eagerly wanted to learn more. Soon she was in formation, starting in the midst of the Covid pandemic. Joanna loved every minute of her formation and

(Cont.) Page 22

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Joanna Dunevant—
Professed
Nine Days
Short of One
Year
(cont.)**

participated in every aspect. One day as part of her NEXuS Prayer cycle she embraced Native American prayer and scripture. She asked me on a “field trip” to visit a Native American interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg. This was Joanna! Curious, sensitive, and dedicated to any pursuit she did.

Joanna took over the convener role of our fellowship, Lady Jacoba, while she was still in formation. No longer her spiritual director (because of our fellowship relationship), I was delighted to become her fellowship sister. Soon after she was professed in February 2023, Joanna added Novice 1 counselor to her TSSF ministry. She did both the convener and counselor role with great joy and grace.

When I started writing acrylic icons, she soon joined me in online classes. We shared space in our small chapel area at St. Martin’s to place our icons. I soon started egg tempera icon writing and Joanna continued acrylic writing. We often coordinated which icons we would place, depending on the liturgical season. It is my hope that her icons will continue to grace our chapel area!

She was a VERY active and dedicated member of her parish, St. Martin’s Williamsburg, serving as lector, acolyte, Eucharistic minister, Eucharistic visitor, altar guild member, and vestry member. You could find her at weekly meetings, Benedictine worship, pastoral care, Wednesday noon Eucharist, and others. She loved the Church with all her heart and soul!

Although suffering from various chronic medical conditions, Joanna persevered with grace and determination. She remained active in Church ministry, AA work as sponsor and delegate, and TSSF ministry. May her courage and perseverance and dedication be an example to us all!

From Alice Bangs

The longest time I spent with Joanna was when we traveled together to St. Francis Springs Prayer Center in Stoneville, North Carolina, for our individual private retreats last October. Marty Mason met us there. We covered a lot of ground in spiritual matters as well as miles. It was a special opportunity to get to know her better. Our Fellowship decided to observe Joanna’s Profession date annually as a special day of remembrance.

**From The Rev.
Lisa Green,
Joanna’s Rector**

“A gentle spirit with a lot of grit” is how one of her fellow members in our Benedictine prayer group described Joanna Dunevant, who died February 9, 2024, at the age of 67, just nine days short of the one-year anniversary of her admission to profession in the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis. Previously a beloved member of Johns Memorial Episcopal Church in Farmville, Virginia, Joanna was just elected to the Vestry of St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Williamsburg, Virginia. Here’s the biography she used as a nominee: “I was baptized by my great-grandfather Simon at Jesus Evangelical Church in St. Louis, Missouri. We moved to Northern Virginia



Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Joanna Dunevant—
Professed
Nine Days
Short of One
Year (cont.)**

when I was 4, and my parents joined the Episcopal Church. I was confirmed in Sixth Grade and took my first communion. I still have my 1929 Book of Common Prayer and my 1940 Hymnal. I moved to Williamsburg five years ago and joined St. Martin's. I have served on the Altar Guild and as a reader. I am a licensed Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor, serving in both capacities, and am a member of the Pastoral Care committee. I attend the Benedictine group, leading Morning Prayer and study of the Rule of Benedict in conjunction with other members. I attend the Wednesday Eucharist and Taizé service regularly. I write icons, some of which are displayed in the chapel, and led a hands-on intergenerational class in iconography."

Joanna was as involved in a wide variety of ministries as anyone I have encountered in my fifteen years of parish ministry. In addition to those listed above, she was an EfM graduate, a member of our Contemplative Prayer group, a caring daughter to her mother and late father, an outreach volunteer, pastoral presence and friend to many, and a devoted doggie mom to Beau and Ladybug. Her radiant and life-giving spirit made us all feel at home, and we will miss her acutely.

Book Reviews



***A Gathering
of Larks:
Letters to
Saint Francis
From a
Modern-Day
Pilgrim* by
Abigail
Carroll**

Reviewed by Pamela Mooman

(2017 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ISBN: 978-0-8028-7445-0)

Letters are an art form. They are gifts from sender to recipient. They represent time spent in crafting them, honesty in sharing from the heart, and, perhaps, ultimately a valuing of natural rhythms, of life lived not by deadlines and headlines but by feeling each breath and cherishing the unhurried arrival of each moment.

A Gathering of Larks is a collection of letters, in the form of poems addressed to Saint Francis. Abigail Carroll started composing a letter to Saint Francis during a summer when she had broken her foot. The letter began in her head, and then she experimented with forms as she wrote it down once, then again, and then again.

Abigail Carroll said: "In some ways, [letters] are a lot like poems because their value lies as much in the spaces they create as in the content they put forward. Letters don't tell a story, but together they can scaffold a story, which is what I have attempted to do here..."

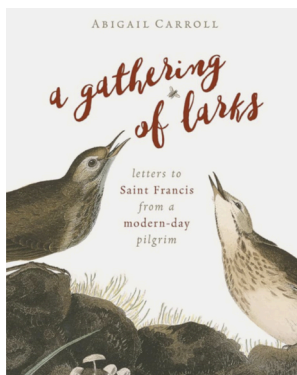
Letters to St. Francis About Living

Each poem letter is addressed to some aspect of Francis — "Dear Friar Minor", "Dear Francis, Patron Saint of Gardens and Lawns", and "Dear Barefoot Friend". The poem letters are presented in a roughly chronological order, starting with St. Francis' days as king of the revels.

Many begin by focusing on seemingly mundane aspects of daily living but gradually turn into thoughts more ethereal in nature, showing that every moment of life is sublime if we are open to finding God everywhere. The themes of Carroll's poem letters — reflection, praise, fear, love, discouragement — rise as testaments to life as a human.

Included Resources

The book includes an epilogue and a question-and-answer session with Carroll that offers insight into her process and purpose with this volume. The book also includes questions for reflection and suggested exercises for deepening connection to God.



Book Reviews

A Gathering of Larks (cont.)

Pilgrim as Tour Guide

Carroll frequently refers to herself as a modern-day pilgrim; however, some poem letters are shot through with humor, and even irony. She writes one of the poem letters to St. Francis about what he can expect should he visit modern Assisi.

“Be warned: as you near the basilica, souvenir stands will increase. Prepare to feel somewhat mocked by bobbleheads, dog tags, shaving mugs, mouse pads... don’t forget to bring some euros along. Everything costs a fee except, of course, the view.”

She also writes to St. Francis about Vincent Van Gogh being another wild priest, of sorts, who loved God’s world.

Carroll’s poem letters pay tribute repeatedly to St. Francis’ loving relationship with Nature and animals, contrasting the sublimity of Francis’ unique calling with tasks of cleaning, scrubbing, repairing. She also writes about how Francis did not shun the work of daily life.

“You owned the wind and the sun. Your prize possessions were a song and a dream.” In another poem letter she writes: “You must have cut your fingers hauling stones through Assisi’s cobbled streets... I imagine you crushed a few toes, but — as penance... positively refused to let anyone know.”

Animals as Reflections of God’s Love

A delightful detail Carroll brings out in the prologue shows that the stories about St. Francis may not be wild-eyed, imagined legends after all, as some would have it. She mentions that the skeleton of a wolf was found in 1872 underneath the chapel of the church of *San Francesco del Pace* in Gubbio.

The poem letters finish with one addressed to “Dear Francis (on the occasion of your death)”:

“As you closed your darkened eyes, I like to think you heard the insects’ evening songs, a minuet of rustling leaves, the lispings wings of gathering larks.”

Whether readers are longtime Franciscans or lovers of St. Francis, or are beginning their journeys, this book is a refreshing glimpse into bridging the gap between Heaven and Earth, St. Francis-style.



The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence, by John Dear

Orbis Books,
2024

Reviewed by Jim Crosby

When I told Fr. John Dear I was reading straight through his new book, he was surprised. He said he sees it best employed as a devotional book, to be read prayerfully, one three-to-five-page section a day, or as a reference for preaching. It is a commentary, after all.

His friend and publisher, Robert Ellsberg of Orbis Books, has called this John’s life’s work. As Gandhi and King, developed and practiced active nonviolence, John Dear based his life on the understanding that they gave us the best lens for seeing what Jesus was doing in first-century Israel. Thus, going passage by passage through the synoptic gospels, he gives us a consistent, compelling case for the nonviolence of Jesus and his divine Abba.

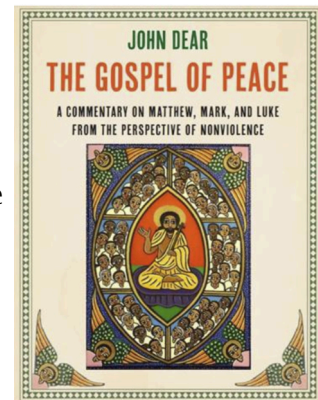
Book Reviews

From the Introduction: “For decades, I’ve taught that active nonviolence begins with the truth that all life is sacred, that we are all equal sisters and brothers, all children of the God of Peace, already reconciled, all one, all already united, and so we should never hurt or kill another human being, much less remain silent while wars wage, people die in poverty, and nuclear weapons and environmental destruction threaten us all.” (p. xx)

As the commentary progresses through Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount is centered as the heart of Jesus’s teaching on nonviolence. Then, in analyzing Mark, Fr. John depicts Jesus as an activist who is unfailingly confronting the Roman Empire in his actions and teachings, pointing out all forms of violence and opposing the culture of domination and death. Looking finally at Luke, Dear highlights Jesus’ opposition to the poverty that arises from injustice and points out that Jesus exemplifies a nonviolent organizer who is focused on building a grassroots movement for justice and freedom.

The author labels the command to love our enemies in Matthew 5:44 “the most radical, political, revolutionary words ever uttered.”

The author labels the command to love our enemies in Matthew 5:44 “the most radical, political, revolutionary words ever uttered.” (p. 35) Getting specific, he writes, “Here Jesus commands us to love the people targeted with death by our nation/state. This is the first point to note: he uses nation/state language. He is not referring to a disagreeable neighbor or a difficult boss or a mean relative. The enemy here refers to that nation which is under attack by your nation. For North Americans, that would mean, over the past five decades, the people of Vietnam, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Grenada, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Jesus would want North Americans not only to stop the wars against these people but to actively love these people.” (*Ibid.*) Fr. John goes on to state emphatically that there is no basis for Just War Theory in the teachings of Jesus.



As he nears the end of Matthew’s gospel, Dear draws a direct link between the Sermon on the Mount and the “sheep and goats” passage in chapter 25, with its attention-grabbing line “whatever you did for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me.” (25:40)

If Jesus gave us a renewed and radical understanding of love in chapters 5-7, here He links earthly life and eternity in unforgettable terms. Dear observes “Notice that these corporal works of mercy are the sole criteria for entrance in God’s reign of love and peace. It does not matter whom you voted for, what color your skin is, what your sexual orientation is, how successful you are, how much money you own, or how pious you look. Everything regarding your entrance into eternal life depends on this: Did you feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, house the homeless, welcome the immigrant, comfort the sick, or visit the imprisoned? Period.” (p. 126)

As he transitions to Mark, Fr. John says that Jesus is targeted for death immediately, and the gospel depicts “a life-and-death struggle of ongoing resistance to the ruling class, the empire, and death itself.” (p. 149) Paying tribute to Ched Myers’s groundbreaking commentary, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus*, Dear urges a Gandhian experimentation with nonviolence and speaks of being in community with mentor Daniel Berrigan, studying and applying sections of *Binding the Strong Man* even as it was still being written.

Book Reviews

The Gospel of Peace (cont)

Fr. Daniel Berrigan told him that if he wanted to follow Jesus, he'd better "look good on wood"

Here's an example of the way John Dear uses nonviolence as it was developed in the 20th century as a lens on the life of Jesus: "Recently, Dr. King's chief Lieutenant, Andrew Young, made an insightful comment about the civil rights movement. He said that he and Martin were not running 'a piety program.' They were not leading a contemplative movement of prayer, meditation, or monasticism. They were trying to change the country, so they were leading a grassroots campaign of nonviolent direct action, civil disobedience, resistance, and cultural transformation to bring about justice, disarmament, and full human rights for every human being. This is an important way to understand Dr. King and the civil rights movement, as well as Mark's description of Jesus and his movement. It is not a piety program; it is a grassroots campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience aimed at bringing down the entire unjust dominant order and empire and heralding an entirely new kind of culture based on justice, compassion, inclusivity, and dignity for everyone." (pp. 157-8)

Early in John Dear's adult life, Fr. Daniel Berrigan told him that if he wanted to follow Jesus, he'd better "look good on wood" — meaning that all sincere discipleship is self-giving and sacrificial. Naturally a key segment in his discussion on Mark comes when Fr. John reaches chapter 8 and looks at the sentence, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (8:34) As our author fleshes it out, he writes, "If you want to be a Christian, you have to deny yourself and follow the nonviolent Jesus on the path of peace and into universal redemptive suffering love, as you resist the structures of harm and oppression. Renounce your violence and comforts and join his campaign of nonviolent resistance to empire and steadfast allegiance to God's reign of peace." (p. 179)

And a few pages later: "He was not trying to reform the dominant social order, the temple, or the empire. He was mobilizing us to disarm our hearts and our world. He was rousing us, empowering us, and ordering us to create a new nonviolent culture of total equality, inclusivity, and justice. He's still doing that today." (p. 194)

From Luke chapter 1, Fr. Dear deduces that his mother Mary was the first and foremost teacher of nonviolent peacemaking in the life of Jesus. He had written of this before in his short book, *Mary of Nazareth: Prophet of Peace* (2003). Summarizing that argument as he begins commenting on Luke, Fr. John says, "Luke's account of Mary's journey from the Annunciation to the Visitation to the Magnificat foreshadows the Gospel journey of contemplative to active to prophetic nonviolence." (p. 223)

Two other key passages are in Luke 4, when Jesus reads Isaiah 61:1-2 and indicates this radical Jubilee prophecy is how he understands his Messianic role (p. 246), and chapters 9 and 10 when Jesus sends out first the twelve closest disciples and then the seventy-two. For Franciscans, this latter passage is familiar as one that Francis took so seriously in shaping the work of the Friars Minor. Both the disciples of Jesus and the early Franciscans were to go by twos, take nothing for the journey, and proclaim peace wherever they went. Jesus's resolute turn toward Jerusalem comes in 9:51, between the successful mission of the twelve and the sending out of the seventy-two. Fr. John likens this campaign on the way to Jerusalem to both Gandhi's Salt March in 1930 and the civil rights march in Alabama in 1965 from Selma to Montgomery.

"Like Gandhi and Dr. King, Jesus sent organizers ahead of him preparing people for his arrival, energizing the population, and calling people to welcome God's reign of peace. All of this was dangerous and illegal in that occupied landscape. Though his actions would lead to his arrest and

Book Reviews

The Gospel of Peace (cont)

execution, as we know now, the movement continued for three centuries as the early Christians refused to fight for the Roman Empire or to idolize Caesar even at the cost of their own lives, and in doing so, helped hasten the fall of empire.” (p. 287) As we come to the end of our study of the three gospels “from the perspective of nonviolence,” Fr. Dear concludes we are not overwhelmed or paralyzed by their radical message. Instead, “Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our hearts are burning within us. We are witnesses of the nonviolent Jesus, the power of transforming nonviolence, and the disarming action of God in history through people following Jesus’ way. We willingly give our lives to God’s ongoing movement of disarmament, justice, and nonviolent transformation for the coming of peace on earth.” (p. 397)

As I said at the outset, I surprised John Dear by saying I was reading straight through the book. Now I plan to start back through with that devotional, prayerful approach, first through Lent, then through most or all of this year. I know my relationship with our Lord will be deepened in the process.

Allow me to close with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s words from the back cover: “Prepare to be inspired, as John Dear guides you on a journey into the nonviolent revolution grounded in Jesus and his Way of Love. Along the way, you will encounter anew the steadfast fearlessness of figures like Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, and Oscar Romero...and find yourself ready to join them in this holy work.”

(Note: John Dear will be on tour with *The Gospel of Peace* through September 2024. Copies are available from Orbis Books at a 40% discount — for \$20 — in connection with the tour. Search beatitudescenter.org for the places and dates of the tour, or go to his website to see his other books: <https://johndear.org/>)



The Book of Joy, His Holiness Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams

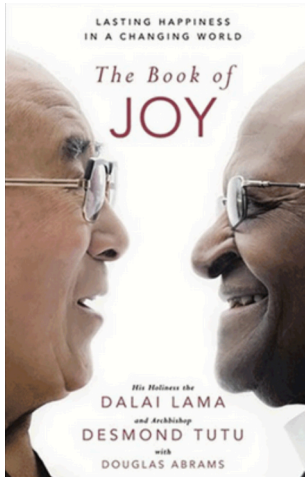
Reviewed by Dennis McLeavey

Penguin Random House New York, New York. ISBN 9780399185045

This book reflects a meeting of His Holiness Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in India at the Dalai Lama’s home in exile. At the meeting, Douglas Abrams created the book by asking questions of the two holy men. A secular Franciscan might wonder how such a book would have turned out if Br. Leo had interviewed St. Francis of Assisi. The ambitious goal of the Lama/Tutu/Abrams (LTA) book was to delineate the eight pillars that they think hold up the structure of joy: perspective, humility, humor, acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, and generosity. One might note some similarity with the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Then also the Buddhist eightfold path resonates with the spirit: right view or right understanding (perspective or Holy Spirit), right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Black Elk’s eight wisdom statements are even closer to the fruit of the Holy Spirit: peace comes from realizing that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit that is everywhere and is within each of us, all things are our relatives and all is really one, the universe is circles within circles and all are connected in community, let every step you take be as a prayer, all must live together as one being, all things are the work of the Great Spirit who is within all things, behold the day is yours to make, and the hearts of little children are pure so the Great Spirit may show them many things that older people miss.

Book Reviews

The Book of Joy (cont.)



Moving from Black Elk back into our own tradition, Divine joy (perfect joy in Francis' case?) is a part of the believer's spiritual nature and is a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence within. These characteristics are positive fruits and guides away from negatives rather than salvation from them.

In terms of a perfect-joy question translated into a modern idiom, Br. Leo might be asking Francis how perspective motivates him. Perspective begins as one of LTA's eight, intertwined pillars of joy. Perspective can mean that there are many ways to look at the same thing as we try to get a more objective and accurate view of reality just as Psalm 42's deer looks for running water. The Franciscan perspective, rather than focusing on sin, emphasizes the love of God, enfleshed in Christ, as the center of reality. Francis saw God in creation, and he saw Christ in people, animals, and nature. What a perspective!

Although Francis of course never had the perspective of the James Webb Space Telescope to inspire humility, his post-conversion perspective had him focused on being like Christ. The New Testament was enough to lead him to humility, the second pillar. Matthew 11:29 reads as follows: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Just as fruits, path, or advice flow from it, perspective is the pillar that supports all.

For Francis as for LTA, perspective is the source of joy. John Duns Scotus, a Franciscan theologian of the 13th century, is known for his unique theology that was influenced by the teachings of St. Francis ([John Duns Scotus: His View of Christ | Franciscan Media](#)). Scotus' theology, often referred to as the Franciscan/Scotistic view, posits that the Divine Word became flesh not because of Adam and Eve's sin, but because God wanted Jesus Christ to be creation's most perfect work. This view aligns with the Franciscan emphasis on the inherent goodness of creation and the overflowing love of the Trinity. Duns Scotus' viewpoint has been adopted by notable thinkers such as Gerard Manley Hopkins (<https://www.franciscanpublishing.com/john-duns-scotus-through-the-lens-of-gerard-manley-hopkins/>), Thomas Merton ([The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Inspiration of His Life, Thought, and Writing \(pastoral.center\)](#)), and Teilhard de Chardin ([Evolution and the Primacy of Christ: From Scotus to Teilhard - Learn@CTU](#)).

The Book of Joy then may be read as a meeting of His Holiness Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu that reflected the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Had Br. Leo interviewed St. Francis, he would undoubtedly have encountered similar pillars.



News

2023 Recipient of Bishop's Cross for Distinguished Diocesan Service

By Joseph Pae, *Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, New York*

Accepting an honor, in this case the Bishop's Cross for Distinguished Diocesan Service, has never been easy for me with Jesus' cautionary words about praise resonating in the back of my mind, coupled with the value of humility as one of the Franciscan virtues. Despite this, I recognized that the Bishop intended to acknowledge my contributions as I transitioned out of the Commission on Ministry, where I had served since 2004. The acknowledgment came as a pleasant surprise, offering a moment to reflect on the ministry God guided me to undertake. It served as a reminder that I am merely playing my part, doing what God has entrusted me to do — my contribution to a larger purpose.

Some context:

- The Great Neck Episcopal Community was formerly composed of three churches: All Saints, St. Paul's, and St. Joseph's Korean congregation. These communities merged into one church in 2013. I joined as one of the missionaries in 2010 alongside Charlie McCarron (our newly elected Minister Provincial) and assumed the role of Rector in 2015. Our congregation is diverse, with members fluent in Korean and English. We conduct Sunday services in both languages and host a monthly bilingual service.
- I have supported the Bishop's vision of transforming the Commission on Ministry into a prayerful discernment process marked by transparency and integrity, rather than viewing it as a mere obstacle to endure.

The citation on the award was as follows:



Over more than a decade, you have faithfully served extensive roles providing leadership and guidance throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island. You have led with a heart for ministry over the years serving as the Rector of All Saints, Great Neck, and the Great Neck Episcopal Community. You have provided outstanding service across the diocese in the Commission on Ministry and as Chair of the Commission. You have been instrumental in the ministry to the Korean community across the diocese. You have served as a member of the Cathedral Chapter and were named as an Honorary Canon to the Cathedral.

You have endlessly supported the people of the diocese, and the people whom we serve.

For your dedication and outstanding service to the Diocese of Long Island, it is my great pleasure and honor to present to you the Bishop's Cross for Distinguished Diocesan Service.

*The Rt. Rev. Lawrence C. Provenzano, Bishop of Long Island.
(November 10, 2023)*



When I Follow: a poem

by Mary Tarentini

When I follow will I drown
In the sorrow of the ages
Or trip and lose my senses in
The dark and lonely spaces

Will the world move just one
breath
From its groaning to be free
Or will I flounder when the
harvest
Sinks below the sea

How often have I heard it said
The mountain is at your
command
Yet thoughts bombard my surety
till
My brain is fully crammed

One deed is worth its weight in
gold
And carries with it all our dreams
So kiss the leper at the gate
And follow always to the
extreme

113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis: The Silents to TV Miniseries (1911-2024)

Part 1: Saint Francis in the Silent Movie Era

by R. John Brockmann, Janice Syedullah, Neil Tumber, Carolyn Banks, and Victoria Tester

In the next six issues of *The Franciscan Times*, you will find reviews and background summaries of all the movies in our collection. The reviews have been written by members of the Provincial Library: Janice Syedullah, R. John Brockmann, and Neil Tumber, along with Victoria Tester and a cameo appearance of one of our oldest professed members, Carolyn Banks. We will invite you to view these movies on your own or with your fellowship and then to send in your own equally succinct 100-word reviews, which we will share in the following issue of the *Times*.

We want you all to participate. This will be a fun way to share what moved you in these films, what you felt was done particularly well, and what were some of the errors or distortions depicted. And who knows? At the end of our Francis Film Fest, there may be prizes for best, worst, and funniest reviews!

So, let's get on with the show!!! Oh, if you would like a preview of 77 years of the films with snippets of seven of the films and three of the four silents, click here <http://tinyurl.com/yc5hf854>.

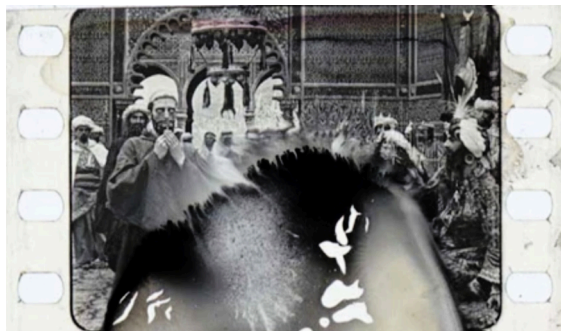
Saint Francis in the Silent Movie Era

San Francesco il poverello d'Assisi (The Poor Man of Assisi) (1911)—

This is the first known film about Francis. It was directed by Enrico Guazzoni, shot in Assisi, and made for the International Exhibition of Turin. (Two years later, Guazzoni created a two-hour movie, *Quo Vadis*, which was one of the first “blockbusters” of movies.)

Harty's *The Reel Middle Ages* offers this plot summary:

In a dream, Francis has a vision of poverty personified. He breaks with his rich family and founds an order of friars. He visits the Sultan of Damietta, who respects him but refuses to convert to Christianity. The Pope accepts his order, and there is a scene in which Francis dictates his celebrated “Canticle to the Sun.” The film closes with Francis blessing Assisi right before his death while surrounded by his beloved monks, his longtime friend Clare, and her order of nuns. (215)



A single frame from this movie was preserved in the 1960s by film historian David Turconi. From a collection of decomposing old nitrate films, he saved what he could by cutting frames from some of the films to at least preserve parts of this collection. This particular frame here seems to have been taken from Francis's visit to the Sultan of Damietta (Sultan right, Francis holding cross to his lips on the left.) We'll see that the visit of Francis to the Sultan becomes a mainstay of most subsequent movies perhaps because it offers the screenwriter an exotic setting, but it becomes a crucial aspect of Francis's story post-9/11 when new interpretations of this event become known. (Moses, 2009)

The Passion of St. Francis (1927)— (lost)

This movie originally titled *Frate Francisco* (1927) was directed by Giulio Antamoro and intended to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the birth of Francis. However, when it arrived in New York movie houses, it was greatly shortened.

Part 1: Saint Francis in the Silent Movie Era (cont.)

Christensen describes the original version of the plot as follows:

...treats the entire life of St. Francis from birth to death. It covers the most famous events of his early life: participation in his father's cloth business, involvement in the Perugian war, the decision to set out to Apulia as a knight, rejection of war, obedience to the command from the cross of Christ at San Damiano, renunciation and disrobement before the bishop (Guido II of Assisi), welcoming of the run-away Clare to a life of poverty, and travel to Rome (to the Lateran) with his first followers for approval of his way of life by Pope Innocent III. The key events of his later life in this film are the audience with the Sultan, the receiving of the Stigmata, and death at the Portiuncula in Assisi after much illness. To the life of St. Francis is added a long, melodramatic subplot, which provides a villain, Monaldo, the uncle of St. Clare. (p. 75)



Van Yperen also observes some “Francis-as-the-new-Christ” scene staging in the film:

- After a battle with the Perugians when Francis is wounded, Pica holds Francis in a way that echoes Mary holding Christ in Michelangelo’s *The Pietà*.
- Francis is presented as the new Christ corpus, arms outstretched facing the audience in the foreground before the San Damiano crucifix.

- At the end of the film, Francis returns to Assisi to die riding on a donkey, hailed by the crowd to remind viewers of Christ entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.
- Van Yperen also includes 17 publicity shots from the movie, one is included here which illustrates the “Francis-as-the-new-Christ” element.

You can still see some snippets of this movie on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/vFr9xj7---g?si=VhGZelbr04atjocZ>,

Saint Francis: Dreams and Nightmares (1933-8)—lost

Between 1933 and 1938, Berthold Bartosch created a 25-minute animated film entitled *Saint Francis: Dreams and Nightmares*. This anti-war film was destroyed by the Nazis when they occupied Paris. A black-and-white frame from the film shows Francis towering above a city (Moritz, 1998).



(from *Bartosch’s The Idea* William Moritz in *A Reader In Animation Studies* 1998 (edited by Jayne Pilling).

Frate Sole (Brother Sun) (1918, restored in 1998)—available on YouTube and here reviewed

“Frate Sole” is an Italian silent film written by Mario Corsi and directed by Ugo Falena. Corsi’s screenplay traces the life of the saint through four episodes or “cantos”: The Kiss of the Leper; On the Footsteps of the Poverello of Assisi; The Temple; and The Stigmata. Here’s how Corsi described announced the premiere:

A Franciscan recreation in 4 cantos by Mario Corsi, with a sacred poem for orchestra and choruses by Luigi Mancinelli... (Cinema magazine (1938)

(Structuring a film about Francis as a variety of disconnected episodes is a technique that would later be used by Rossellini in 1950.) (Cont.) **Page 32**

Part 1: Saint Francis in the Silent Movie Era (cont.)

The YouTube version presents the film with the organ “commentary” by Robert Kovács, performed on November 16, 2019, in the Church of St. Francis in Aleppo (Syria). Use this version with Arabic and English subtitles-- <https://youtu.be/qGcRNL9SzBA>

Or <https://youtu.be/9jyZKVp4-o8>



Our Reviews—Can You Offer Other Insights for this Silent Movie?

John Brockmann—I was surprised at the role reversal of “Claire” [sic] and Francis. Clare takes the moral high ground and even teaches Francis: shaming Francis into treating a beggar with kindness, praying for Francis’s conversion, and even explaining to Francis what happens when he hugs the leper. Her spiritual conversion seems both independent from and simultaneous with Francis’s, and when Francis has the Stigmata experience on Mt Alverna, Clare has a vision of it in her distant convent cell. Is this role-reversal Corsi’s reaction to the male-centric violence in which he was wounded in WWI?

Janice Syedullah—Inspired by the prayers of Clare and his strange sense of melancholy, Francesco embarks on a spiritual journey that leads him to seek solace in giving to the poor and embracing the leper. As he does this, his heart is receptive to the voice of God directing him to rebuild his church. The film, through what I see as somewhat disjointed vignettes, follows Francis and Clare’s journey as they offer themselves to God in a spirit of devotion, love, and joy.

Neil Tumber—A beautiful film that brings to life many Renaissance paintings accompanied by operatic music for pipe organ and choir. The scenes are not a continuous narrative and while this means that, perhaps, you won’t see your favorite episode of Francis’ life, you will be granted a deeper insight into other aspects of his spiritual journey. This telling of his life focuses on Francis as an individual and does not explore how the order of brothers and sisters grew from his example. It was filmed in 1918.

Victoria Tester—*Frate Sole* draws from medieval and Renaissance visual art. Its credits introduce costumed actors with moving ‘stills,’ imitative of sculptures flanking portals of Gothic cathedrals. Later tableaux reflect a direct study of Giotto’s work — Francis with the sultan, the appearance of the seraph to Francis, and Clare’s farewell to the saint. The mandorla features in the shape of the entrance to the Portiuncula to sanctify both Francis and Clare. Scenes of Francis’s *Cantic of the Creatures* offer us triptychs — not of typical religious subjects, but of nature — and often the eyes of the actors portraying the blessed roll heavenwards, a representation born in Renaissance painting.

Carolyn Banks—60 years professed—My observation at first was amazement at the continual inference that Clare was the source of Francis’s inspiration and her prayer was his strength. Whether this was true or just the idea of the scriptwriter remains a question. I was struck by the care they took to make the costumes and scenery match Giotto’s murals. One has to overlook the antique style of overacting and appreciate this century’s view of the life of Francis.

Please Send Your Insights for this Silent Movie To The Editor.

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