



The Franciscan Times

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

Pace e bene

Fall 2024

Musings from Our Minister Provincial, Charlie McCarron

the potter, the wheel, and the clay

As I prepared for Chapter, the image of the potter at her wheel from Isaiah 45:9 kept resurfacing in my thoughts. Recognizing this as a sign worth exploring, I chose it as the first reading for Chapter's opening Eucharist, where I planned to share my reflection. While I usually adhere strictly to the lectionary, I felt prompted to pair this reading with the Gospel for that day, which happened to be the story of Martha and Mary from Luke 10:38-42.

The imagery of the potter, the wheel, and the clay is deeply resonant for a Franciscan community, particularly during turbulent times. It invites reflection on how we are shaped by God. This theme aligns well with the story of Martha and Mary, where Jesus visits two sisters: Martha, overwhelmed by her many tasks, and Mary, who chooses to sit and listen at Jesus' feet. Jesus gently tells Martha that "only one thing is necessary," emphasizing the priority of presence over mere activity. This story highlights the ongoing tension between action and contemplation, a balance that is crucial for a Franciscan community, especially in times of change.

The week before Chapter, I attended a virtual Convocation with our Province of the Pacific, where I was asked to speak on the theme of action and contemplation — an issue and question rippling through our worldwide

Order. This reflection set the tone for many of our discussions at Chapter, prompting us to consider how Martha and Mary's choices intersect with the potter's work and shape our communal life.

Like Mary, who sits at Jesus' feet, our community must also learn to pause and reflect on God's work in our midst. Just as the potter occasionally stops the wheel to assess the vessel's progress, we, too, need moments of stillness to listen to the Spirit. The rhythm of Chapter was intentional and structured to support both contemplation and dialogue. Each day began with a voluntary 20-minute period of silent prayer in the chapel, setting a reflective tone for the day. This was followed by *lectio divina* in small groups, focusing on sections from our current Principles alongside the 1928 Principles of Christa Seva Sangha. These small group sessions fostered deep and meaningful sharing among us as Franciscans. Afterward, we gathered again in the chapel for Morning Prayer before heading to breakfast.

At 9:30 a.m., we convened for our first topical discussion of the day. At 11:00 a.m., we entered into the Eucharist in the chapel, followed by lunch at noon. The afternoon discussion began at 1:30 p.m.. These morning and afternoon sessions included discussions on lifelong formation, initial formation, care for creation, fellowship dynamics, chaplaincy, and



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other aspects of our shared life. By mid-afternoon, we transitioned to several hours of free time, allowing for rest, walks in the woods, or personal conversations, before gathering again for evening prayer in the chapel.

After dinner, the schedule remained flexible. Some ministries met independently, while others chose communal activities. On two evenings, films were offered: the first night featured *Cabrini*, an inspiring full-length film; the second night presented two short films from Italy — one a meditation on the

Testament of St. Francis, and the other a dramatization of Masseo's time with Francis at La Verna. Our third evening together concluded with Compline, where we prayed through the necrology, shared stories, and lit candles as each name was read. Throughout Chapter, all liturgies were drawn from the U.S. Prayer Book, thanks to a local parish that graciously provided us with Prayer Books and Hymnals.



The story of Martha and Mary offers a reminder that while practical tasks are necessary, they must not overshadow the “one thing necessary” — time with God. Martha's busyness, though rooted in service, led her to miss the deeper connection with Jesus. In the same way, our community's structures and tasks should remain adaptable, like clay on the potter's wheel, always open to being reshaped by God's hand. If we neglect regular reflection, we risk becoming rigid vessels that no longer serve their purpose.

Mary's attentive listening to Jesus invites our community to discern whether our current systems truly reflect God's love or whether they have become distractions. The Spirit may be urging us to let go of practices that no longer serve us or to adopt new forms that better embody God's presence today. It's through prayerful reflection that we can make these discernments.

This past year, my personal journey into Jungian analysis has made me more aware of my own “clay vessel” — my fragility, strengths, and God's ongoing work in my life. It has been a challenging but enriching process, akin to being placed back on the potter's wheel, where pressures mold me anew. This personal growth mirrors our Province's call to be open, at times, to be reshaped by God, trusting that God is the one doing the molding.

Recently, five of our siblings have contacted me with a desire to leave our shared life. Their decisions and our conversations have been sobering, underscoring the difficulties of individual and communal transformation. Like the “experience” of the clay on the wheel, our life together is not always easy; it involves pressure, reshaping, and sometimes even breaking. Some of their reasons reflected long personal discernment. Other departures reflected cracks in our

the potter, the wheel, and the clay (cont. from page 3)



**Chapter 2024 Attendees
at Pallottine Missouri
Retreat Center**

communal vessel — gaps in meaningful connection, lack of challenge or support, and fellowships that had “lost the spark.” These concerns were at the heart of our Chapter discussions on formation, chaplaincy, and the nature of fellowship.

In the midst of these challenges, it’s clear that our strength comes from a deep relationship with God. As Mary chose to be nurtured by Jesus’ presence, we too must cultivate a similar intimacy with Christ to sustain one another on this journey of transformation, and be empowered for lives of genuine service.

The themes of Martha and Mary enrich the reflection on the potter and the clay, reminding us to maintain a balance between action and contemplation. For Franciscans, this means engaging with necessary tasks while also stepping back to listen, pray, and be guided by the Spirit. By allowing God to continually reshape us, we ensure that our communal structures genuinely reflect the treasure we hold within: God’s presence. In choosing the “better part,” we embrace the one thing that endures — communion with Christ, the source of our life and mission.



Working Together to Spread the News: CAROA and NAECC

by Masud Ibn Syedullah

So, who’s working together?

The Conference of Anglican Religious in the Americas (CAROA) and The National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities (NAECC).

And what are these organizations?

These two organizations are networks for religious communities in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.

CAROA consists of conventual orders, meaning those religious communities composed of monks, nuns, or friars who live in monasteries, convents, and friaries, who take the traditional monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Our First Order Brothers of the Society of Saint Francis and our First Order Sisters of the Community of Saint Francis are members of CAROA, along with about eighteen other conventual Religious communities in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.

The NAECC communities, referred to as Christian Communities, are like the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis. With the exception of one, all Christian Communities are dispersed, all living under vows of lifelong intent. Some are communities of men, some of women, and others, like TSSF are composed of people of all genders, single, married. The Community of Celebration is the exception in that it is a residential community, historically composed of single people, couples, and children. There are currently fifteen NAECC Communities, and several others in various stages of formation.

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**Working Together
to Spread the
News: CAROA and
NAECC**

(Cont.)

Each month we pray for member communities of NAECC and CAROA (and other Religious Orders) on Day 31 in our Third Order Intercessory Cycle of Prayer, pages 107-108.

So, how are they working together, and what is this news they are spreading?

For the past 11 years, representatives of the various communities of both CAROA and NAECC have met annually to foster fellowship, to learn about each other's life and ministries, to share worship and spiritual reflection together, and to discern how Religious communities can be of further service to the larger Church. In fact, about 10 years ago, Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, called a meeting of Anglican Religious Orders (including the Society of Saint Francis) to encourage us to view ourselves as instruments through which God wants to help renew the Church (and the world) at this time in history. He reminded us that during the Middle Ages it was the Religious communities of monks, nuns, and secular Religious (like today's TSSF) who were largely responsible for keeping alive faith, hope, and the charitable work of Christ — both in the Church and in the world. Archbishop Welby urged each Order to rediscover the fire and energy of their founder's vision, and to prayerfully discern how the fire of that charism can be Light, Health, Blessing for the Church and world in our time, so much in need of such gifts. NAECC and CAROA have been prayerfully considering the way forward.

Two years ago, for the first time in the history of the Episcopal Church, the General Convention passed a resolution authorizing and designating a Sunday to be observed as Religious Life Sunday throughout the entire Church — the Third Sunday after the Epiphany. It is to make known to some, and to remind others, of the wealth of spiritual life and resourcefulness that exists in and through the ministries of the near 40 Religious Orders and Christian Communities within the Episcopal Church. NAECC and CAROA, with the help of the House of Bishops Standing Committee on the Religious Life, were responsible for that resolution to be brought forth to General Convention.

On January 26, 2025, we will be observing Religious Life Sunday for the third time. It will again be an opportunity for Religious Communities to make themselves known and to communicate to the Church (beginning at the parish level) that we exist, share the Life-giving Presence of God among us through prayer, fellowship, and service, and that we have gifts to share with the Church and the world.

Members of CAROA and NAECC are currently producing videos featuring representatives of both NAECC and CAROA communities that will be shared with the Church in the new year. These videos are ways to make our presence known and to say we are available

Working Together to Spread the News: CAROA and NAECC

(Cont.)

to serve the Church: to lead retreats and quiet days, to share ways to be of service to surrounding communities, to lead prayer and meditation workshops, to encourage environmental sustainability, and to support efforts of peace and social justice, to name a few.

From October 22-24 2024, the Executive Committees of both CAROA and NAECC met together at the Community of Celebration in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, to prayerfully discern further ways our Communities can make ourselves known to the Church, as well as ways we are available to help the Church fulfill its mission.

So be thinking about ways you can promote awareness of our Order, TSSF, by establishing an information table at your diocesan convention; by presenting a talk sometime during your Adult Education/Formation classes, sharing how being part of a religious Order has informed and changed your life; or do something else to help spread the news — the good news to be experienced in and through Religious Life.



Members of the CAROA and NAECC Executive Committees: Sr. Faith Margaret, Community of the Holy Spirit (CHS); Br. Masud Ibn Syedullah, Third Order, Society of Saint Francis (TSSF); Sr. Kristina Frances, Sister of Saint Margaret (SSM); Br. Bill Farra, Community of Celebration (SCC); and Br. David Brinton, Oratory of the Good Shepherd (OGS). ★

Letter to the Editor

by Neil Tumber

RE: Charlie McCarron's Musing from Our Minister Provincial: our Province as a Garden of Transformation (Spring 2024)

What a beautiful, poetic, inspiring article! I enjoyed reading it and becoming immersed in memories of the sights, shapes, colors, and aromas of a garden. After reading, however, I was reminded of the time the rector was walking through the parish and saw Rosie working in her garden. The Rector, beaming with delight, called out, "What beauty you and the Lord have produced together!" Rosie replied, "Yes, but you should have seen it when the Lord had it to himself!"

Any garden needs at least one gardener, or else we will have a wilderness.

There will be digging, fertilizing, planting, watering, pruning, and composting. While I enjoyed the pleasant pictures of the Garden of Transformation article, I am left wondering what action I, as an individual, or we as an Order, need to take. I am looking forward to hearing what our brothers and sisters suggest.

By the way, thinking about the wonderful diversity across our province and continuing with the allegory of the garden, I envisage different flower beds or groves of trees, the herb and vegetable gardens and the orchard! Which part of the garden are you being called to tend? ★

Five Sermons

Birds, Tertiaries, and Community: A Homily on Mark 4:30-32

By Holly Wallace



Jesus said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

“So that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

Jesus, however, says nothing about *which* birds of the air may make nests in its shade.

I have spent much time looking at the large camellia bush in my front yard — it is in direct view from my bedroom. Aside from just watching the bush grow, I take great joy in watching the birds come and go. The different species of birds who live in my area of the neighborhood are the same species who fly in and out of the camellia.

It is like watching the air traffic at Dulles International Airport outside of Washington, D.C. The birds depart and arrive using any number of routes available. When they are in their hangars — or nests — they rest in the shade, or from rain, or from all sorts of inclement weather. There they are — each one different from another.

I have yet to see a sign posted by the camellia bush in bird language that says: “Cardinals Only;” or “Blue Jays Use Separate Entrance;” or “Robins Not Welcome Here;” or even “Mockingbirds Must Maintain Silence!” Somehow, with all the differences between their several species, and with all the quirks that each individual within the same species may have, they all seem to get along.

If we think about it, as members of the same species, we humans have endless numbers of differences individually. As Franciscan Tertiaries, we live as one extended family. We have so many similarities, in which we rejoice in. At the same time, we each have wonderful differences in which we also rejoice in.

That is one of the true gifts we have been given by our loving Creator — the ability to be our own “*me*.”

Occasionally, I hear some birds in my yard really squawking at each other; they sound as if they are having quite a row. But it never seems to last.

As God’s children, we do our best to love one another. However, whether it is in one of the communities to which we belong, or any other inter-personal relationship, differences and disagreements will occasionally arise. At these times, it is important that we deal with whatever are the problems — because *we* need it, and because the *other* person needs it equally as much.

Yes, it can be difficult to make peace with someone with whom we are at odds, but if we can swallow hard and make the effort, we find peace within ourselves, too.

I offer here a prayer from the Jesuit publication, *America*. The title is “The New Serenity Prayer:”*

Birds, Tertiaries, and Community

(Cont.)

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
which is pretty much everyone,
since I'm clearly not you, God.
At least not the last time I checked.
And while you're at it, God,
please give me the courage
to change what I need to change about myself,
which is frankly a lot, since, once again,
I'm not you, which means I'm not perfect.
It's better for me to focus on changing myself
than to worry about changing other people,
who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying,
I can't change anyway.
Finally, give me the wisdom to just shut up
whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter
than everyone else in the room,
that no one knows what they're talking about
except me,
or that I alone have all the answers.
Basically, God,
grant me the wisdom
to remember that I'm
not you.
Amen.

By being in communion with others, we have the opportunity to learn how to live a better life. Let us thank God for lessons learned from each other, and from the birds.

*<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/04/12/terre-roche-james-martin-new-serenity-prayer-245036>



Courage – The Most Under-rated Gift of the Spirit

By Gordon
Kubanek



As we follow Christ and Francis on our individual Franciscan paths, we are trying to emulate the path to God that they made clear by the examples of their lives. We too strive to make Heaven visible on Earth as Christ and Francis did — however, like them, we face obstacles and challenges that threaten to overwhelm us. At those dark nights of the soul, the gifts of the Holy Spirit — gifts that we emphasize so often (like humility, goodness, kindness and patience)--just don't do the job. Fortunately for us, Courage is also one of God's gifts to us. If you're like me, you really need it. Sometimes I just feel like giving up; I sometimes feel overwhelmed and life is just too hard. We all need a reminder, and a helping hand, to get us out of the darkness back to the light. I hope these words will give you a helping hand today.

Recently, I had a long chat with a new Christian about Courage because he has, for now, stopped going to church. I asked him why and he gave two reasons: First, the Christians at his church were not brave. In fact, they were becoming more and more afraid of every new risk they encountered. Second, they did not build him up, but instead said things that, to him, sounded more like words that reduced his value, tearing him down.

As I read the scripture today, my ears were listening for any words that resonated with these two challenges to our Christian living. The words that

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**Courage –
The Most
Under-rated
Gift of the
Spirit
(cont)**

spoke the most to me in this light are Amos 7:14-15: *“Then Amos answered Amaziah, ‘I am no prophet, nor a prophet’s son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’”*

Amos was a reluctant prophet. Clearly, like you and me, he was afraid of saying the wrong words that hurt instead of healed. Clearly, like you and I, he knew that he needed to do as the Lord commanded, and he had to prophesy words of power and words of healing. So, as my friend needed, we are called to kindness because we have the power to be kind. It is the power of God that brings kindness that heals, kindness that builds up instead of tears down. It is the power of being filled with prophetic words and deeds that free others, like my friend, to believe in themselves again. When we let the power of the Lord live within us, all of us can do this, and more in ways that are unexpected.

Underlying the beauties of the Christian path are not simply nice thoughts and kind emotions. What lies underneath is raw, spiritual power. Christ could do what he did because the power of God lived within him. Because we are following in his footsteps, we too must discover and nurture that same power. Yet most of us, especially those of us who want to be kind, are afraid of power. We are afraid that we will abuse it and that it will turn us into devouring beasts. Yes, it is true that power like this can corrupt us, but only if we lose the connection to the Holy Spirit. To NOT nurture that power is, to me, a sin just as evil as the abuse of power. It is the sin of omission, the sin of passivism, the sin of cowardice, which is the death of a living faith.

Do you nurture this power? Do you pray for Courage? I seldom do. Of the four cardinal Christian virtues, Courage seems almost invisible. Of course, I am not talking only about physical or even just moral courage; I am talking about the almost magical alchemy of strength and humility that integrates our body, heart, and mind with God’s will. In my eyes, that then gives us the gift of becoming wise as we begin to see Life through God’s eyes by “knowing when to hold them and when to fold them, knowing when to walk away, and when to run,” (in the words of the country song, *The Gambler*, made famous by Kenny Rogers). Although sometimes fighting for a just cause is the right response, sometimes “doing nothing” by listening and not reacting is the proper and compassionate Godly response, and sometimes even “running away” from an impossible situation is actually Courage, as made clear when Shakespeare wrote “Discretion is the better part of Valour.” Of course, this may look like cowardice from a human perspective, but sometimes, from God’s perspective, running away is Valour because it can avoid the deep sin of pride that so easily enters our souls when we think we are capable of the impossible. Actually, only God is capable of the (seeming) impossible.

So, dear friends, let us strive to be like Amos and become brave prophets that build each other up. Let’s all be courageous prophets whose lives are an example of the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the Earth into the Heaven it can and should be. As we hear in Romans 15:19, “Let signs, wonders, and miracles be released through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen.



Called to be Different?

By Neil Tumber

A series of thought-provoking articles in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare who, called by God, left their lives of wealth and privilege to devote themselves to witness to the love of Christ.

How does our belief in the resurrection make us different?

You have probably seen a movie in which the bad guy is threatening someone: there are very many movies in which this happens.

“If you don’t tell me, I will kill you!”

Now our culture expects the person being threatened is fearful. The bad guy certainly expects that the threat of imminent death will lead to their getting the information they want.

However, we followers of Christ believe in the resurrection. We believe in life after death, in which we will be in the presence of our Lord God, able to worship and praise and love without pain or fear. Let’s read what the *Book of Common Prayer* tells us:

Ministration at the Time of Death (BCP page 462)

Almighty God, look on this your servant, lying in great weakness, and comfort them with the promise of life everlasting, given in the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Commendation at the Time of Death

Depart, O Christian soul, out of this world; In the Name of God the Father Almighty who created you; In the Name of Jesus Christ who redeemed you; In the Name of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you. May your rest be this day in peace, and your dwelling place in the Paradise of God.

A Commendatory Prayer

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant N. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive your servant into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

And from John Newton’s wonderful hymn, Amazing Grace:

When we’ve been there ten thousand years

Bright shining as the sun

We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise

Than when we first begun



Our Christian will reply, “Thank you. I am ready to die.” And the Christian may add, “This is a good day to die.”

Bishop Steven Charleston talks about how, in Native American culture, the concept of community is paramount and how they believe that the spirits of those who have died are still part of the community. There is a continuity in which the living and the dead together continue

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to worship God, the creator and sustainer of all. *“So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart...Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and its purpose in the service of your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide....and when the day comes... sing your death song and die like a hero going home.”* (Tecumseh, as quoted in *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus* by Steven Charleston.)

Our Christian’s response will certainly enrage the bad guy, who will probably torture the victim in the expectation that pain, whether physical or mental, will encourage the Christian to provide the information.

But why would our Christian do that?

Consider Matthew 5: 9-12

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Or Romans 8: 35-39

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

³⁶As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is a story in the Little Flowers in which Brother Leo asks Brother Francis what would be perfect joy. The two brothers are walking to a monastery where they are well known. They are walking through a winter storm which has made them cold and wet. Brother Francis says that perfect joy will be found when the gate keeper does not recognize them and, as they persist in asking to be let in, the gate keeper chases them away by hitting them with a knotted stick causing them to stumble and roll in the snow. If, after all this, they are able bear their injuries with patience without complaining and think upon the sufferings of our Blessed Crucified Lord, then, says Francis, “This is perfect joy”. Indeed, being allowed to suffer is a gift from God.

<https://assisiproject.com/2018/06/23/saint-francis-explains-perfect-joy/>

Now, finding that neither the threat of death nor the application of pain has yielded the required information, the bad guy turns his attention to our Christian’s partner or their child or their parent or someone else that they love.

Called to be Different? But that person is also a Christian, is also ready to die, and is also willing to endure pain because of their belief in God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
(cont.)

Of course, it is shocking, painful, agonizing for our Christian to hear and see their loved one being tortured to death. They can pray that they will have strength to endure to the end (Romans again?) and also that God will release them from suffering by taking them to join all the saints in heaven.

The bad guy cannot and will not win! Death, where is thy sting...?

1 Corinthians 15: 54-58

⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Thus, whenever we watch a movie or read a book in which death or torture is used as a threat, we believe, that for us as followers of Our Lord Jesus Christ, this is not going to change our determination to confront evil or diminish our faith in a loving redeemer.

So... what if the bad guy is cancer or another life-threatening, painful disease?

Do the same ideas apply? I think they do. Remember that our first command is: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12: 29-31)

We know that all of us will die. We also know that in this sinful world, suffering and pain are present. But if our focus is on the Lord our God, we can accept each new day with thanksgiving that our Lord can, through the power of the Holy Spirit working in each of us, show his love in action. We can also, with joy, accept His call to bring us home to join all the saints worshipping continually in His presence: in heaven.

So, whether the bad guy is attacking you or your loved one: dare to be different (from the secular culture). In humility, love and joy, prayerfully look forward to being with your loved ones in heaven. If it is today that you or your loved one should die, praise God, thank God, worship God. If it is not today, praise God, thank God, worship God for the opportunity to show His love in action.

Romans 14: 7-9

⁷For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

**Called to be
Different?**
(cont.)

The secular culture in which we live expects us to fight against death, to prolong life no matter the quality of life. We are expected to seek every medical intervention possible, but we are not like that! We are on our way to heaven! If today is not the day that I am to die, give me palliative care so my suffering is, if possible, reduced while God is still using me to demonstrate his Love in action. But, if it is today, let me go. Wish me, "Bon voyage!". In a little while, we will be together again, worshiping together our Lord God.

A Prayer for the Dead (BCP Page 470)

O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered: Accept our prayers on behalf of thy servant N, granting an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of thy saints; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for the Sick (BCP Page 458)

O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need: We humbly beseech thee to behold, visit, and relieve thy sick servant N. for whom our prayers are desired. Look upon them with the eyes of thy mercy; comfort them with a sense of thy goodness; preserve them from the temptations of the enemy; and give them patience under their affliction. In thy good time, restore them to health, and enable them to lead the residue of this life in thy fear, and to thy glory; and grant that finally they may dwell with thee in life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Hymn:

Glory to thee, my God, this night,
for all the blessings of the light:
keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
beneath thine own almighty wings.
Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
the ill that I this day have done;
that with the world, myself, and thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.
Teach me to live, that I may dread
the grave as little as my bed;
teach me to die, that so I may
rise glorious at the awful day.
O may my soul on thee repose,
and with sweet sleep mine eyelids close;
sleep that may me more vigorous make
to serve my God when I awake.
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Words: Thomas Ken, 1692

Tune: Tallis' Canon



Hope in Times of Crisis (11/2023)

By Isabelle Solberg

We are approaching the season of Advent — this hopeful time of year when we rejoice that just as Jesus came to save us once, he will come again. But as we look around, this joyful season contrasts sharply with the realities we witness today. Amidst the cruelty of war, a society that cannot seem to find common ground, and the threat of a changing climate, not much of what we see embodies hope against the festive backdrop of the Christmas season.

This summer, I lived a firsthand experience of what it means to lose hope. Our community was evacuated for six weeks due to wildfires. In the remoteness of northern Canada, fires were raging, sometimes as close as 0.5 miles away from our town and digging 5 feet deep into the ground. Thankfully, the winds shifted just in time to save our homes, allowing us to return safely after an agonizing separation from home. Not every community was as lucky.



But this experience left a mark. For weeks, people grappled with the potential loss of homes, life's work, and the cherished memories that transform a house into a home. The evacuation itself was a nightmare. People left with their cars filled with as much as they could grab on their way out, some cars caught fire on the road, others had to be left behind because they ran out of fuel. Those fortunate enough to secure hotel accommodations in the nearest towns found themselves crammed into a single room, with pets and children in

close quarters. No one had prepared for a six-week evacuation.

Upon returning to our town, they told stories that were not of despair, but of hope amidst the crisis. Every single person had an encounter of true love and hospitality in the middle of the devastation of this evacuation. Some told me that they were taken grocery shopping by strangers, others received a quilt from a family they met at a laundromat. Those with no place to go found refuge in the homes of compassionate strangers. In ways big or small, people were eager and ready to help those navigating a crisis.

I want to share this story because it is easy to forget our humanity when we only hear about disagreement, war, and strife. As people created in the image of God, our hope lies in the belief that, even in the darkest moments, God's work manifests through us unexpectedly. In times of crisis, our hope is in each other, as people extend a helping hand, embodying the compassion that defines our shared humanity. ★

Hope in Times of Crisis: 2024 Update—Hurricane Helene Hit the Mountains of Western North Carolina

By Mike Halus

On September 27th and September 28, Hurricane Helene hit the mountains of Western North Carolina very hard. The rainfall varied from 20 to 30 inches. It was reported that this was a one in a 1000-year event. Entire communities were destroyed by floods and landslides.

Initially, the entire area had no electricity, no running water, no cell phone service, and no radio stations were operating. Most of the roads were impassible due to fallen trees and many roads were completely washed out or covered with landslides. The entire area was completely isolated and had no means of communication.

My wife and I live in a continuing care retirement community called Givens Estates. Approximately 1000 residents live on a 250-acre estate with various types of housing. There are approximately 300 staff supporting us. Many of the residents had no damage, while others had significant damage to their individual homes and automobiles. Some staff had their homes damaged or completely destroyed.

My wife and I live on the seventh floor of a large apartment building. We had no damage to our apartment or to our automobile.

Recovery was very slow due to the extensive destruction to the infrastructure in our area. The staff here did an amazing job to make sure that everyone had water and food. Even with an inoperable kitchen and no electricity, they provided meals for us. The staff would also arrive with 3-gallon water buckets and flush our toilets twice a day. Cases of drinking water were available for all of us. As I recall, the recovery sequence went something like this:

1. Staff provided food and water immediately;
2. Local radio stations came back on the air 2 or 3 days later;
3. Cell phone service was re-established;
4. Electricity was re-established;
5. Nonportable water re-established; and
6. Internet and TV re-established.

We now have everything but potable water.

We feel very blessed and are grateful that we came through OK. We are helping our neighbors and staff who have had losses. ★

A Different Theology of the Incarnation: Reflection on John 1:14

By Ed Schneider

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.”
John 1:14

There is a grotto in the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth. It is believed by many that the Angel Gabriel visited Mary in that grotto, and it was there that she received the message asking her to become the Mother of God. It is said that there was silence in Heaven as all waited to learn if Mary would say yes. And we know she did. She answered, “Be it done unto me according to your will.”

Cont. on page 16

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A Different Theology of the Incarnation (cont.)

Inside that grotto is a plaque that reads: *Verbum caro factum hic est* — the Word was made flesh here. That’s a powerful statement that points to the uniqueness of Christianity. Unlike contemporary pagan stories about deities pretending to be human, the Christian message from the beginning is that God actually became a man. God became a man who lived, who suffered, and who died just like the rest of us. And this incredible journey of God becoming a man and dwelling among us began at a particular time and in a particular place — in a Nazarene grotto through a message by an angel to a teenage peasant girl.

But who is this God who, in the words of St. Athanasius, took humankind into the Godhead? Who is this God who took our nature into himself and thereby sanctified humanity?

To be blunt, we know next to nothing about God. The mystics of the major religions who write about their encounters with God tell us that God is beyond our understanding and our ability to describe. Despite two millennia of Christian theological speculation, the truth is we can only know what God chooses to tell us about himself.

Nevertheless, that hasn’t stopped us from making up all sorts of things about God. We can reasonably assume God is omnipotent and omniscient — but those are assumptions. And many people often go further and assert that God behaves in particular ways and has certain likes and dislikes. And too many people presume to know whom God loves and whom God rejects.

Some assertions about God come from the Old Testament, where God is sometimes depicted as narrow, rigid, tribal, cruel, murderous, and vindictive. I suspect those assertions tell us more about the biblical writers who described God in those ways than they tell us anything useful about God. However, those negative assertions are at odds with other Old Testament images that tell us God is loving, merciful, gracious, and universal. How can God be both tribal and universal? Vindictive and merciful? Cruel and unconditionally loving?

We can blithely dismiss these questions and declare, “It’s all a mystery,” and move on without another thought. However, that would be a mistake. Our assumptions about God create working models — images — in our minds that govern how we think about God. And how we think about God shapes the ways we pray and respond to God.

We need to remember that our images of God are not God — they’re just the ways we conceptualize God, and our conceptions usually say more about us than they do about God. If we hope to grow in spiritual wisdom and maturity, then we first need to know that we *have* images of God and then we need to learn the ways these images create barriers to our encountering God as God truly is.

**A Different
Theology of the
Incarnation**
(cont.)

The problem of our God-images is writ large in the gospels. One of the themes that runs through all four gospels is that the Sadducees, Pharisees, and scribes could not recognize God incarnate standing in front of them because he did not look and act the way they expected God to look and act, based on their readings of scripture. Jesus did not fit their images of God, and so they had him crucified.

God knows our images of him cause problems. There is a reason that God told the people of Israel they must not make a graven image of God. As soon as we make an image — whether the image is stone or a theological model — that image becomes for us God. The God-images we create then become idols.

But God knows we create images of him because our brains are hard wired to need images. We need conceptualizations and models. If we don't have them, then we create them.

God told us not to make images of him. But God in his wisdom and compassion recognized our need for an image, and so God gave us a self-image.

In the time of Caesar Augustus, while Quirinius was governor of Syria, God spoke. And God's Word was born of the Virgin Mary, and was made a man. *Verbum caro factum est* — the Word was made flesh.

The author of Colossians wrote that Christ "is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15).

When God spoke and his Word was made flesh, God told us what we need to know about him. When God spoke, God gave us a self-image. It is not an image made of stone or an image made from theological speculation. Instead, it is a living and dynamic image formed from Jesus' loving actions.

In Christ, we see a man who had compassion on the poor and weak, who healed the sick, who raised the dead, and who forgave and loved even those who hurt and betrayed him. We see a man who argued with religious leaders because he had no patience for their theologies of exclusion and discrimination. We see a man who did not cling to status, wealth, power, or even life itself.

Everything we think we know about God must be measured against God's own self-image in Jesus who was and is Incarnate Love. If our images — our conceptualizations — our theological models — don't mesh with God's Incarnate Love, then our images are saying more about us than they are about God. As Past-Presiding Bishop Michael Curry often says, "If it's not about love, then it's not about God."

Jesus Christ — the Word made flesh — is the image of the invisible God, but St. Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8 that the Spirit of Christ dwells within us. When we hear that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, it means that Jesus walked in Judah and Samaria during the reign of the emperors Augustus and Tiberias. But it also

**A Different
Theology of the
Incarnation
(cont.)**

means that the Spirit of Christ dwells within us here and now. God's self-image of Incarnate Love dwells within us.

Verbum caro factum hic est: the Word was made flesh here — now — in our own hearts, and we manifest God's self-image through our love.



Milestones: Welcome the Newly Professed

Myka Lahaie

Myka Lahaie lives in Allegany, New York, and is an Assistant Professor of Theology and Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University. She was first drawn to this way of life while in graduate school, seeing it as something that complements her theological study and helps to keep her accountable to a life of ongoing discernment about what it means to give expression to this gospel way of life. In speaking about her experience in formation, she says, "I have learned so much through encountering the wisdom and insights of my novice counselors, participants in the novice classes, and the members of my fellowship. I am excited to continue this journey with you all and contribute to the order in whatever ways I can."

Editor's Addendum



Myka's latest publications include "Kierkegaard and Gift: The Problem with 'Kenotic Love' in Light of Kierkegaard's 'Gift Theory'" *Modern Theology* 36 (2) (April 2020): pp. 336-357; "Givenness, 'Mystery,' and the Question of Nature and Grace: Reading Marion with the Help of Josef Pieper." *Modern Theology* (published online April 2, 2022); and "The Gift of a Penny as 'Counter-Experience' in Kierkegaard's Discourses: Humility, Detachment, and the Hidden Significance of Things" *Philosophies* 9 (4) (August 2024): 124. ★

Glen Southergill

Glen Southergill has never walked a straight line in his faith journey!

Born in Connecticut and educated in Arizona and South Carolina, Glen is now a husband, a father of two girls, and a professor of writing who lives in Butte, Montana. After a young adulthood spent outside our faith tradition, he began following Christ in the Franciscan tradition shortly after his Confirmation into the Episcopal Church.

Two formative experiences influenced him to go in the way of the Franciscan tradition. The first occurred when reading scripture for the first time with an inquirer's gaze in preparation for his marital vows.



Scripture grabbed him and challenged him, as it still often does. The second was joining in prayer with beloved family and friends at the bedside of his grandfather as he died. Glen felt intensely guided in unexpected ways. These experiences mirror where Glen still turns for guidance: scripture, community, and prayer.

Glen serves in a variety of roles, from Lay Leader and Lay Preacher to employment as a professor at Montana Tech with strengths in environmental and health-related studies. Through TSSF formation, he gained a deeper appreciation for contemplation and deep

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Milestones: Welcome the Newly Professed (cont.)

Glen Southergill (Cont.) listening within creation. And with the Lord's help, he's very curious for what comes next on his path.

His siblings in TSSF are invited to contact him at any time for prayer or conversation, since he is deeply grateful for the Order and all in it. ★

Suzy McCall

I have been serving as a missionary in Honduras, Central America, since 1990. I grew up in the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina and came to the field with SAMS, a sending agency of the Anglican/Episcopal Churches (<https://samsusa.org/>). My adopted children are Mary Elizabeth (34), Noah (33), Maria Leticia (29), Ethan (21), Lucy (18), and JoJo (10). I am a single woman with loads of children!



I founded and work with a missionary institute called LAMB (<https://lambinstitute.org/>). In the capital city of Tegucigalpa, we have an inner-city school/daycare with other neighborhood programs, a children's home, and a small home for teenage mothers. We say that we are "following the Lamb wherever He goes" (Rev. 14: 4).

Three years ago, I went on a 30-day silent retreat of the Ignatian Exercises. For a long time before that experience, I had been drawn into a more contemplative spirituality, having spent most of my life working very hard without a balance of rhythm and rule. The Exercises gave me a thirst for more intentional spiritual community, so I went online and found TSSF. Our missionary work focuses on children and youth who have been trapped in societal structures created by generational injustice and corruption. We are peacemakers who attempt to straighten crooked roads in the name of Jesus.

My TSSF community is the Latin American branch with Franciscan brothers and sisters all over Central and South America. Last year I was able to visit Assisi with three of my children, and while standing in Clare's quarters within San Damiano, the Spirit said to me, "She is one of your spiritual mothers." That set me on a path to know Clare in a deeper way, which has also deepened my understanding of Francis's calling and vision.

Thank you for welcoming me into TSSF!

[**Editor's Note.** Please visit the LAMB website — you will be awed by the work that Suzy and her compatriots are accomplishing. The website offers many ways to partner, support, and join in their work.] ★

Milestones: Rest in Peace

**Margaret Ibara
— Professed
50 Years**

Issue # 12 of the *Franciscan Newsletter* of 1974 congratulated Margaret on her profession on August 15 of that year. In 2014, the *Franciscan Times* congratulated her on her 40th anniversary of profession.

She was 93 when she died.



Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Terrance Goodpasture — Professed 20 Years



Bishop Rice (TSSF Bishop Protector) and Deacon Terrance

He was 56 years old when he died August 15.

He was ordained deacon by our Bishop Protector, David Rice, December 1, 2018.

To see Deacon Goodpasture's final sermon at Episcopal Church of St Anne, Stockton, California, August 2018, click here <https://fb.watch/v6U576nGjz/>. He then went to St. James Episcopal Cathedral in Fresno, California, where he served as Creation Care coordinator for the diocese.

In 2019, Terrance was an organizer of Pilgrimage of Hope, a march to raise awareness about the plight of undocumented persons and refugees. It proceeded 173 miles from St. James Cathedral in Fresno to Sacramento, the state capital, for an observance of California's Immigrant Day of Action.

Terrance also preached a short sermon on St. Francis while at St. James Episcopal Cathedral in October 2020, and you can view it here <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17Zsx8evFv/>.

He left St. James Cathedral in 2021, and, this April, moved to Montgomery, Texas.

From Bishop Rice

“Deacon Terrance Goodpasture was a faithful Deacon, Franciscan, friend, colleague, and family member. He was much loved for his kindness and gentleness and generosity. He showed quiet strength amid substantial challenges. And he will be remembered for his snorting laughter, his snarky sense of humor, and his mischievous smile. And most of all, our beloved Terrance will be remembered for the goodness he reflected in his life and the care and thoughtfulness he brought to all relationships.

May our good friend and brother rest in peace and rise in glory.”



Scott Lee Faulkner — Novice 2 Months



Obituary from Williamson Memorial Funeral Home

Scott Lee Faulkner, MD: Devoted husband, father, and grandfather; dedicated parishioner of St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Franklin, TN; avid supporter of Vanderbilt sports; perpetual student of life, family, and the human condition; and faithfully ardent dog parent — passed peacefully on to the next stage of his continuing education on Wednesday, October 9, 2024. He is survived by Katie Louise Faulkner, his wife of 32 years; his four children, four grandchildren, and his Boston terrier, Beatrice.

Scott was born on June 1, 1943, to H. Lee and Christina Sutch Faulkner in Towson, Maryland, during the height of World War II. His father was a Baltimore food broker who instilled in Scott the crucial importance of education and life-long learning. Scott took these lessons to heart, attending the Gilman School and Princeton University, where he was a member of men's a capella groups The Traveling Men and Tiger Tones.

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Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Scott Lee
Faulkner**
(cont.)

He then received his Medical Doctorate from Johns Hopkins University, followed by a residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville.

The tumultuous and transformative era of his birth inspired a lifelong patriotism and love of his fellow Americans, leading inevitably to Scott's enlistment in the U.S. Navy from 1977 to 1979 as a flight surgeon aboard the U.S.S. Saratoga. Following this service, Scott started his own practice in cardio-thoracic and vascular surgery in Montgomery, Alabama.

It was through this medical practice that Scott met the love of his life in Katie Austin, and they were married in 1992. For Scott and Katie, this marriage wasn't only a second chance at lifelong love and devotion, but a beautiful merging of families, the gains of which would come to include grandchildren from both sides who were destined to become a central focus of his happiness, his purpose, and his legacy. In Katie, Scott found a true life partner; a soulmate on whom he could forever rely and depend, and who would walk through all the highs and lows beside him until his last day. Together, Scott and Katie traveled and traveled, celebrated and grieved, learned, lost, lived, prayed, and endured.

Scott continued his surgical practice in Montgomery for 27 years, retiring in 2006 to Franklin, Tennessee. In true Scott Faulkner fashion, his "retirement" was anything but. In many ways, this closing of a chapter began a new life for Scott, and he poured his intellect and curiosity into a myriad of interests and passions. He dived into his genealogy. He ran two half-marathons. He attended Vanderbilt baseball, basketball, and football games, and brought his grandchildren with him. He traveled to Israel. He became a Stephen Minister through St. Paul's Church, providing one-on-one attention, care, and ministry to community members suffering through difficult times. He was a Novice in the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis. Scott's focus as a physician in time transmuted from healing bodies to healing souls, mirroring Scott's own emerging spiritual education.

This is not to say that Scott left physical healing behind — in his retirement, he began a second medical career as a wound care physician in Nashville — but he found ways in which to bring his lifetime of medical knowledge and expertise to bear on healing his community in any ways he could. He was known among his fellow parishioners as someone who would accompany them to doctor's appointments, translating for the surgeons and physicians into layman's terms. As a patient himself later in life, he embodied the characteristic doctor/patient: admirably difficult. Specialists and pathologists would look stunned when they discovered the quiet elderly man they had been peppering with questions and advice was himself a retired surgeon. He always handled their chagrin with the air of a well-meaning but critical professor.

Scott's life began yet again when he became a grandfather. He would eventually be fortunate enough to claim four grandchildren, each of whom represented the apex of his pride and happiness. Soccer games, ballet and

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

Scott Lee Faulkner (cont.)

piano recitals, plays, rowing regattas, choir performances — no interest or endeavor his grandchildren could undertake would be missed or uncelebrated. Scott frequently crossed the country to attend these events. Win or lose, his response was always one of praise and encouragement. More locally, Scott was a dedicated “taxi service” for his grandkids. No matter what personal project or research was dominating his attention at the time, all would be dropped if someone needed a pickup from school or a ride to practice. These rides inevitably would include a milkshake or ice cream cone by the end, making his car the preferred mode of transportation among his progeny.

Somehow through all this love and devotion — for spouse, for children, for grandchildren, for community — Scott still had room enough in his heart for his dogs. A lifelong lover of dogs, Scott was rarely apart from one. His and Katie’s dogs traveled nearly everywhere with them and received the same treatment as a valued family member. Neighbors would not likely recognize Scott on the sidewalk if Beatrice wasn’t walking alongside him on her leash.

In the end, despite his Princeton days, his service on an aircraft carrier, and the decades of surgical care, Scott’s most lasting legacy is in his family and in the community he loved and served. It would be an insurmountable task to trace the lives changed and bettered by his involvement, but those beloved by him and who cherish him were ever-present in his final days, which were passed in the company of friends and family. ★

Book Reviews

Another Christ: Rediscovering Jesus, Francis and Discipleship Today, by Andrew D. Mayes, TSSF

Review by John Rebstock

In September 2023, not long before the current war in Gaza and Israel erupted, Terry Doyle and I were fortunate to participate in a pilgrimage sponsored by St. George’s College in Jerusalem. St. George’s College is an Anglican institution, part of the complex that includes the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr, a Pilgrim Guest House, and the offices of the Diocese of Jerusalem. We read books, heard lectures, and visited holy sites both human-made and natural.

Seeing the sites where Jesus lived, preached and healed in and around Jerusalem and Galilee was deeply enriching in visualizing the Biblical narrative. Further, since indigenous Christians in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza are primarily Palestinians, St. George’s enables pilgrims to visit and worship with Arab-speaking congregations in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

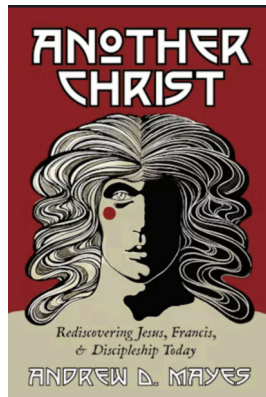
Andrew Mayes, a professed member of TSSF from England, has spent time at St. George’s College as Course Director, encountering both recent scholarship and immersing himself in the physical setting of the historical Jesus. (Terry and I had a different Course Director for our pilgrimage, so I have never met Mayes.) While Terry and I only spent two weeks on pilgrimage, Mayes’ repeated experiences lend a palpable immediacy and authenticity to the stories and analysis he provides.

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Book Reviews (cont.)

**Another
Christ:
Rediscovering
Jesus, Francis
and
Discipleship
Today
(cont.)**



As a Franciscan, Mayes draws on the lives of both Jesus and Francis in this book. Mayes challenges readers to rethink their understanding of ministry, calling for a radical re-envisioning of what it means to follow Christ in today's world. In that regard, the book adds to recent efforts from tertiaries in our own Province, such as *Radical Grace and the Economy* by Gary Russell (podcast, workbook, and YouTube series), and *Sacred Ecology* by Jeff Gollhofer. Mayes' approach is deeply rooted in both theological insight and historical context. Drawing from his years spent in the Holy Land and his deep engagement with the life of St. Francis, Mayes presents a vision of discipleship that is adventurous, bold, and transformative. Each chapter portrays Christ in a different, often startling light — Christ as a builder, a mystic, a rebel, and even a jester — inviting us to expand our own spiritual practices and perceptions of faith.

One of the key themes is the rediscovery of Jesus through recent scholarship, which Mayes blends with reflections on contemporary Christian living. His focus is not only on abstract theology but is also a reflection on how images of Christ can energize and inspire modern ministry. The inclusion of St. Francis as a living model of “another Christ” amplifies this message. The book juxtaposes the radical, counter-cultural aspects of both Jesus and Francis, urging us to break out of complacency and engage with the world in new, bold ways.

A significant portion of the book reflects on how St. Francis embodied these radical characteristics of Christ. Mayes emphasizes how Francis, “another Christ,” lived with an audacity that Christians today can learn from. Although not aimed exclusively at tertiaries, Mayes' inclusion of Franciscan spirituality and references to our Principles provide a useful lens through which members of TSSF can rediscover our own calling to be “another Christ” where we live.

Mayes provides reflection questions and prayer exercises at the end of each chapter. These additions make the book not only an intellectual pursuit but also a spiritual practice. It is an ideal resource for shared formation in the context of TSSF fellowship meetings. These questions and exercises invite personal and communal transformation.

To illustrate these points, I offer examples from one chapter, on solitude. In this chapter, Mayes explains how Jesus experienced solitude and retreat in different ways to support his ministry. In the Wilderness, the Transfiguration, and Gethsemane, Jesus withdrew to discern his vocation. Solitude was also a time of healing grief, such as at the death of John the Baptist. After conflicts, such as with the Pharisees, Jesus spent time alone to renew his focus. Jesus also spent time in solitary prayer to learn, meditate, and conceptualize what he would go on to preach.

Mayes then references early Franciscan documents to recall how Francis embodied these same practices of retreat, meditation, and solitary prayer. Finally, Mayes provides questions at the end of each chapter for reflection or discussion (very useful to support fellowship conversations); a suggestion for a prayer exercise (another helpful vehicle to share experiences); and suggestions for further reading.

Another Christ supports spiritual renewal and challenges us as tertiaries to live out our charism with renewed commitment. The book helps us look beyond conventional images of Christ and, with Francis by our side, to embrace service in the world with a sense of adventure, courage, and joy.

Resource Publications (Wipf and Stock: Eugene Oregon), 2024, 204 pages, ISBN-13: 979-8385227389; pbk \$25, Kindle \$9.99



Book Reviews (cont.)

***White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class Can Reconstruct American Democracy* by Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove**

Review by Diana Turner-Forte

White Poverty is a clarion call encouraging a revolutionary upsurge in community-building, namely a community that intertwines a spectrum of human beings, moving beyond color and ingrained divisions perpetuated by untruths and misrepresented history. Dr. William J. Barber II reminds us that we can no longer allow false narratives to thwart American democracy. Drawing upon statistical information that has not been fully disclosed, interviews with thousands of people from the hills of Kentucky to Washington state, and a lifetime involvement in social justice through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Repairers of the Breach, and the Poor People's Campaign, Dr. Barber speaks from his heart and first-hand experience. The book is filled with hope, compassion, and is rooted in Christianity. Collecting stories from all across America, Dr. Barber came to a deep understanding of "the way each person's voice is tied to their dignity."

After laying a historical foundation of poverty studies rooted in a number of factors but specifically tied to corporate greed, Barber demonstrates that millions of Americans are affected by poverty. From low-wage workers and children experiencing food insecurity, to unsafe drinking water, and inadequate health care, these are four myths that Dr. Barber has proven can be overcome.

The first myth — that pale skin exonerates one from a shared interest in studying poverty — is dismantled with numbers demonstrating that the majority of the poor have paler skin. Myths two and three suggest that only Black people want change in America, and therefore, it's a Black issue. The fourth myth is that it's not possible to overcome division. Barber's ability to draw diverse groups of people together around common issues, encourage them to share their stories, and work together for change has impacted policies and prompted movements that prove anything is possible with God.

White Poverty is a sobering look at what has been happening in America for decades and proposes that with knowledge, persistent involvement, and shared responsibility, massive change could occur rapidly. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove's chapter weaves stories from his childhood through the memories of his grandmothers. He shares how these older women experienced long hours standing in textile mills barely earning enough money for food and the basics of life, still being able to provide a roof over their heads and a place for young Jonathan to enjoy a meal, safety, and community. It wasn't until adulthood and meeting Dr. Barber that Jonathan came to the realization that his grandmother's affordable housing was made possible through policy and political changes that emerged out of the active engagement of Black Americans. Unapologetically, he writes: "The apartment complex that was my childhood playground was a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) community for senior citizens, and much of the food Granny Taylor shared with us was paid for by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)."

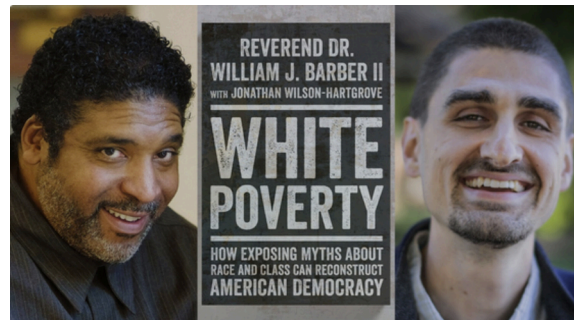
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Book Reviews (cont.)

White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class Can Reconstruct American Democracy

In closing, Dr. Barber says: “...we simply have to allow ourselves to be caught up in the moral fusion movement that is accelerating toward love, justice, and mercy for all.” Dr. Barber and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove invite everyone to participate in this “moral fusion movement”, because how we respond is urgent and affects us all.

Liveright Publishing Corp (a division of W. W. Norton & Co) (2024) 288 pages, hardcover and kindle. (ISBN 978-1-324-09487-6) hbk \$18.19, Kindle \$9.99.



Review by Dennis McLeavey

Experiencing God: Faith Narratives of Episcopalians, Ian S. Markham and Kimberly E. Dunn, eds.

Should a book review begin with a warning that the book’s contents may upset what you think about God and, more importantly, how you experience God? One seldom encounters such a weird book, one that opens up new vistas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This reviewer is presenting no footnotes and only asking the reader to research authors, such as the author of the second chapter. This review can possibly be a simple gateway to an endless set of experiences. Are Episcopalians meant to be relatively affluent, white, middle class, well-educated, somewhat reserved, grounded in reason, and wed to intellectual tradition? At a recent Fellowship meeting with a question prompt, “When are the times in spiritual direction that I feel as if I have touched the heart of spiritual direction?” some discussion ensued about the requirement for Franciscans to have a spiritual director, but no mention of the word “love” surfaced. Religious affection does not seem to be a normal part of Episcopal practice.

Experiencing God has seventeen chapters — the first seven entitled “Living Aware of God” and the rest entitled “Broad Experiences of God in Eucharist, People, and Art.” The first four could have been entitled “Experiencing God through Miracles.” With just about all the chapters written by priests and bishops, it’s not surprising that some become homily-like. All chapters are followed by three discussion questions. The breadth of topics ranges from metaphysics to servant leadership. Ways of experiencing God range from music and Eucharist, to community and reading. Struggles with belief are part of the picture. What stands out clearly is the cry of those excluded and their welcome by God. Reading this book’s discussion of music and community may lead you to experience liturgy differently.

In “Dance with Me,” the very first chapter of *Experiencing God*, we read a poem about the joining of two lovers as tributaries joining a river. After a

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Book Reviews (cont.)

Experiencing God: Faith Narratives of Episcopalians (cont.)

refreshing mention that “God desires people to live abundant, wholesome lives free from guilt and oppression,” the author tells a story of her mystical experience. An avid reader of scripture, she agrees with her husband that she might spend a weekend by herself to be with God. The rest of her story can make one uncomfortable, as suggested by the comfort-level question at the end of the chapter. At any rate, she had never used a particular sheer, white negligee given to her 11 years earlier at her bridal shower. God asked her to pack the negligee. At the motel, she puts on the negligee with anticipation. God then says, “Dance with Me,” the title of the chapter. As she does, she is united with God and lost in the music and the aroma of the room. Well, we cannot accuse this author of avoiding the word “love” in her answer to how she experienced God. [Editors Note. This chapter seems to echo nuptial mysticism from Beguine spirituality that originated in the Low Countries in the 13th century. It was inspired by the ideas of Bernard of Clairvaux, especially his use of imagery from the *Canticle of Canticles*. Beatrice of Nazareth, Julian of Norwich, and Hadewijch of Antwerp wrote books exploring this type of mysticism.]

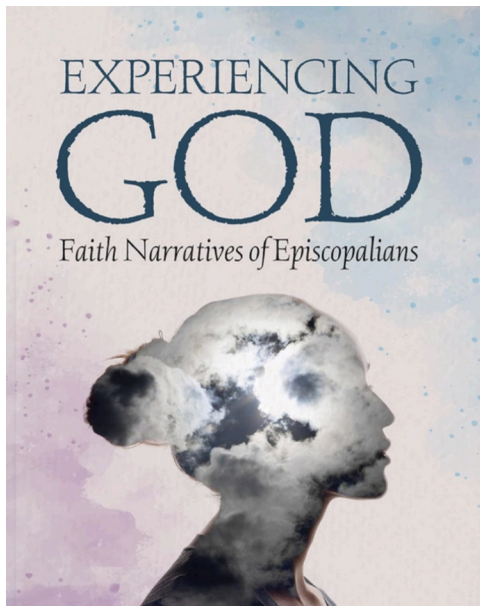
In the second chapter, “Beyond Your Wildest Imagining,” we are taken back to 2003 and the anti-diversity of those days. When we read Psalm 27, we are probably asking God to defend us from our enemies, perhaps people who don’t like us or who deride us. Few of us have death threats from enemies. Previously, as a seminarian insecure about his ability to live up to his calling, the author of this second chapter had a vision of Christ encouraging him.

Had he been a junior seminarian in the Roman Catholic Church in the 1960s, he would have been expelled for being gay. When he was voted in as a bishop in the Episcopal Church in 2003, a wind blew through the church where the vote took place. Struggling with death threats in the following years, he loved Psalm 27, but he struggled with prayer. To touch the heart of spiritual direction, his director encouraged him to stop talking in his prayer and just listen. His experience then became one of being replenished daily by prayer to have the energy to carry out his calling to be a bishop.

We are next presented with “Saying Yes to a Slow Dance with God,” which relates the experience of a Black woman who converted from her Baptist roots to become Episcopalian so that she could become a priest. She presents her story of Jesus appearing to her and calming her with light when she was praying for her sister, whose intense headaches never led to any diagnosis or cure. Her prayers were answered, but her story challenges the unanswered prayers of others who have also prayed

fervently for a brother or sister.

Fortunately, the fourth chapter, “God’s in Me, Too,” recounts a powerful experience that does not at first evoke challenging questions. The chapter



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Book Reviews (cont.)

***Experiencing
God: Faith
Narratives of
Episcopalians,***
(cont.)

author's description of her love for her studies as a ballet dancer and her feelings of God's presence in her dancing stay in the realm of normal. What becomes unusual is her description of leg injuries that terminate her dance career before she rests and recuperates for a long time with contemplation and a still mind. Never to dance again is turned on its head when the injuries have disappeared on a subsequent visit to the doctor. [Editor's Note. This chapter was reprinted in the Summer 2024 issue.]

Thin places are where the separation between heaven and earth almost disappears. The most poignant chapter for this reviewer was the one by the priest reflecting on "who sinned, this man or his/her parents?", as he and his wife dealt with Emily, their Down syndrome child.

God's presence in Emily reminds me of my parents' reaction to my statement as a 10-year-old almost seventy years ago that Terry, my younger brother, would go to Heaven. Terry, you see, had brain damage as a result of either a faulty inoculation or a mosquito bite and infection. In response to my assertion coming from my childish faith, there was a peaceful and beautiful glance between my parents that momentarily relieved the turmoil of my parents' constant struggle with Terry. This book is richly filled with invitations to thin places.

Cascade Books (Wipf and Stock Eugene OR, 2024) ISBN: 978-1666772487; 154 pages; hbk \$30.10; pbk \$20.46; Kindle \$9.99.★

Reviewed by Janet Strickler

***The Year in
Liturgy and
Church
History
Through a
Cathedral
Window:
Featuring the
Art and
Stained Glass
Windows at
the Cathedral
of St. Phillip,
Atlanta,
Georgia*** (2005)
by Ken
Brownlee

As an artist, a liturgist, and a fan of stained glass, I found this book by our Companion Ken Brownlee very enjoyable. In an unusual and creative way, he has used the liturgical year as a structure for looking at the many beautiful stained-glass windows in the Cathedral of St. Philip, Atlanta, GA. I've never seen a book organized this way, and it (almost) makes me wish I lived in Georgia, so I could now go look at the windows in the Cathedral in a whole new light!

The book begins with a minimal introduction to stained glass, to the liturgical year, and to the Cathedral itself. And then it dives right in to the seasons of the church year, with a page for each of the Sundays of Advent, then the Christmas and Epiphany seasons, and so on. For pretty much every week of the liturgical year, he has identified sections of the windows (and sometimes other art) in the Cathedral that correlate with the lectionary lessons for that week.

Here is one of my favorites, chosen to illustrate Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor."

After finishing the church year, Brownlee turns his attention to various saints, including a two-page spread about St. Francis, with a lovely modern window based on the Peace Prayer. There are also windows depicting various historical figures in the Anglican and Episcopal Churches.

Book Reviews (cont.)

I came away from reading this book with a renewed admiration for the handiwork of the stained-glass artisans who made it, from the late 19th century all the way into the 1960s. But even more than that, I came away with a great admiration for the depth of attention that Ken Brownlee has paid to those windows, to how closely he has studied them over many years as a Cathedral Tour Guide.



The Touched Garment window
from the Cathedral of St.
Phillip, Atlanta, Georgia

When I step into a church with lovely stained glass, I tend to see it as a whole — a field of beautiful color, and maybe to notice one or two imposing figures. However, I've never thought to look so deeply into all the many scenes that appear in smaller sections and in the midst of tracery, let alone to go looking for pieces that portray particular stories from scriptures in the lectionary.

While this isn't a fancy or professionally published book, I think it will be of interest and enjoyable to people of faith, especially those who love liturgy and who love to discover artistic expressions of the stories that are so familiar to us.

[The author has gifted a copy of this book to our Provincial library for circulation.]



A Poem:
The Fringe of
Jesus's Cloak
(Mark 6: 56)
By Ken
Brownlee
(Companion)

The people came from miles around
To find where Jesus rested.
Just to touch the fringe of His cloak
Is all that they requested.

For in that simple touch of cloth
They knew that there was healing;
And all God's love and saving grace
Was what they would be feeling.

For Jesus, tired as He was,
Looked with mercy on these in need,
Just as today His healing touch
Remains as His holy deed.

We, too, can come to where Christ rests
And seek His holy blessing.
For in Christ's sacred body and blood
Our need for love confessing.

The cloak of Jesus and its fringe
Is easy for us to reach.
The only thing that we really need
Is the love that Jesus came to teach:

God's Kingdom, it is everywhere
For all of us to share.
It is within that Kingdom
Where we'll find Christ's loving care.

His cloak we'll find in many places:
In blood-stained bandage or beggar's hovel,
We must not fear to touch such cloaks,
For these are the fringes of Christ's own mantle.

113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis: The Silents to TV Miniseries (1911-2024) — Part 3

**48 Years of
Liliana Cavani's
Francis: *Francis
of Assisi* (1966),
Francesco (1989)
and *Francesco*
(2014)**

By Your Provincial Librarians: R. John Brockmann, Janice Syedullah, Neil Tumber and, beginning with this Part, special European Province Guest, Paul Alexander — Director and Star of *Finding Francis* (2015)

In 2015, Liliana Cavani was interviewed about all three of her Francis movies. Here are three questions-and-answers from that interview. (Pisanello, 2015)

What is it about the figure of Francis that has driven you to make three films on him?

The fact that Francis never pretended to teach anything to anyone. Out of his immense love for Jesus, he simply tried to live Gospel values as best he could by loving all of God's creatures. It is an extraordinary thing when a human being no longer desires to excel above his brothers and sisters; when a human being actually prefers to be 'the last'.

I know many people who use the gift of intelligence to gain status for themselves, and sometimes, when they actually do achieve high standing in society, they become very vain and arrogant. They put their heart and soul into climbing the social ladder without realizing that they are losing something of the utmost importance, which, however, seems without any value to them, but which is, instead, the deeper meaning of their lives.

Francis, on the other hand, wishes to remain faithful to his relationship of love to Jesus, and goes on a deep search for life's real meaning. For him the Gospel is the "discovery within the discovery," because it is the annunciation of the meaning of life for all creatures. This faith-certainty becomes the drive behind all his deeds. All creatures form a fraternal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pope John Paul II invited you to the Vatican when he wanted to see your second film on St. Francis. What do you remember of that event?

It was during the Feast of the Epiphany in 1990, and I remember it was a very rainy day. I was admitted into a hall where I saw the Pope with a few of his closest aides. I was seated next to him, and every now and then it was clear that he was feeling deeply moved by the film. He would touch my arm from time to time during the screening. At the end, we parted with a big hug.

What sources did you draw from in making this latest film?

I made my first film back in 1966 after stumbling across the figure of Francis almost by chance. Somebody had given me the book *Life of St. Francis of Assisi* by Paul Sabatier, published in 1894. It was such a wonderful introduction into the life St. Francis that I felt compelled to know more about him, so I read *A Unique Saint*, a 1952 book by Joseph Lortz, a more modern account of his life. However, when I made that first film even the historical documents on Francis, the *Franciscan*

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113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis — Part 3 (cont.)

Sources, had still to be published in their entirety, and, in 1966, interest in St. Francis was not as great as it is now.

I have, by now, read dozens of books on St. Francis. One of the latest writers on the saint is Chiara Frugoni, who has given a very interesting description of the relationship between Francis and Clare. Other interesting studies have recently been conducted by Jacques Le Goff and other scholars of the Middle Ages.

On the subject of the Crusades, which are described in my latest film, I studied, along with my colleagues, the highly informative book *The Saint and the Sultan* by Paul Moses, the veteran American journalist.

With all this new knowledge bubbling inside of me, I just knew I had to make a third film on my hero.

***Francis of Assisi* (1966) — television movie available on YouTube in Italian**

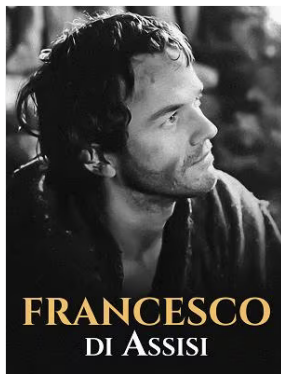
Francis of Assisi was Cavani's first feature film and the first film produced by the RAI (Italy's national broadcasting network). It incorporates a realism and visual weight that Cavani had developed in her earlier documentary work. The film enjoyed enormous success because it reflected the cultural and societal changes occurring in Italy in the 1960s. Cavani's 1966 Francis is a youth challenging authority in all its forms — family, church, state — awakening to the new and often destabilizing forces at work in the world. (Gariff, 2018.)

Reviews — Can You Offer Other Insights for Francis of Assisi (1966)?

John Brockmann — Not understanding Italian (there are no subtitles), yet being familiar with Francis's story and its key figures, and concentrating on Cavani's many closeups on faces, I learned much. I came to understand Francis's sociological contexts: "the villagers" of Assisi and his band of early followers. His context with the poor is not romanticized; they sometimes bully Francis or riot over his meager alms. This Francis is not an isolated saint, but a man deeply anchored in his contexts. This Francis struggling to the end with even the words to say to a crowd of his brothers passes Scorsese's "reverential test." There is no halo.

Neil Tumber — Dark, brooding black and white film that shows St. Francis as he struggles with his call to devote his life to following Jesus. For much of the film, Francis says almost nothing: all his emotion is conveyed by facial expression — a combination of fear, frustration, and failure. Very occasionally do we see any joy. Those moments are uplifting! I don't think the film maker understood Francis, and it is the film maker's emotions that the actor playing Francis shows us.

Paul Alexander — This may not be the film to entice newcomers to the Franciscan story, but it is an absolute must for those wanting to extend their understanding of Francis because the film is beautifully constructed. A slow moving, black and white journey through the life of Francis starting in the brutal workshop of his father's cloth factory through to Francis's death outside the Portiuncula does not sound like an appealing way to spend two hours when the dialogue is Italian with no subtitles. Its slow episodic scenes allow the viewer to make up their own minds about what Francis is thinking.



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113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis — Part 3 (cont.)

***Francesco* (1989) — Provincial Library has a copy (also available on YouTube)**

Cavani's screenplay for this second version of Francis's biography was adapted from Hermann Hesse's 1904 book, *Francis of Assisi*. Hesse focused on Francis as the initiator of a religious movement and wrote:

*Those who disdain to drink from murky waters, who are not satisfied with simulacra, who are not satisfied with a name instead of substance, nor with an image instead of reality, are also those who want to return to the first sources of all energy and of every life: they are the great initiates on the path of wisdom.***

Dark and gothic, *Francesco* is a complete reversal of the traditional religious biopic. This version of Francis's biography focuses on his struggle with the growth, leadership, and management of his movement that he neither sought nor wanted. The movie also focuses on the struggle Francis faced with holding to his gospel ideal in the face of calls for a "more realistic" approach to this life. Any spiritual aspects are portrayed through emotional growth of the characters and the expressions visible in their faces. Cavani doesn't shy away from the more unpleasant aspects of Francesco's life, including the ugliest aspects of poverty and behavior bordering on insanity. (*Francesco*, Mondo Digital)



Francesco received multiple awards, including substantial recognition for Cavani, who was nominated for the Palm D'Or at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival.

Reviews—Can You Offer Other Insights for *Francesco* (1989)?

John Brockmann — Cavani's 1966 version, as in all previous movies, presented Francis's story as an unvarnished documentary. In this second version, Cavani pulls the curtain back on those who interpreted and shaped the "Francis" we know. The movie does this by jumping out of the chronological narrative eight times to a tent where we see a few of the first brothers and Clare recall, interpret, and shape memories of Francis, which Br. Leone (Leo?) writes in a book, ostensibly *The Legend of the Three Companions* — one of the first documents that "captured" the earliest oral recollections of Francis. Is this the first Franciscan meta-cinema?

** [Editor's Note
Hesse's 1904 book has yet to be translated into English. It is 84 pages long, and I have a copy in German. If you help translate this, please contact John Brockmann, editor]

Neil Tumber — Francis, dirty, covered in sores, struggling to find his God. Francis barely speaking, hardly praying, fighting his calling. Clare sits on a hillside with some of Francis's companions to remember and write down stories from his life. I found this rugged realism tough to watch; very difficult to see Franciscan love and joy in this portrayal and yet, this is Francis's story, too: contending with hunger, illness, and spiritual agonies. Very important, I think, to watch this film to balance the idealistic, air-brushed, clean and happy "poverty" given in other images of St. Francis.

Paul Alexander — In this film Francis, played by the handsome American film star Mickey Rourke, looks like a boxer and Clare, played by the beautiful English rose, Helena Bonham Carter, looks like a bemused angel. The film is episodic, without always providing links, is historically

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113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis — Part 3 (cont.)

inaccurate in its account of Clare, and whimsical in its not quite touching on a romantic attachment between the two of them. Yet for all this, the film is magical. It made me fall in love with Francis and, if you view Clare as his Lady Poverty, her strange presence throughout becomes, at the very end, heartbreaking.

Francesco (2014)—TV movie



The 2014 version, a two-part miniseries for RAI (like her first Francis project), repositions the tale for young, contemporary audiences. It narrates the saint's life through the eyes of two of those who were closest to him, Saint Claire of Assisi and Brother Elias. Like the earlier versions, it chronicles Francis's wealthy upbringing, his conversion, his embracing of poverty, his turbulent relationship with his father, the birth of the Franciscan movement, the problems with its organization, and his death.

Unlike earlier versions, this one dedicates significant screen time to Francis's part in the Fifth Crusade, his meeting with Sultan Al Malik-Al Kamil, and his failed efforts to stop the battles between Muslims and Christians. This additional material draws on new research (Moses et al.) about Francis's travels and implicitly repositions the saint's plea for peace between religions in the context of contemporary post-9/11 Muslim-Christian tensions. (Brooks, 2019, 77)

Unfortunately, it is not currently available except in snippets on YouTube in Italian. ★

“The Hippie Saint” — Brother Sun, Sister Moon (1972) Provincial Library has English version

(This film exists in two different versions. There is the original Italian version of *Fratello sole sorella luna* (137 minutes), which premiered in Italy at Easter 1972. More widely available is the English version of 120 minutes, which premiered in New York City on Christmas 1972. The Italian version is longer and has better continuity and character development than the English version. (Christensen, Part 2, pp. 46-9))

The ultimate popular-culture expression of Francis as hippie is this movie. The director, Franco Zeffirelli, intended it that way. “Francis had everything from the Establishment...[but he] didn't want any part of all this,” he explained. And elsewhere: “The words Francis says to his father are echoed by many young people to their parents nowadays, in Italy, Europe,

America...” Indeed, Zeffirelli and several early collaborators had initially wanted to engage the Beatles for the film, with Paul McCartney starring as St. Francis. Although that plan fell through — perhaps fortunately — they claimed that the Beatles ‘were fascinated with the figure of St. Francis, whose philosophies struck a deep chord with them.’” (Appelbaum, 126)

The movie analysis website, *Rotten Tomatoes*, reveals a large split on this film, with reviewers giving it 42% (out of 100) and the Audience Score being 77% (out of 100). The *New York Times*'s critic, Vincent Canby,



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113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis — Part 3 (cont.)



“The Hippie Saint” — *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*

described it as: “a big, absurd doodad, a movie that confuses simplicity with simple-mindedness and that makes saintliness look like an extreme form of Asian flu.” Critic Roger Ebert wrote in the *Chicago Sun-Times*: “*Brother Sun, Sister Moon* is a big, limp Valentine of a movie, filled with an excess of sweetness and light.” The sweetness and light may derive from the fact that the movie only covers the early part of Francis’s life up to the time he brings his rule to be approved by the pope (played by Alec Guinness who five years later would reappear as Obi-Wan Kenobi). Missing is the Stigmata, his blindness, the diseases of his later years, and the organizational struggles that Cavani details.

However, as a representative of the audience that has enjoyed the film for years giving it a 77%, here is the recollection of the long-time editor of *Sojourners* magazine, Jim Wallis:

“I was completely unprepared for my first meeting with the saint. I left the theater stunned and speechless. On the way home in the dark car, I quietly began to weep. Never before have I encountered a life so consumed with the gospel...His utter obedience to Christ was radiant in exposing the places where my commitment was still compromised... I cried that night because my faith seems so small and weak when compared to his.” (Wallis, 3)

Reviews — Can You Offer Other Insights for *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* (1972)?

John Brockmann — This St. Francis “opera” is visually stunning, and painstakingly crafted with music. Sadly, such visual and audio emphases seem to have left imaginative space only for stereotypical characterizations. For example, Pietro, “The Father,” yells, mocks, sobs, and is violent within his household, and the leader of Assisi hierarchy, “The Bishop,” is a fat glutton and a liar lacking nearly all Christian graces. Lacking space for complex character development, Francesco who begins as a stereotypical PTSD, catatonic war veteran soon becomes a highly-verbal, anti-war hippie stereotypically accused of “subverting the established order of society”, and as “a menace to society”. Zeffirelli helmed dozens of opera videos, and this St. Francis “opera” stereotypically ends in a visual and audio triumph with the Pope’s blessing of the creation of a new Order. Francis’s encounter with the Sultan, the disorder in the Order as it grew, the Stigmata, and his death are all missing.

Neil Tumber — For every era there is a Francis! This is the Francis of the flower people! It’s almost, *Francis: The Musical*. [Editor’s Note: Such a musical was performed but not for another 10 years (book by Joseph Leonardo; lyrics by Kenny Morris; music by Steve Jankowski), and there was a subsequent production in 2000.] Glorious colors and wonderful outdoor scenes. Whoever saw so many poppies? It is a film of its time, with

113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis — Part 3 (cont.)

dreamy people drifting through the countryside with music by Donovan adding to the almost psychedelic experience. This is the era that also saw the first productions of *Godspell*.

The film does, however, have its dark side, particularly in the character of Francis's father, who becomes increasingly frustrated with and violent towards his otherworldly (mad) son. The church too, in the character of the bishop of Assisi, is very worldly and to my eyes, repugnant. Only in the closing scenes when Francis has his audience with the Pope do we see the layers of worldly protection being stripped away to celebrate the workings of the Holy Spirit in the little brothers of Assisi.

My favorite scene is the brothers in the streets of Assisi, in the pouring rain, joyfully singing thanks to God for Lady Poverty and Sister Want.

Janice Syedullah — While Zeffirelli's portrayal of the life of Francis is often criticized for being romantic and fluffy, it still rates number one on my list of movies about St. Francis. The reason is that it succeeds in getting to the heart of the Franciscan charisma. It highlights the unparalleled relationship between Francis and Clare, both of whom share a radical devotion to Christ. Francis's conversion is accurately retold. There are scenes that stunningly convey how Francis's eyes hold in love both the pulchritudinous and the grotesque in people. Beautiful cinematography, authentic costuming, and a great soundtrack come together to produce one of the best movies about St. Francis that has ever been made.

Paul Alexander — There are two scenes in this stunningly beautiful film that epitomize the message Zeffirelli wants to make. Francis, on a rooftop, watched by Clare, tries to fly as free as a bird, and Alec Guinness, as Pope Innocent the Third in the Vatican, weighed down by excessive wealth, pomp, and glory, tells Francis that, in his poverty, he puts the church to shame. It is a tragedy there are two things that prevent the film from being a great classic, such as, for example *Lawrence Of Arabia*: the excessively sentimental singing of Donovan and the storybook ending halfway through Francis's life. ★

Being Pakeha
by Dorothy Booker
(former Minister
General TSSF)

“Rebuild my Church, as you see it is in ruins.” These words of Christ to Francis those many years ago, have been with me as I have prayed and meditated on what this means as we look at our Church, our world, and our journey as Franciscans.

“Rebuild my world, as you see it is in despair” could well be God's voice calling us.

I am conscious that one can get lost when we look at the world. I look at crumbling Gaza and the death of so many innocents. I look at Aotearoa New Zealand and see our founding document Te Tiriti being challenged as if of no real importance.

I am conscious of our First Order Brothers reminding us, and challenging us, that we as Third Order are the Franciscan voice here in Aotearoa. Does our church see us as a voice that echoes the Franciscan way of life? As

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Being Pakeha Franciscans we need to step into places where we otherwise would not have gone. Our Minister Provincial spoke of a friend of his who shared that one of the hallmarks he looks for in a spiritual leader, is that they are able to both discern, and help others, to where they otherwise would not have gone.

(cont.)

I reflect now, on the time when as Minister General I visited Brazil and, whilst there, we shared morning prayer and the psalm for the day. Our two languages, Portuguese and English, mingled and it was a very special and significant moment.

My challenge is for us as Franciscans to honour who we are by being a visible presence in our community, in our church and to be able to speak when we need to. It is easy to take the words of Francis to “share the gospel and not use words.” Yes, it is true that by our actions we witness, but we also need to be vocal when needed. I hope that each Diocese will have a Franciscan presence at their Synods this year and that we will be seen as people honouring our Church, our country, and our founding document. I am working with Interfaith people, many of whom have come from war-torn places and who have now found a home here. They are honouring the Treaty in how they live and act.

In 1965 I answered a call to go and work in Melanesia as a nurse. I was working in the then Diocese of Melanesia, one of the two island Dioceses of our church. A church that was very much part of the Anglican church in New Zealand, but was at the same time very much a Melanesian church with its own liturgies being written and its own culture being honoured. In the 1970s when Melanesia became a Province, it was able to stand tall. It was in Melanesia that I began my Franciscan journey.

Returning to New Zealand from having experienced a church honouring its own culture, I realised that as a Church here in Aotearoa we had some things to do. It did take some time.

The Three Tikanga Church came into being in the 1990s and with it a more direct challenge for Tikanga Pakeha to look at what it means to have a founding document that is more visible. This helped us to live in this land, and to walk beside one another, honouring each person for who they are; Tangata whenua, people of the land as well as those of us who proudly can say that we are Pakeha.

I'd like to share these thoughts around the word “Pakeha”. Within the word “Pākehā” there is reference to three words:

Pā - means to come in to contact, to make contact.

Ke - is related to the word “rerekē” that means different, or unique.

Hā - is to share and exchange the breath.

I understand that's the whole reason we do a hongi — to share and acknowledge the breath, the hā, that connects us all.

So, putting those three words together, “Pakeha” means

To come in to contact with a unique essence of the hā.

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Being Pakeha Bishop John Bluck, at the conclusion of his book *Becoming Pakeha, a journey (cont.)* between two cultures, (well worth reading) reflects, “I share some words from the waiata that Ngapuhi sang when Samuel Marsden and Ruatara came to Oihi in the Bay of Islands, Christmas Day 1814. The locals knew that the arrival of Pakeha meant that their lives would never be the same again but they sang it nonetheless

E! ka nukunuku: E! Ka neke neke

It is moving; it is shifting.

Look to the open sea of Waitangi

Spread before us like a shining cuckoo

It is good, all is well.

Change is coming soon.

Is on the horizon.

It is good, all is well.

Let peace be established. ★

Special Supplement from St. Benedict the Black Fellowship

Welcome to the first installment of articles, book reviews, and other resources offered by the St. Benedict the Black Fellowship to further strengthen our Order's life in Christ, in the Way of our patrons, Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi.

Masud Ibn Syedullah

Convener, St. Benedict the Black Fellowship

A Brief History of the Fellowship St. Benedict the Black by Diana Turner-Forte

On May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a Black man lay face down on the ground while a white police officer held him in place with his knee to his neck. The compression from nine minutes and 29 seconds resulted in the Black man's death while he was saying: "I can't breathe." What shocked me about that horrific scene was that nobody did anything.

The video spread like wildfire nationwide and internationally. While it only took one viewing to deeply disturb me, my heart broke open over and over again. As weeks passed, the inhumanity was like a gnawing toothache, relentless and steady. By the time of that incident there were more than 130 reported deaths of Black people nationwide, killed by non-military officers, according to a National Public Radio (NPR) report. *

I struggled to reconcile my Franciscan charism with the flagrant public brutality toward brothers and sisters of color and the deafening silence in fellowships, churches, and community gatherings where the incident was not even acknowledged. And I wept! In spite of protests, it became apparent that the killing of Black human beings in broad daylight by non-military officers, was an accepted part of life in America and had become normalized. And maybe more so, it had become too painful to even speak

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Special Supplement from St. Benedict the Black Fellowship (cont.)

A Brief History of the Fellowship St. Benedict the Black (cont.)

about. This seemed to be a trend. In different times and places, for fellow Black Franciscans. These unnecessary, careless deaths could have impacted us personally and could have been any one of our relations: nephew, cousin, sister, brother, wife or husband, but it was life as usual in America.

Of course, the weariness of yet another killing, often of innocent people by police in the United States, was terrifying. In my heart I knew something was not right. I was intimately connected to those fallen beings, not just by skin color but by the community of humanity and Christianity, and no one in the communities to which I was associated at that time seemed to care.

In June of 2020, I contacted Masud Ibn Syedullah, a fellow Franciscan, with the question: Was there a community of Black Franciscans? After an extended pause, he mentioned the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE). As I became acquainted with the UBE, I realized that what I was seeking was much closer to home. Who were the Black faces on the pages of the Directory of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis? As it turned out, if we were to continue this exploration of a community within a community, I needed to speak with Peter Stube, then Co-Acting Provincial Minister. In another brief conversation, Peter Stube enthusiastically blessed and endorsed the formation of our fellowship. The gathering of our small group became a reality and was much easier with Zoom.



It turned out there were only a handful of Black Americans in TSSF, and I remembered the first gathering to be full of joy, curiosity, and possibility. Initially, we gathered mostly without an agenda, but developed a rhythm of prayer, summary of current events that uniquely affected us as Black Americans living in a racialized country, our personal experiences of being Black and Franciscan, what was on our book list, and supporting each other in prayer.

Who are we? Retired priests, artists, activists, workshop facilitators, mothers, daughters, fathers, and sons united in Christ, Francis and Clare. We are passionate about our prayer life, faith, study, and service to our communities.

Just as the emergence of the fellowship was spontaneous, moved by the Holy Spirit, so was the name, St. Benedict the Black, 1524-1589. He was born a slave in Italy and was released from bondage in his late teens. He became a solitary, living among other desert hermits in Monte Pellegrino, eventually becoming superior of the community. When the order was disbanded by Pope Pius IV, Benedict became a Franciscan lay brother and head cook at St. Mary's convent near Palermo. He's recognized by his humility and counsel, and you may have seen pictures of him holding loaves of bread. His feast day is April 3, and he is the patron saint of African Americans.

*In 2021 National Public Radio (NPR) issued an investigative report covering the deaths of Black People in America by non-military persons from 2015-2019.



Special Supplement from St. Benedict the Black Fellowship (cont.)

Reports from
the Episcopal
House of
Bishops
Theology
Committee by
Masud Ibn
Syedullah

“Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?”

“Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?”

“Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?”

(Each from the Baptismal Rite of the Episcopal Church BCP, pp.302 & 305.)

During the past two years, the Theology Committee of the Episcopal House of Bishops has produced two very bold and historic documents urgently calling members of the Episcopal Church to live into the above promises we affirm several times during the year. The bishop’s urgent appeal comes in a time in the history of the United States (and the world) when we are experiencing social and political polarization expressing itself in highly disrespectful, dehumanizing, and violent ways. The bishops are calling Episcopalians to remember that our first and highest allegiance is to the Way of Jesus, upon which our baptismal vows are based.

We are clearly living in a time of confusion. Many are using a veneer of Christian faith to advance attitudes, policies, and laws that in no way represent the Way of Jesus. His call is to a radical commitment to view ALL humanity as bearing the image of God (although that image may be dormant), worthy of respect, being heard, and responded to as brothers and sisters of the same Creator, regardless of nationality, social position, race, color, education, or any other category or status used to devalue and separate fellow humans. Days Seven, Eight, and Nine of our Third Order Principles concur. Our Second Aim is, “To spread the spirit of love and harmony” — without exception.

I commend to you the following two reports from the House of Bishops Theology Committee. These two reports are valuable reading for tertiaries, and particularly for those of us in the USA as we discern how we shall vote in November. Our vote, regardless of the political party to which we align, was hopefully congruent with the values of the baptismal faith in Christ we profess, transcending partisanship. We, as members of the body of Christ in the world, are called by our Lord to represent Christ by working to call all people, with all of our diversity, into reconciliation with God and each other.

Both of these reports are available in paperback and Kindle format, and can be purchased from Church Publishing Incorporated, or Amazon.

Realizing Beloved Community, presented to and authorized by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church in 2022, published by Church Publishing Incorporated. The bishops boldly call members of the Episcopal Church to acknowledge and renounce all attitudes, policies, and laws that reflect the principles of White Supremacy and to embrace, support, and work towards realizing a beloved community. They are very clear about historical (from the founding of the USA) and present attitudes, public

Special Supplement from St. Benedict the Black Fellowship (cont.)

**Reports from
the Episcopal
House of
Bishops
Theology
Committee
(cont.)**

policies, and laws that have intentionally favored and given social, educational, and financial advantages to white people (particularly white people of financial and social status) and disadvantaged people of color - black, brown, red, yellow. The bishops name such attitudes, policies, and laws as sin - working to corrupt and destroy the creatures of God. Not only are those oppressed by such attitudes, policies, and laws, the victims of corruption and destruction, but also those who support such are also victims of such sin. They, too, experience a spiritual corruption - a sickness of the soul - often without being aware of the damage of spirit and conscience being done to them. The bishops offer guidance to renounce such destructive attitudes and policies, give examples of work being done within the Episcopal Church to correct such destructive policies, and heal the wounds caused by them, and urge all of us to build and support a "Beloved Community" in the Spirit of Christ.

***The Crisis of Christian Nationalism* (2024).** This very timely report, issued at the end of this past summer by the Theology Committee of the Episcopal Church House of Bishops, boldly and clearly describes a current movement within the United States among self-proclaimed Christians that expresses itself in ways totally contrary to the Way of Jesus. This study of Christian Nationalism "addresses this important issue which has increasingly come to the forefront of conversation surrounding Christianity, democracy and white supremacy." The Theology Committee of the House of Bishops is faithful in its task to approach this topic within the traditional Anglican framework of scripture, tradition, reason, and liturgy to, "shed light on the foundations of the movement, the distortions that drive it, the related dangers we face today, and a hopeful path forward"



**Lift Every Voice
and Sing** by
James Weldon
Johnson

A group of young men in Jacksonville, Florida, arranged to celebrate Lincoln's birthday in 1900. My brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and I decided to write a song to be sung at the exercises. I wrote the words and he wrote the music. Our New York publisher, Edward B. Marks, made mimeographed copies for us, and the song was taught to and sung by a chorus of five hundred colored school children.



Shortly afterwards, my brother and I moved away from Jacksonville to New York, and the song passed out of our minds. But the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it; they went off to other schools and sang it; they became teachers and taught it to other children.

Within twenty years, it was being sung all over the South and in some other parts of the country. Today the song, popularly known as the Negro National Anthem, is quite generally used.

(From www.jamesweldonjohnson.org)

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Special Supplement from St. Benedict the Black Fellowship (cont.)

Lift Every Voice and Sing (cont.) [This hymn appears in two Episcopal Church hymnals: *The Hymnal 1982*, #599, and *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, #1.]

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty,
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our God,
True to our native land. ★

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Special Supplement from St. Benedict the Black Fellowship (cont.)

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Film

“Bad Faith” Christian Nationalism’s Unholy War on Democracy. **One of the 10 best films of 2024 with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

Other Resources:

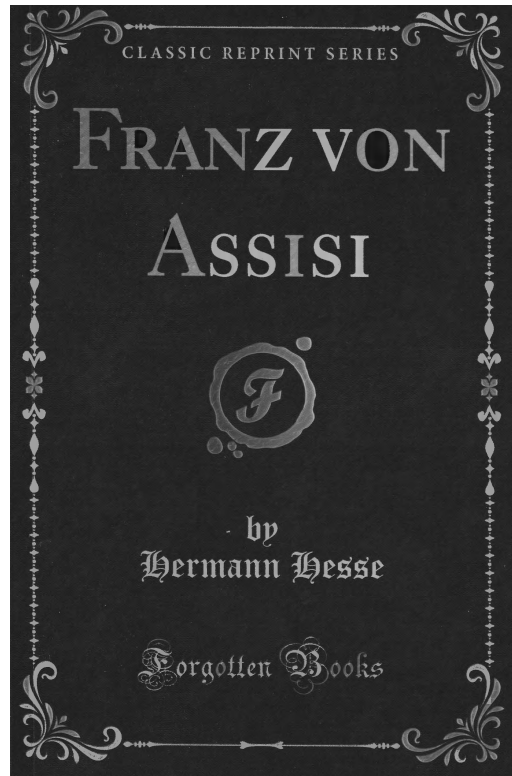
Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.
poorpeoplescampaign.org

The Poor People’s Campaign, or Poor People’s March on Washington D.C., was a 1968 effort to gain economic justice for poor people in the United States. It was organized by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and carried out under the leadership of Ralph Abernathy in the wake of King’s assassination in April 1968. (Wikipedia)

Both Heather Cox Richardson and Timothy Snyder are historians touching on current events:

- Letters from an American. <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com>
- Thinking About . . . <https://snyder.substack.com>
- An interview with Timothy Snyder from the Ukraine on npr.org Weekend Edition Saturday, 14 September 2024 with Scott Simon. Timothy Snyder's upcoming book, *On Freedom*, explores how we misunderstand the concept of freedom.





Collaborate on an important way to expand the essential literature on Francis.

The Swiss writer Hermann Hesse was one of the best writers of German literature after World War II with works based on characters, usually young, willing to break with the society in which they live such as *Demian*, *Beneath the Wheel*, *Narcissus and Goldmund*, *Steppenwolf* and *Peter Camenzind*.

In 1904, shortly before writing *Peter Camenzind*, Hermann Hesse, published a short biography of St. Francis of Assisi, whom he saw as the contrast against the papal power and the heresies of his time, and who found his inner freedom through the Gospel and poverty. This book is the search for St. Francis of Assisi in order to incorporate him as a model, in whom he wanted to mirror himself. (from De Libris website)

This book must offer some unique insights because, as you have read in the movie article, Liliana Cavani adapted her 1989 screenplay on Francis from this book. It has never been translated into English, but is in the public domain and available from the Internet Archive in a variety of filetypes.

If you can translate German and are willing to collaborate on this project to bring this book into English, please contact the editor.

