



The Franciscan Times

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

Pace e bene

Summer 2025

Musings from Our Minister Provincial, Charlie McCarron: Grounding in the Mystery of Divine Love

Joan Powers, who has been professed in our Order for 62 years, recently shared materials from Anna Keer, a former member of the Third Order of St. Francis before the merger with SSF. Among these were 12 months of letters published as monthly meditations for “Tertiaries by Mother Mary Veronica”, the then Mother Superior of our Province’s Poor Clares. These letters prompted me to reflect on the life of our Province before the merger and the experiences of our Tertiaries from 1917 to 1966. While we celebrated this lineage during our Provincial Centenary in 2017, there remains limited awareness of the life they led and the lessons their example offers us today.

I want to focus on one meditation from May 1955, which highlights our Province’s devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As I write during the time of the special period of focus mentioned by Mother M. Veronica, it seems fitting. The importance of this devotion to the Sacred Heart could be dismissed as “Spikey Anglo-Catholicism,” a term often used to disregard the early years of our Province. However, such dismissal overlooks the profound connection to ancient Franciscan spirituality and values.

The first Franciscan community in the Anglican Communion was the Society of Divine Compassion, founded in 1894 in Plaistow, London. The second, known as the Graymoor Friars and Sisters, was established in New York in 1897 or '98 as the Society of the Atonement. I won’t delve into their

histories but will highlight the significance of their names. The term “Society” was likely chosen to avoid inflaming the animosity some Anglicans felt toward the revival of religious life. This hostility partly led to the Society of the Atonement’s departure from the Episcopal Church.

The name “Society of the Divine Compassion” reflects similar concerns. The Divine Compassion is the Anglican term for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This alternative name may have been adopted to ease political tensions and root the community in the deeper origins of the devotion. Thus, the first Anglican Franciscan community might well have been called the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Why did Fr. Andrew, founder of the Society of the Divine Compassion, and Fr. Joseph, our founder, embrace this ancient devotion? Fr. Joseph had a remarkable understanding of Franciscan history and spirituality, seeking to adapt these teachings to the Anglican North American context. The devotion to God’s incarnate love, as manifested in Jesus Christ, is central to both Franciscan spirituality and our theology. Thinkers like Bonaventure and Duns Scotus emphasized the primacy of Divine Love, anchoring our tradition in the “fountain fullness” of love expressed in creation and humanity. Since patristic times the devotional focus on the Word’s identity

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Provincial News



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**The Deadline
for the Fall
edition is
October 1.**

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as the Incarnation of Divine Love has been Christ's heart.

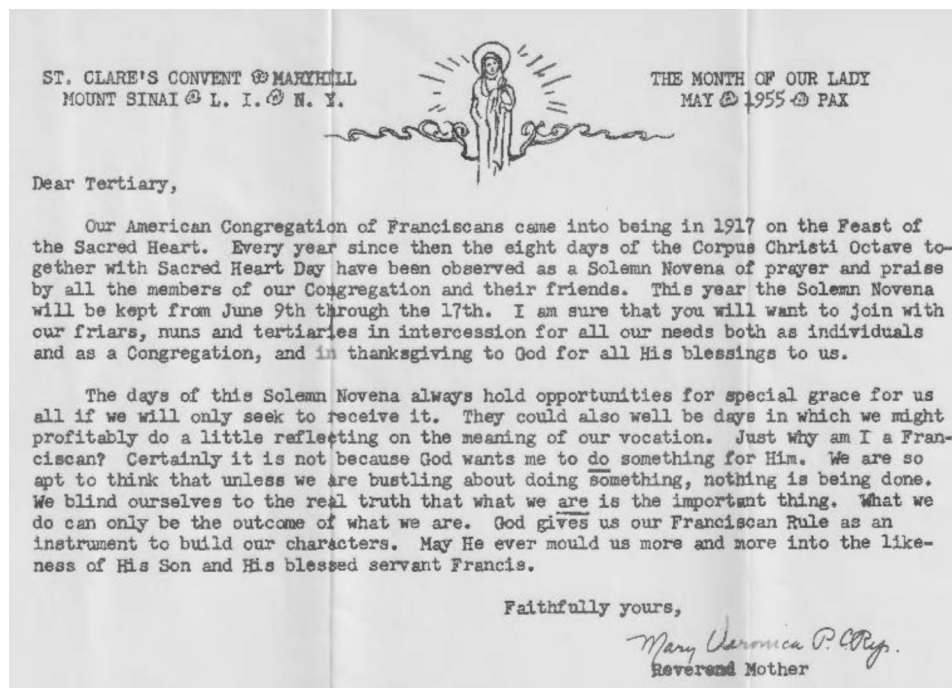
Our focus on God's love is also evidenced in our tradition's fascination with the symbol of the seraph angel. The word "seraphim" comes from the Hebrew "saraph," meaning "to burn." Seraphim angels radiate passionate love for God, described in the Bible as "a blazing fire" (Song of Solomon 8: 6). As they bask in God's presence, they are enveloped by the divine flames of God's love. This angelic symbol of burning love was the form in which the Crucified appeared to Francis on LaVerna. Our identity as the Seraphic Order, with figures like Francis as the Seraphic Father and Bonaventure as the Seraphic Doctor, underscores our essence as the Order of Love.

None of this contradicts our SSF roots, which are grounded in the Bhakti or devotional Love tradition of Hindu spirituality. When Fr. Algy, one of SSF's English founders, returned to England and planted a version of Christa Seva Sangha, he named it the Brotherhood of the Love of Christ.

Given all this, Mother Mary Veronica's call to pay attention to Christ's Heart seems entirely fitting and reminds us of our Province's grounding in the mystery of Divine Love. Perhaps this is a good thing to pray on as we approach the feast day of our founding in 1917, the feast of the Sacred Heart, aka the Divine Compassion, on June 27th this year.

I'll conclude with an excerpt from Bonaventure's Tree of Life, where he reflects on Christ's heart:

"...blood and water which poured out when the soldier pierced Christ's heart... Flowing from the abyss of our Lord's heart as from a fountain, this stream gives the sacraments of the Church the power to confer grace... an eternal and inaccessible fountain, clear and sweet, flowing from a hidden spring, unseen by mortal eye. None can fathom your depths nor measure your breadth; nothing can sully your purity. From you flows the river which gladdens the City of God and makes us cry out with joy and thanksgiving, for we know by our own experience that with you is the source of life, and in your light, we see light." (Tree of Life 29-30)



Want a copy
of the 12
Months of
Letters from
the U.S.
Poor Clares?

Click [HERE](#)
to download
it from the
TSSF
website's
Historical
Documents.

What Does it Mean To Be a Companion?

By Gordon Scruton, (Companion-SSF, Former Bishop Protector, TSSF, Retired Bishop, Diocese of Western Massachusetts)

As Companions of the Society of St Francis, this word has special meaning for us. It speaks not only to our organizational membership, but also to the quality of our relationships with Francis and Clare, and our relationship with the Christ to whom they point us by their words and lives.

A companion is one who is frequently in the presence of another person. This includes an intimate friendship relationship which involves eating meals regularly with another person. (Literally com-pan, means "eating bread with".) The closer we live with another person, the more our companion influences our lives.

This word "companion" leapt off the page for me on Easter Saturday, when we read from *Acts* chapter 4 (v. 13). Just a few weeks after the resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Peter and John had healed a man who was lame and unable to walk from his birth. Peter and John were arrested, then brought to be questioned by the same Jewish leaders who had condemned Jesus to death just a few weeks before. They were asked by those leaders, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" Peter, who, out of fear, had three times denied even knowing Jesus on the night before the crucifixion, answered with amazing boldness, "This man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who you crucified, whom God raised from the dead." When the religious leaders saw the boldness of Peter and John, "they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus."

In totally unexpected ways, the continuing companionship of Peter and John with the Spirit of the Risen Christ had transformed them into much deeper, more courageous, and spiritually alive companions. Remember, they and all the disciples had abandoned Jesus when the soldiers arrived in Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. While they had been companions with Jesus for three years,



they were still immature companions in the process of learning what it means to live as companions who speak, look, and act like Jesus by the way they live. While they had been unfaithful companions of Jesus, Jesus continued to be a faithful companion with them. After his resurrection, he continued to show up as a companion with them, to give them his peace, to eat bread with them, to love, forgive, and teach them, to send them the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell in them as their continuing companion, continuing to teach and guide them to live and keep growing as faithful companions of Jesus.

During their lifetimes, people looked at Francis and Clare and their followers and saw, in their faces, their words and actions, their humility, their love, their courage to be peacemakers, their bold caring for people society considered to be outcasts, their loving respect for God's creation and creatures...in all these ways they saw that these Franciscans were companions of Jesus because they looked, spoke, and acted like Jesus. Many people around the world who saw Pope Francis over his years of ministry, (the first Pope to intentionally take the name of Francis of Assisi), recognized him as someone who looked, spoke, and acted like Jesus.

In what ways is Jesus companioning you/us now, inviting you/us to keep maturing, taking loving risks to keep growing as faithful companions of Jesus, Francis and Clare, and all our neighbors?



At Six Months Outside the Walls

John Cooper

It has now been a bit more than six months since I have been out, and I thought it is high time I wrote. Life has been a whole new experience for me. Some things never change, but some things most surely have.

I have missed a lot. Sticker shock. Political drama. Months of phone work with our state's insurance plans, which I straightened out just in time to convert to Medicare. More insurance drama. For a guy who never had a cell phone, it has been a challenge.

The story, though, has been a very successful one, thanks entirely to the love and support of so many people. I had little else but my guitar and a desk lamp when I walked into this room and saw how it was furnished by so many friends, and friends of friends, and many I have not even met. It chokes me up now thinking of it. The gifts I have received did not stop with my release. The computer I am typing on now was another gift from a very old friend. Finally, I think I can say,



with God's grace, I am making a real go of things. We have all worked very hard in these last six months getting me squared away. I can't imagine people getting out without the support I have had. Their success would be unlikely.

I have found a well-known, yet still interesting, function in the universe. More times than I can describe I have watched as God provided for me. Most often, the blessings have come through the love of friends and family, sometimes through the kindness of strangers, and sometimes through events that I didn't see coming. Looking online for an item I wished I could afford only to find it two days later at a thrift store. Wishing I still had my custom knife from many years ago, I found one on the sidewalk. These incidents may seem small or unrelated, but to someone in need they are quite noticeable. And quite numerous. Like a brand-new winter coat, free of charge, from the Hope Center in Waukesha. Blessings never stop coming. Most notably, in the kindness of extraordinary people. Every hour, and everything I use, reminds me again of the love and support of those who have cared.

I believe many of the sufferings we encounter through life come to us through our relationships with other people. For some reason, it's in the design of things that much of our healing will also need to come through our relationships with others. It may be risky at times but I don't see a way around that. Not from my experiences. There is no legislature that we can pass, no punishment we can inflict,

nothing else we can take away that can ever restore hope in a person. We have to do that. And you all have.

Today's political scene, paired with my own personal situation, seems to make the future rather tenuous. Somehow, I am not overly concerned. Over and over throughout my life, I continue to see the providing grace of God, the power and strength of caring people, and the resilience of faith and hope.

As Peter, himself wrote to us,

"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you." - (1 Peter 3:15)

Well then, I guess that would be my continuing faith in our God, and the hope and ministry of all God's people.

Thank you all. And thanks be to God.



Queering Franciscan Theology: *Spreading the Spirit of Love and Inclusion*

Hanna Kae

Hanna Kae is a semi-retired researcher and historian and is currently a TSSF postulant. She has been active in mission work with the homeless and 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Hanna is an applicant for ordination in the Anglican Church of Canada. As a transgender woman, Hanna is a vocal advocate for 2SLGBTQIA+ rights.)

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**The Object of the Order:** To Build a Community of Love  
With Jesus at our center, we seek to follow his way in community with one another.

**Day Seven – The Second Aim:** To spread the spirit of love and harmony  
The Order sets out, in the name of Christ, to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all. We accept as our second aim the spreading of a spirit of love and harmony among all people. We are pledged to fight against the ignorance, pride, and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind.

**Day Eight – The Second Aim, cont’d:** Members of the Third Order fight against all such injustice in the name of Christ, in whom there can be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for in him all are one. Our chief object is to reflect that openness to all which was characteristic of Jesus. This can only be achieved in a spirit of chastity, which sees others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfillment.

Third Order Society of Saint Francis. 2021

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The Third Order Society of Saint Francis (TSSF) prides itself on upholding the values of Saint Francis of Assisi, particularly when it comes to issues of inclusivity, making the gospel available to many, and embracing Francis’s practice of, in the way of Jesus, subverting a status quo that creates barriers to accessing God. I would argue that those very characteristics of Francis, and by extension TSSF, are “queer” actions. This stance is a type of inclusion theology that, when applied to the situation of many 2SLGBTQIA+ people, parallels the work of theologians in the development of transgender and queer theologies. What I am setting out to do in this article is to examine the stories of Francis and his early followers, and identify overlapping points of integration between Franciscan theology and queer theology.

What does it mean to talk about examining Francis from a queer perspective? To speak of queer actions, we need to divorce the word queer from its obvious 20th/21st century meaning. To be queer is to be different from what is considered normal in society. Jesus’ choice of lepers, sex workers, and tax collectors for friends and companions was a queer act; challenging the religious leadership was a queer act. Much of the work that Jesus undertook to bring about the “upside-down” kingdom of God is arguably queer work; by extension, Francis’s imitation of Jesus in his actions and words were queer works. For a member of the wealthy merchant class to embrace poverty is a queer act; embracing the diversity of God’s creation in the face of exclusionary social norms is a queer act; subverting gender norms to create access and opportunity for all is a queer act.

(Cont.) Page 6

Queering Franciscan Theology (cont.)

In this sense, we can establish that Francis, in his imitation of Jesus, was acting in ways that challenged his society's understanding of its own rules regarding wealth, status, privilege, inclusion, and who has value. By challenging these dynamics of patrimony power and privilege, Francis lays a groundwork to challenge issues of gender, the role of women, and the acceptance of diversity.

The study of Queer Theology is a long-established form of inclusion theology that examines Christianity from the perspective of finding the queer voice in sacred text, understanding scripture from the perspective of an excluded community and challenging patrimony in current theology as applied to minority groups (Cheng, 2011; Goss, 2002; McMahon, 2016). In the study of queer and transgender theologies, scholars and theologians draw from a range of interdisciplinary tools and methods. These help explore how theology intersects with 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, experiences, and justice struggles. Queer and transgender theologians are creating opportunities to open Christianity to people who have been actively excluded from church and from Christian worship. To do this, we rely on a number of tools, including language analysis, biblical critique including queer hermeneutics, inclusion of lived experience and testimony, and queer liturgical analysis.

In a study of Francis and the subsequent theology that has developed under his name, we see many examples of actions and ideas that are directly relevant to the queer community and in harmony with ideas put forward in queer theology. For the purposes of this discussion, I will focus on the following areas:

- **Inclusion and Acceptance:** All of creation has its source in God and therefore is part of the family of God; all humans are created in the image of God and worthy of love and acceptance; a willing embrace of the marginalized and discarded members of society;
- **Gender Non-conformity:** Abandoning gender norms and establishing rules for the orders and hermitages that are gender non-conforming.

Inclusion and Acceptance:

Francis was radically queer in his embracing of animals, the earth, and other elements as siblings in God's kingdom; going so far as to model a radical acceptance of the marginalized and abandoned members of his society as beloved sisters and brothers. To extend this very Franciscan trait into the present day, we can easily demonstrate that one natural extension of this value is a transformative acceptance and affirmation of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. This is both a very Franciscan act and a very Christ-like act. In today's world, awash with anti-2SLGBTQIA+ and especially anti-transgender rhetoric, TSSF tertiaries have a special calling to embrace and stand up in solidarity with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in the spirit of Francis. In the *Earlier Rule* (Regula non bullata), Chapter IX, Francis explicitly calls on the brothers to overcome any aversion or social stigma associated with working with and for the marginalized:

They must rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside (Francis of Assisi, 1999a pp.70).

Queering Franciscan Theology (cont.)

Women's Roles

In his acceptance and support for Clare, Francis was showing that inclusion and acceptance is an act of love and especially important to those who are “inferior” according to the world’s standards. These actions challenge the patriarchal and hierarchical assumptions about a woman’s place in religious life and can be read through both a queer and feminist lens. When Clare first approaches Francis to seek a life of poverty and devotion, he affirms her calling without hesitation. Francis’s response and support empowered Clare and the Order of Poor Ladies by recognizing Clare’s call as equal in intensity and legitimacy as his own (Armstrong, 2006). Rather than directing Clare to an existing convent, Francis enabled the creation of a radically new form of female religious expression. In empowering the Order of Poor Ladies through their own rule and the founding of a parallel and autonomous order, Francis was directly challenging the male-dominated structure of the Church (Delio, 2004, pp.181).

Likewise, in the establishment of the Third Order, Francis empowered lay followers to take up a unique role in the life of the Brotherhood and the body of Christ (Pettersen, 2006). Francis sought the input of Clare and lay supporters in the development of these orders and their shared vision. Francis showed a level of respect and equality to the lay community and the Order of Poor Ladies that was highly unusual for the 13th century. In particular, Francis accepted and respected Clare’s spiritual insights as formative for the establishment of all three orders, affirming the spiritual authority of a woman.

Gender Non-conformity:

Although Francis was being very explicit in turning gender roles upside down in his discourse and rules as well as his actions, this transformative characteristic has not obviously been incorporated into Franciscan theology as we know it today.

Each of the early biographies of the saint (Thomas of Celano, 2000; Bonaventure, 2000; Julian of Spayer, 1999) record Francis’ very deliberate adoption of feminine titles and roles for himself, developing the image of Francis as “mother” who gave birth to each one of the early brothers and tenderly cares for each as any mother would (Elphick, 1998, pp.13-17). This model of motherhood is one that Francis insists the brothers adopt, especially in the hermitages. In both of the rules and in his rule for the hermitage, Francis explicitly instructs the brothers to adopt a feminine role towards others.

Let each one love and care for his brother as a mother loves and cares for her son in those matters in which God will give him the grace. (Francis of Assisi, 1999a pp.71)

In the imitation of mothers and children and the sisters Mary and Martha from scripture, Francis encourages brothers living in the hermitages to adopt feminine roles and responsibilities for each other:

Let those who wish to stay in hermitages a religious way be three brothers or, at most, four; let two of these be “the mothers” and they may have two “sons” or at least one. Let the two who are “mothers” keep the life of Martha and let the two “sons” keep the life of Mary... (Francis of Assisi, 1999b pp.61)

Queering Franciscan Theology (cont.)

From a transgender or non-binary perspective, this expression of gender liminality is important, as Francis directly challenges issues of equality, acceptance, and gender. This fits the pattern of queer actions that Francis was undertaking throughout his life once he abandoned wealth as a part of his radical imitation of Jesus. By adopting the title, role, and responsibilities of a woman of his time, Francis was making a bold statement about the perception of women and their role in his society (Elphick, 1998, p14; Walker Bynum, 1986, p.263; Thomas of Celano, 2000, pp.304-305).

Brother Jacoba

Francis' emphasis on the equality of women subverted the exclusionary rules that prevented one particular woman from fulfilling a religious calling by renaming and re-gendering her. Certain translations of Thomas of Celano's *Treatise on the Miracles* include Francis' direct overturning of the gender restrictions in his society (Elphick, 1998, pp37). Toward the end of his life, Francis accepted Lady Jacoba, a widow, into the brotherhood. In the *Treatise on the Miracles*, Celano recounts the story of Brother Jacoba — upon Jacoba's unexpected arrival, Francis is recorded to declare:

Blessed be God, who has guided the Lady Jacoba, our brother, to us. Open the door and bring her in for our brother Jacoba does not have to observe the decree against women (Elphick, 1998, pp. 37).

Clearly, we cannot superimpose our present societal ideas onto Francis' time and actions. We cannot know or assume that his actions were intended to uplift someone who might today have identified as gender non-conforming. We can, however, see ourselves in his actions and understand how his message and actions are applicable to situations today. Finding our lives reflected in the life and actions of Francis can provide a point of connection, a source of hope and strength to transgender and non-binary individuals and guidance to allies of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Implications for Franciscans

The 2SLGBTQIA+ community has been marginalized, powerless, and under attack from the patriarchal systems of power in both the church and western society throughout church history. Today's current political climate has generated increasing hostility toward this community in general and especially toward transgender and non-binary individuals. Unfortunately, many of the voices calling for hatred towards this marginalized group of people are identifying as Christians. This highlights obvious and important questions facing all Christians who call themselves Franciscan (especially tertiaries in TSSF): In imitation of Francis, Clare and Jesus — What are you doing that is affirming of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community? How are your actions extending the embrace and love of Christ to this community? If possible, how can you be a visible and vocal supporter of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

It is clear to see that Francis' actions and words were intentionally following the example of Jesus. His deliberate upending of societal norms was intended to draw attention to the marginalized and excluded in his society and to highlight a way forward in imitation of the Christ that uplifts all of creation. Francis's choice to abandon his family of origin and create a chosen family is a queer act that speaks directly to the experience of many 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. It is obvious that Francis saw and understood that gender was being used to exclude people from fulfilling their

Queering Franciscan Theology (cont.)

role in God's kingdom. Francis believed in the sacredness of all creation and sought to embrace those who were different and excluded. The implications for Franciscans, when it comes to 2SLGBTQIA+ people, seems obvious: **Accept, Affirm and Uplift.**

Were Francis alive today, would he be a vocal supporter or opponent of queer people? What would Francis' response be to the attacks on the rights of transgender and non-binary individuals in today's world? Though we cannot know what Francis would think or do today, we do know that Francis willingly turned his back on wealth and privilege, surrendered to love and inclusion, and embraced the lowest members of his society. At one level it is easy to say that we, as Franciscans, would follow a rule of love and inclusion. How then do we live a life that is inclusive and affirming of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

Commitment to Inclusion

Francis committed himself to transformative and radical inclusion in the name of Jesus and each one of us can do the same. I would urge each tertiary to take the first steps to get to know this marginalized community. Find ways to meet and talk with 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Overcome your own uncertainty, fear, or discomfort to "embrace" the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in imitation of Francis' embrace of the lepers, the marginalized, and the excluded. Ask yourself the following questions: What am I doing that is affirming of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community? How are my actions extending the embrace and love of Christ to this community? If possible, how can I be a visible and vocal supporter of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

In the next instalment of this article, I will be providing some examples of how each of us can choose to integrate a queer theological viewpoint into one's spiritual life in order to broaden and deepen our experience of the divine. In addition, I would be pleased to respond to questions and comments that are submitted in response to this article. If you have any questions or comments, please email them to hannan@apostles.guelph.org. Be aware that I may be reprinting all or part of the comments and questions you submit.

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Milestones: Welcome the Newly Professed

Tripp Hudgins



Hello there. My name is Tripp Hudgins, and I am grateful to become a part of the Order. Currently, I reside in Richmond, Virginia, with my family and work as a hospice chaplain. My wife, Trish Austin, works as a costumer and actress. Our son is in fourth grade.

As many have said before me, becoming a Franciscan was more about owning who I already am rather than becoming something new. The Franciscan Path provides me a way to more deeply be who God has called me to be. To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly is my vocation. Opening that vocation to service for all creation simply makes sense to me.

I hold ordination in the American Baptist Church. However, as an Episcopalian, I serve on the vestry of St. James the Less in Ashland, Virginia, and I teach homiletics through Church Divinity School of the Pacific's CALL initiative.

As fate would have it, this former Baptist gets to teach the Episcopalians how to preach. It is great fun. ★

Loretta Armsworthy

I was born here in Nova Scotia, Canada, and am the mother of five children, eight grand-children, and four step-grandchildren. I also have four great-grandchildren...so far.

I am in discernment for the Diaconate and, hopefully, this is the time God has chosen for me to fulfill that role.

I love crafting and mission-work for our community, and it seems God has placed that call on my heart to do more and be more for my home

Milestones: Welcome the Newly Professed (cont.)

**Loretta
Armsworthy
(cont.)**

community as well as beyond. I am a LLM at our church (Christ Church, Anglican).

I first became aware of St. Francis over 40 years ago when I noticed that his ideals and my ideals were similar. I rescue animals; I love nature and that's where I find God; it is my nature to help people. So, although I will be officially professed on June 15, God willing, I feel I have been a Franciscan ever since that time.

My heart and soul are happy to be Franciscan. ★



**Beverly
Mennie**

Greetings to my Christian siblings!

I am joyful to be with you, professed May 17, 2025, in Spokane, WA, although my home is on Vancouver Island, BC, Canada.



I have two grown daughters and a 16-year-old grandson who live in this same city. I moved to Nanaimo to make things easier with my family, especially my almost 99-year-old mother.

In my church I am a Lay Assistant and Morning Prayer Lay Worship Leader.

From a young age, my father told me of St. Francis and would whistle like the birds. I cannot whistle like the birds. However, I have worked and lived with those less fortunate most of my life. My quest to help those who are impoverished mentally and spiritually led me to front line work with people who were hospitalized with psychiatric concerns and also to spiritual care in the hospital settings. When I retired, I became a full-time Registered Counselor. I have lived in numerous places and eventually found a "rock" where I could settle when I found this community of Franciscans. From then on, there was no other avenue. My lifestyle (and pilgrimages to other places) has become simplified as I age and can spend more time "caring for creation." Hopefully, I can continue to learn more from keeping the Franciscan Rule of Life. ★

**Deborah Falls
Lockhart**



As a recently professed (April 4, 2025) Franciscan, I have come to appreciate the path as one very close to my call to the Diaconate. Being asked to be servants of the Church and taking vows of obedience has become a way of life, one reinforced through daily worship, scripture studies, and attempting to live out a Rule of Life based on modeling Jesus.

Married and living in the Northern Neck of Virginia, I have enjoyed serving in two small parishes. Spreading the Gospel and working closely with several other denominations, these parishes are working side by side to meet the needs of a community impacted by food insecurity directly related to ongoing underemployment, medical care problems, and limited affordable housing.

Living out my Franciscan vows of simplicity is both challenging and rewarding and will be my lifelong work to do. I am grateful for my small fellowship, St. Elizabeth (Richmond, Virginia) and its members for their example of living in faith, love, and seeing Christ in everyone.

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Milestones: Rest in Peace

Mary Beal—

**24 Years
Professed**

Recordonline.com

Mary Ramsdell Beal passed away on March 2, 2024, at the Converse Home in Burlington, Vermont. She was born in Newburgh, New York, to Homer and Marion (Cook) Ramsdell on September 12, 1927. Mary graduated from the Knox School, attended Wheaton College, graduated from Mount Saint Mary's and earned a MA from NYU. She married John W. Beal, and they resided in Newburgh for many years. Her family owned the ferries that crossed between Newburgh and Beacon and sold the right of way to the state for the construction of Route 84.

She was a special education teacher and tutor. She was a gifted gardener and member of the Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties. She loved skiing and golf. She enjoyed biking, tennis, travel and sailing. Never stopped learning. Loved animals, children and music. She was a special friend to young people and will be fondly remembered by those to whom she gave her time, advice, and affection. She was an Episcopalian and joined the Order of Saint Francis.

Before her last move to Burlington, she spent several happy years in Plattsburgh, a decade in Westport and another in Rockport, Massachusetts. She is survived by her three children and their spouses, six grandchildren and their spouses, and seven great-grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews, and, finally, many friends and admirers of all ages.

From Evelyn Mackie

I want to share with you a very special moment that occurred while she was being professed in my Connecticut home. Most of the Brother Juniper Fellowship was there. In my backyard, at least 10 or more cardinals appeared circling and landing on a tree right next to my patio. They flew in a pattern in the tree! They were amazing. I believe they came in celebration of her life profession.

Another thing I remember is that she and Judy Gillette held quiet weekend retreats at Mary's home in Rockport, MA when she lived there.



**Charles
"Chick" Moisan
Carroll—
Professed 5
Years**

From Portland Press Herald Obituary, 6/5/2025

Charles "Chick" Moisan Carroll died on June 1, 2025, at his home in Topsham, surrounded by family. He was 84 years old. His wife, Ann, said that, after a long illness, he voluntarily stopped eating and drinking.

During the Johnson Administration, and living in Washington, D.C., Chick joined the U.S. Bureau of the Budget in the Executive Office of the President, where he was responsible for the oversight and budgetary control and management of the Federal Aid Highway Program. He then took a job as Assistant to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. Following this assignment, he served as Special Assistant to the Administrator of the Urban Mass Transit Administration.

Following his public sector service, Chick joined DGA International, a lobbying firm in Washington, D.C., as "number two" to the founder. One of

(Cont.)

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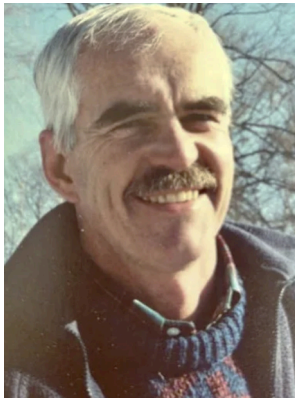
Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**RIP: Charles
"Chick"
Carroll (cont.)**

the major accomplishments of DGA in which Chick was intimately involved was securing landing rights at New York's Kennedy Airport and Washington Dulles Airport for the British and French Concorde supersonic jets. He ultimately flew on one of the very first Concorde flights between New York, Washington, D.C. and Paris.

In 2005, at the age of 65, Chick enrolled in the Bangor Theological Seminary. Upon completion of the program, he was named a deacon at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brunswick and became a member of TSSF. During this time, Chick also served as Chaplain at Parkview Hospital in Brunswick.

In 2010, Chick and two friends founded The Gathering Place, a day shelter and warming center for the impoverished and homeless populations in the Brunswick area. It currently welcomes 80-100 guests per day who receive generous support. Chick continued his volunteer work at the Gathering Place almost right up to the time of his passing.



From Doug Wall—a Fellow Mainer and Fellow Member of the Br. Juniper Fellowship

He was a great guy. I'd meet him for lunch couple of times a year until his decline. We always talked about our lives as TSSF members. The homeless shelter he helped start was one of his joys.

From Peter Prewandowski—A Fellow Member of the Br. Juniper Fellowship



I got to know Chick because he was in my formation group. During that time he visited Assisi. He thought to bring back Tau crosses for every member of our group. I later passed mine on to a Franciscan companion. It was the first Tau cross I ever received. That was how Chick chose to share his Assisi pilgrimage with his Franciscan companions.

**RIP: Pam
Moffat:
Professed 44
years**

"Roving Reporter Finds Pam Moffat in Morocco"

Peg Shull (reprinted from *Franciscan Newsletter*, January 1979, p. 6.)

Three years after they married in 1953, Pam Moffat's husband, Peter joined the Foreign Service, and as a result, she and her family have lived in Washington, D.C., Japan, France, Switzerland, Trinidad, and Italy. With two older children (Sarah and Matthew) now living in the States, Pam, her husband, and youngest, Nathaniel, 11, have begun their second two-year tour of duty in Rabat, Morocco. There, Pam works with the Embassy Wives, the International Women's Club, and the American School, where she serves as a member of the board of directors, in addition to her church work.

Pam writes:

"I could go on and on about how beautiful Morocco is. It is the special light that strikes one most often; on the river valley as we look across to the "twin city" of Sale or throughout the city as the changing light falls on the ancient walls. There are contrasts in

(Cont.) Page 14

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP:Pam Moffat (cont.)

between old and new — Biblical scenes or very Parisian ones — contrasts too between rich and poor, but overall great acceptance of these contrasts. We have not seen as much of the country as we would like, and it is totally different from one city to the next, and even every ten kilometers in between.”

Pam learned that the nearest Anglican church was in Casablanca, fifty miles away. That, added to the loss of her fellowship group, combined to make her feel “cast adrift.” But as it turned out, this time in Morocco has given her the chance to be “more a part of the Franciscan world here than anywhere else we have lived.”

There is an ancient Franciscan tradition in Morocco: “St. Francis was stopped in Spain by sickness and forced to turn back from his planned visit to North Africa. Soon after, four Franciscans were martyred in Morocco and there have been many links over the centuries. Today, there are Franciscan convents in nearly every major city, with orphanages, schools, clinics, and also workshops to instruct young girls in handwork, especially the traditional Moroccan embroidery. The Franciscans in Morocco do not set out to proselytize, but rather to live among the Moroccans as witnesses. The two religions, Islam and Christianity, seem very compatible.”

On their arrival, the family was warmly welcomed into the Roman Catholic community of Rabat. Pam was introduced to a small group of Franciscan sisters who run a retreat house and school. Twice a month, she joins a study group held at the convent (they are currently reading the *First Life of St. Francis* by Thomas de Celano). A weekly charismatic prayer meeting and Mass is also held there. Pam also meets each week with a Protestant/Southern Baptist Bible study class. In addition, Pam delved into a number of books this past summer, including several about St. Charles de Foucauld because of his links with North Africa, where he was killed in 1916.

Pam was professed October 3, 1977, at the Franciscan convent by a French Franciscan priest from Marrakech, who was visiting Rabat. Her profession took place during a Mass in the small convent chapel, said “partly in French, partly in English, but the sermon (in English) for my son Nathaniel, was all about St. Bartholomew!”



American Foreign Service Association (*Foreign Service Journal*, July/August 1985, p. 49.)

In May 1985, Pamela Harriman (wife of Secretary of State Averell Harriman) presented the Avis Bohlen Award “for a member of a Foreign Service family who does the most to advance American interests at a post” to Pamela Moffat, wife of the ambassador to Chad.

The citation read: “The first official family member to take up residence in N'Djamena, Chad, in June 1982, Pamela Moffat responded to the challenge of a capital devastated by civil strife in an isolated, underdeveloped country with zest and inventiveness,” said Harriman. “Her ability to find supplies needed for representational events enhanced American rapport with its hosts and furthered U.S. interests there.”

(Cont.) Page 15

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP: Pam From Verleah Kosloske
Moffat (cont.)

Pamela Moffat was an inspiration to many. In addition to her 44 years in TSSF, she was one of the founders of the Washington D. C. Fellowship in 1986; she was active and on the boards of directors of: Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Episcopal Urban Caucus, and countless other organizations.

Pamela regularly attended General Convention to encourage the Episcopal Church to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

She and her husband Peter spent their retirement years in Washington, D.C. after many years serving abroad in the U.S. Foreign Service. Pam was an outspoken advocate for anyone in need and had a highly developed sense of fairness and justice. It is always good to see the many photos of Pam in demonstrations in Washington by faith and justice groups over the last 30 years.

From Terry Doyle

Pam was a long-time convener of our fellowship in the Washington, D.C. area. In that role, I found her to be very welcoming, both in her role in our fellowship and in the hospitality of her home in northwest Washington, DC and later on Columbia Road.

I felt she expressed Franciscan joy and simplicity in so many ways.



(Taken Halloween 2012). (If to rt) Jan Hilton, Companion (dead), John Rebstock, Tony Cobb, Pam Moffat, Verleah Kosloske, Ed Schneider (withdrew from Order) and Joan Shelton (dead), (not pictured, Terry Doyle, who took the picture.)



Two Years Before Her Death, Pam (circled in center) is Pictured Participating in a Maryknoll Economic and Ecological Stations of the Cross in Washington D.C.



Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Mona Cutler
Hull—
Professed 42
Years ; Died
2002**

John Brockmann

Mona Hull was professed in 1960 (named *Sr. Mary Irene* at Profession) and died in 2002; 23 years ago, before the *Franciscan Times* took up the intention to tell the stories of those tertiaries who had died.

Yet even though never put down on the *Times*' pages, Mona's legacy keeps popping up in our New England Br. Juniper Fellowship experience; as when her daughter, Berney Graham, was at our long-time Fellowship Convenor Judith Gillette's funeral in 2022, and passed on a number of Mona's manuscripts for our archives. And then this Winter, my neighbor, Joan Powers (professed 62 years), passed me a bag of books that just happened to include Mona's self-published *The Sprouted Seed: 32 Poems on Religious Themes Organized into Five Parts* (2005). (Elsewhere in this issue you can read Mary Tarantini's review of this collection.) According to Mona's daughter, Berney Graham, *The Sprouted Seed* was just supposed to be a family heirloom gifted to family and friends in July 1994, but its surprising appearance and Mary Tarantini's review in this issue, offers us an opportunity to celebrate Mona as she should have been when she died 23 years ago.

From a Parochial Point of View Within the Order

Mona was there at many early events in the gestation of what would become the Province of the Americas within TSSF. For example, 62 years ago, before there was a union between TSSF European and TSF American Provinces in 1967, there were various Fellowships in Third Order Secular of the American Congregation of the Franciscans (TSF) called *Custodias*:

...in **Spring 1963** a group calling itself the "Diaspora Custodia" (including all of New England) held a meeting at the Church of the Advent in Boston. Rev. Whitney Hale was chaplain and leader of the meeting. The Rev. Hugh Thompson of Connecticut was elected Guardian, and the following women were asked to perform various secretarial duties: Mrs. Lucy Pierce, Miss Lephie Thompson, and **Mrs. Mona Hull**. (From *The Little Chronicle*—publication of the First Order Brothers, Mount Sinai, NY)

At that time, Mona was also working on her dissertation at Boston University using the Paul Sabatier Collection of Franciscan History in the Boston Public Library: 1,735 volumes, 638 pamphlets, and many letters, leaflets, and papers. (One item still in the collection is an early breviary with well-worn wooden covers.) Her finished dissertation in 1962 was titled, *The Usefulness of the Original Legend of Saint Francis of Assisi in Religious Education* (available from our Provincial library).

Later, in **1967**, when Br. Paul worked to create a Third Order organization separate from the First and Second Orders, Mona was chosen to be the first treasurer.

Then at **April 25, 1968**'s organizational launch of an independent TSSF American Province at Little Portion, Mona was there laughing in the first

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP Mona Hull (cont.)

row next to John Scott at the first Chapter meeting. (For an extended discussion of all of this, see “Chapter 3: Br. Paul & the Third Order Corporation 1966-73” in *The First 100 Years of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis in the Americas (1917-2017)* (2017).)



Later, in 1972, a year prior to John Scott becoming our first Provincial Guardian (later Provincial Minister), Mona contributed the following article for the *Third Order Newsletter*.

Why Keep A Rule of Life

Mona Hull (reprint of *Third Order Newsletter*, September 1972, p. 14.)

The word, “religious” does not mean “devout” or “Church-going”. It is said to mean “under bond” or “under rule”. The word “discipline” seems to come from the word “disciple”. A life for God, then, is a life truly under bond, a bond not of our own making, but built into the nature of our creature-ship and God’s love.

A rule of life is not something imposed on us, any more than our religion is. It is not something we make up for ourselves, either. Our Lord Himself gave us the Rule of Life. The rich, young ruler said to Him, “Good Master, what must I do to be saved?” To this our Lord replied, “You know the precepts of God; keep them and you will be saved.” But the rich young man thought himself already a pretty terrific precept-keeper. Seeking more light, he persisted: “All these things have I kept from my youth up ... What lack I yet?” It was then that our Lord clearly said, “If you would be perfect, (if you want to be more than a precept-keeper), go, sell all that you have and become poor.” He said, “Come, follow me; leave everything, in complete obedience.”

A rule of life takes our Lord at His word. Many people do not do this ... they interpret ... and the Lord, “looking upon them, loves them”. The keeper of a rule is a simple man. He says, “Ok, Lord, if You meant what You said; here I am, let me try ... “

“But--,” you interrupt, “that was 30 A.D. Surely He didn’t mean that for me!” A Franciscan is a man who happens to believe that our Lord says this to him, and that he need not, as the rich young man did, go away sorrowing.

More than handing out a rule, our Lord was an originator of the religious life. He himself lived in a religious community with his disciples. The Franciscan community is as much as possible like that of our Lord. Its men and women are artisans, housekeepers, tax collectors, and fishermen. Its primary rule is to follow the Master wherever He leads, in poverty, purity and humility, enjoying His love

Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

RIP Mona Hull (cont.)

and doing His will. An individual alone cannot live all of Christ's pattern — therefore the religious community. A man cannot grow in Christ without adopting Christ's pattern — therefore a rule of life. A man living for God must live in two worlds: his own, and the Kingdom of God; therefore, the active life rule of mercy and love, and the regulated spiritual exercise of the kingdom in prayer.

The Franciscan Rule is not the way for all men. But the Third Order is called, in the word of its Rule: "to sanctify the physical through the sacraments, to train and develop the mind through faith, to maintain home life and fellowship with others in peace and love through the grace of God, to sweeten all life, even that of dumb beasts through kindness, courtesy, and charity; to help and uplift through service, especially in the service of Holy Church; and to oppose materialism by unshaken faith in the power of the supernatural ... in a word, the spirit of the Third Order is the spirit of the Holy Gospel --- Jesus only, Jesus always, Jesus in all things.

Mona was then-convenor of the Massachusetts Fellowship, the Br. Juniper Fellowship, until she was 75 in **1988**, when Judith Gillette became convenor.



Br. Juniper Fellowship Meeting About 1998 Probably in Concord, Massachusetts

(If to rt) Back: unidentified, Margaret Motley (deceased), Leonard Gaucher (visitor), Judith Gillette (deceased), Peter Miller, Cindy Loverin (inquirer), Michael J. DePetrillo (deceased), Allan Brown (deceased)
Front: Janet Moore, Joan Powers, Adrienne Dillon, Nancy Kangas, (deceased), and Mona Hull (deceased)

(Mona was also active in the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, a community of Episcopal lay and ordained women headquartered at Adelynrood in Byfield, Massachusetts. Renowned Episcopal socialist Vida Dutton Scudder (celebrated in the 2010 *Holy Women, Holy Men* on October 10) guided the birth of the organization for 35 years. Scudder was also the person who donated the Paul Sabatier Collection of Franciscan History to the Boston Public Library, which Mona later studied for her dissertation.)

As if this were not enough—Children and Social Action

As a tertiary, Mona was also a mother with five musically gifted children: Gordon III, Mona Jerusha (known as Jerusha), David, Jonathan, and Berney. Having met Gordon Hull when she was still a student at Mt. Holyoke, Mona married in 1937, the year she graduated from Yale with a degree in public health nursing. They were married for 65 years.



From that time on, Mona dedicated herself to service among the poorest of the poor. Her first job was in the famous Henry Street Settlement in the heart of New York's Spanish Harlem. After four years in New York, she moved to Hanover, New

RIP Mona Hull (cont.)

Hampshire, where Gordon had been appointed professor in Dartmouth's physics department. Even though she had three more children during this time, Mona continued her work in the public health services. But it was during their move to Concord, Massachusetts, in 1956 that Mona's sense of mission really thrived. Concord is a wealthy town but surrounded by truck farms supplying the Boston markets. Noting the dire status of Puerto Rican migrant workers on these farms, Mona worked through local church volunteers to set up neighborhood health clinics, dispensing the most basic of hygiene information and supplies.

As her older daughter, Jerusha McCormack, notes, the Hull household also became an interim home for refugees: one fleeing the Hungarian Revolution; another, a Christian Palestinian, from Gaza. Jerusha also recalls her mother taking in for some months the pregnant, unmarried daughter of a former colleague. In a poem written for Mona's funeral, Jerusha celebrates her joyful Franciscan hospitality, not merely to people in trouble but to a miscellaneous array of adopted animals. None of her gestures, Jerusha remarks, were lost on Mona's children, nor her tender openness to the plight of those caught in a very conventional culture, once saying: "If you are morally rigid and emotionally narrow, you can be badly bruised." Also, of course, as she implies, you are also going to be spiritually impoverished.

Mona's fierce commitment to those socially marginalized took a very public turn when, in the midst of the national school desegregation unrest of the 1960s (known locally in Boston as the *Boston Busing Crisis*), Mona assumed a crucial role. Working with her parish, The Church of the Advent, together they proposed to start a school that, by design, would reflect Boston's racial diversity. It opened in 1961 as a progressive elementary school with a focus on social justice. [The Advent School](#) initially enrolled a student body that was 50% black and 50% white. Mona became the first Director of the school and led its exponential growth until she stepped down in the 1965-66 school year.



Her mission statement for the Advent School was "Our children live together. They should learn together in reflection of the city they come from."

In 2007, a Mona C. Hull Founders Award was created to honor prominent graduates whose careers have embodied the Advent School's Mission.



**RIP Mona Hull
(cont.)**

**Lines for Mona
To Mona Jerusha Hull from Mona Jerusha McCormack (Daughter)
(read at her funeral in 2002)**

Mona:

When I was young, you made a poem,
"Lines for Jerusha".
"Jerusha means Inheritance," you wrote,
"And this is yours, to keep, to read, and know...."
Now, Mona, you are our Inheritance —
One we will try to learn, by naming what you left
To us as legacies: one by one.

First: you taught us what it means to have
An open heart. I recall a young and frightened woman
Who came to stay. Pregnant and single, she had been turned
From her own family door. You took her in.
The next year, there was a man
Who had fled the streets of Hungary.
There were many others, who had no name:
The immigrant workers from the local truck farms
To whom you brought soap, towels, toothbrushes –
And Hope. They were part of a secret life you lived
And we knew only by the bags of toiletries
Spilling from the sunroom.
Towards my own refugees, your hospitality was infamous:
Not merely friends, roommates, disreputable dates –
But years before, creatures kidnapped from the wild:
Frogs and frog-spawn; beetles; snakes; white rats;
Turtles. An alligator that took up the family bath
(We didn't wash for weeks). And once, for Christmas,
A spider-monkey, who bit everyone and tried the limits
Of even your Franciscan graciousness.
This is the first gift.

The **second**, Mona,
Is your spirit. You had the élan of a buccaneer.
You braved everything: five kids in eight years —
On a professor's salary, at a time when there were no
Baby foods, frozen meals, disposable diapers, or even dryers.
(In Hanover, they called you: "Poor Mrs. Hull").
Your riches were your children. We learned early
Not to let you leave without us, in case we missed Adventure.
You blazed your way through: a Ph.D. in '62,
When women were supposed to be at home, ironing shirts.
Later, studies in theology when the sentence
"My mother is a lay minister" had all the sense
Of a line from a Victorian nonsense verse.

RIP Mona Hull (cont.)

Third, and last, Mona, you bequeath us something
At which we can only guess: your soul.
You were as shy of this as of a secret life,
Which would only flash before us like a fleeing doe.
We measured it by what you did away from home,
By the foundations of your spirit — schools and hospices
And committees of good works. But in the end,
These meant less to us than the grace
With which you always welcomed us,
Whether glad or troubled or in pain. We found a largeness there.
You were our home, our landfall after troubled seas,
Our legislator in the little laws of love.
And so today we mark these down, so that,
In your leaving, Mona, we will remember what is left,
And, in so doing, learn ourselves again
What you have given us, your own true Inheritance.



The Sprouted Seed: 32 Poems on Religious Themes Organized into Five Parts by Mona Hull (posthumously published 2005)

Review By Mary Tarantini

Mona Hull's poetry mirrors her life as a disciple of Jesus and a Third Order Franciscan. Her book, "The Sprouted Seed", 32 poems on religious themes organized into five parts, was published posthumously in 2005 and only recently discovered and made available. *[Please see the companion obituary for Mona in this issue.]* As one delves into her verse, one can begin to see her mastery of words intertwined with a devotion to simplicity and a Christian life richly lived. There is a familiarity in her words as she shares her faith, her questions, her love for God, that readers of these poems will recognize and embrace.

She begins a chapter on Sacraments with the words,

"Lord as we walk our dusty way,

Sacraments greet us day by day -

The outward and visible sign may be

Ordinary humanity -"

Then she walks us through a week, day by day, each day infused with spirit-filled sacraments: friendship, self-examination, vocation, healing, failure, marriage, and then the all-encompassing gift our Lord bestowed upon us, giving us spiritual nourishment, the Eucharist.

"And yes, Lord it is I

Trudging along in your way,

It is for me

That you shine forth your love

Today, I thank you - you have sent me Lord

The sacrament of Eucharist"

*The Sprouted Seed: 32 Poems
on Religious Themes
Organized into Five Parts* by
Mona Hull

Available from the Provincial
Library.

The titles of her poems in Chapter 1 are familiar and holy to the reader: *Lent, Prayer, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Waiting, Good Friday*, to name only a

RIP Mona Hull (cont.)

few. She reflects lovingly and searchingly on the meaning of these holy days and how we are woven intrinsically to the seasons of the Church like the beating of our faith within our hearts and lives. Here are the first few verses in “Lent”:

“Today, I have a sense of the
sprouted seed,
Long in darkness, somnolent, confined
Suddenly *pushed* through the wet resistant earth
Popped to the wide blue of the roaring sky!”

We also see in her poetry the human condition to question and to search for answers and truth expressed in words strung together in lyrical lines and simple images. To say Mona Hull had a way with words is a prodigious understatement.

“Taupe, taupe stand the willows,
White, white shines the snow-
Tell me, heart of my Heart-life:
Where shall my spirit go?”

She seemed to see clearly that life and death are intertwined in the human condition and the human inclination is to be searching for answers that lead us to a spirit-filled life with God and with each other.

“On, on runs my searching...
In and out of my head
Answer me, Love of my Lostness:
Is this what it means to be dead?”

The last chapter of this astounding book of verse is reserved for Brother Francis. Each poem follows the path of his life as she addresses him accordingly as “Bold Brother Francis,” “Rude Brother Francis,” “Bright Brother Francis,” “Brown Brother Francis,” “Blind Brother Francis,” and “Saint Brother Francis.”

Each poem references Francis in different moments along his journey — “rich-robed, defiant, aflame, in burlap and cord, limp and spent” until in, the final poem, Francis is simply and wondrously what we all, as Franciscans, know him to be: “Still singing...” In the last lines of this poem, Mona gives voice to our collective hope that when we pass over, Francis will shine “In the Peace of God’s Order/ To welcome me home.”

RIP Winston Williams— Professed 40 Years



From John Dorman—the man who brought TSSF to Guyana

John Dorman was a United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) missionary priest in the interior of Guyana for 38 years (1957-95). He was professed in the Third Order (November 18, 1980), and died on July 18, 1998. This is how Dorman described his encounter with Winston 53 years ago in “A View from the Lock-Up” in *El-Dorado*, magazine of the Guyana Diocesan Association, UK, 1972. (Dorman helped train Winston for the priesthood.)

A year ago, when I was here in the Cuyuni, I had Winston [Williams] with me, a young Akawaio tribesman who, alone and unaided, persuaded the Guyana Youth

RIP Winston Williams (cont.)

Corps to release him from that training, so that he may fulfill the claims of God calling him to train for full-time Christian work. He came with me across the high savannahs and through the streaming forest valleys, northwards to a strange area, to serve as an evangelist on the very same island I was arrested on this afternoon. After that long three days' journey, I had only one night to introduce him to his little flock—"This is my young brother, Winston, who will stay to help you come nearer to God"—and the next day after an early Mass, we waved goodbye, leaving him on the rocky beach with the tall trees behind him, as upright and strong as himself. He is belted with the fact of vocation; the certainty of divine commission; apostleship, if one dare claims that word for each such Christian, as well as for us all. How hopeless it would be if we left that behind. (*The First 100 Years of Our Province* 2017, p. 96.)



Dorman (left); Winston (ft rt)

From The Downs Benefice Winchester, Hampshire website

Winston's 'Parish' is enormous and a lot of travel can only be done by boat. He is deeply concerned for the young people in Jawalla, particularly the influence on their lives and behavior of migrant labor brought in by the mining companies.

From the Franciscan Times, Summer 2007: "Life in the Interior" by Winston Williams

I am Rev'd Canon Winston Williams, member of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis. I was professed in 1985 and became an ordained Priest. I live in Upper Mazaruni Region F in a village called Jawalla situated in the Interland of Guyana.

I have five Churches to supervise and to minister. The way of traveling is by dug-out canoe boat. The distances are far, about 60-90 miles apart from Church Centres. The area is covered with rain forest and high mountains all around. Communication is very difficult. It takes weeks and months to get mail. The only way to reach Upper Mazaruni is to fly with a small aircraft. The flight is over one hour to Kamarang or Imbaimadai, then three hours' drive with a small engine boat. The community engages in simple farming and mining and lumbering.

I am married with five children, three are now married. I engage in farming as my main occupation, and I enjoy the ministry as priest. I am now 21 years in the priesthood.



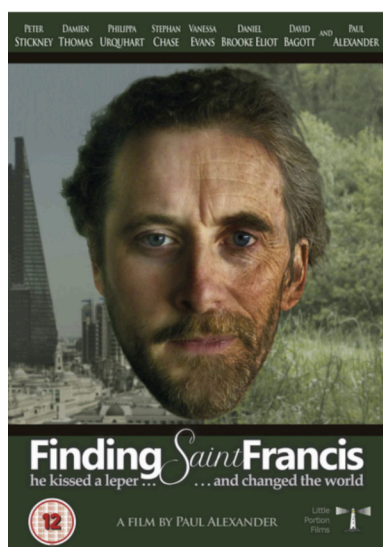
113 Years of Movies About Saint Francis: The Silents to TV Miniseries (1911-2024) The Final Part: From Our Own Order: *Finding Saint Francis* (2015)

From Our Own Order: *Finding Saint Francis* (cont.)

by R. John Brockmann, Janice Syedullah, Neil Tumber, and Paul Alexander

Paul Alexander, "About the Film"

Peter, a young executive in his early thirties, arrives at a Franciscan Friary dressed in a city suit but looking as though he hasn't slept for several days. He stands in an empty car park with no one in sight. He walks across the road into a courtyard where he sees a series of paintings hanging in a cloister. As he looks at them, he hears a door opening on the other side of the courtyard but when he turns to see who is there all he sees is the door closing.



He crosses the courtyard and goes through the doorway into an empty annex. On the right are some glass doors. He goes through into an oblong room with windows down one side. The room is dense with the smoke of incense. It is a chapel No one is there. He walks the length of the chapel into another empty room that has rush matting on the floor and a colourful wooden cross on the far wall. As he approaches it, he hears a voice behind him. Alarmed, he turns round to see a Franciscan friar sitting on a bench against the wall. It is Brother William, the guest master of the Friary.

William is showing Peter where he is staying when a bell rings in the courtyard announcing that afternoon tea is available. When they enter the courtyard Peter finds that it is now full of people surrounded with film gear who are obviously about to set up for filming a scene. William informs Peter that the film crew are spending a fortnight at the friary filming a modern version of 'The Life of St. Francis'. As they stand in the courtyard looking at a statue of St. Francis, we hear a 'voice-over' beginning the story.

The film ends with a scene of Francis lying on the ground dying, surrounded by people, in the same place that we first saw Peter at the beginning of the film. The penultimate shot is of Peter standing alone in the empty car park remembering all the scenes he has seen and experienced over the past two weeks. It is a very different Peter whom we see walking away from the Friary.

The feel of the film is Brechtian, with the director, as actor and storyteller, commenting on the scenes that are played for real, but kept in a modern, simple setting with sparse symbols for costume and scenes that epitomize character and place. Actors play multiple roles creating a montage effect of scenes that build to a film in which the audience are aware that they are watching a story of contrast and contradictions but are swept up into the story.

The aim of the film is threefold:

- To tell the Franciscan story as accurately as possible in a way that makes Francis a colourful three-dimensional character revealing details that are sometimes funny, sometimes tragic. We see his humility as well as his fiery character and his deep commitment to following in the footsteps of Christ;
- To bring the story alive and make it relevant to a modern audience who may not be familiar with Francis, by placing his story in a modern context;

From Our Own Order: *Finding Saint Francis* (cont.)

- To show that Peter, the cast, the crew and the audience are all on a journey of 'Finding Saint Francis'.

Review by Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (Australian Province) (2021)

This film takes a different tack. It is set in a Franciscan house in the English countryside. A middle-aged man undergoing something of a personal search, arrives



at the friary and encounters a group of the lay associates and friars. They are listening to a talk on St. Francis by the director, Paul Alexander. He sees something in the man, discusses his situation with him and offers him the role of Francis in the forthcoming film. He accepts and, as he undertakes the role, he sees parallels with his own life.

The budget was limited but several actors and amateurs are used in the film to present the equivalent of Francis's life but in a contemporary setting and with contemporary costumes. For the pictorial background of Assisi and the surrounding countryside as well as visits to Rome, color sketches are used effectively. And there is the musical score.

Finding Saint Francis (2015) — Provincial Library has a copy; also available on Vimeo
<https://vimeo.com/200338190>

The screenplay traces the details of Francis's life, many of which are familiar, but which it is important and interesting to hear again: the background and the wealth of his merchant father, his French mother, his early and rather carefree life, his military service. This includes giving away his armor and horse to a needy soldier, but his father supplying substitutes.

Review by Stephen Brown in the *Church Times* (2016)

Alexander uses techniques more normally associated with theatre than film. Actors playing multiple roles wear items (such as a skull cap) that are mere tokens of who and what their characters represent. This kind of distancing from the past helps viewers to be part of the on-screen story. This is especially true of Stone's character, as he becomes transformed into a Francis for today.

In another film, *Jesus of Montreal*, performers of a Passion play become the very people whom they are portraying. *Finding Saint Francis* could have no greater compliment than being compared to that remarkable Canadian film.

Reviews from Tertiaries

Neil Tumber — Humility, love and joy, the three notes of the Third Order are fully on display in this delightful rendering of the Saint Francis story made by our own Paul Alexander, a tertiary based in South London, UK. Filmed in and around the Society of St. Francis First Order friary at Hilfield and using many first order brothers and third order visitors as actors this Franciscan experience is an example of the power of simplicity because the events of Francis' life lose nothing of their impact and convey the healing that comes from finding Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis.

John Brockmann — This is guerrilla movie-making; actors playing multiple roles; a curious mixture of costuming; a large portion of the exposition carried by voiceovers and close-scanning of Assisi watercolors; and at times, we are watching the movie with a sense of willing disbelief, and, at times, we are behind the scenes watching the actors drink coffee in the kitchen. Such guerrilla movie-making is the message of the film; the medieval life of Francis needs to erupt into our present and

**From Our Own Order:
Finding Saint Francis
(cont.)**

produce changes in us by being closer to God in the way of Francis. My only quibble with the film is that the depiction of the meeting of Francis and the Sultan is very Bonaventure-ish and does not incorporate recent research such as presented in the *Sultan and the Saint*.

Janice Syedullah — This is a very creative video with a fresh and innovative rendition of the life of St. Francis. Basically, it is the director, in a storytelling approach, giving an overview of the life of Francis while actors act it out. It is interspersed with works of art and natural settings as the backdrop for the storyteller. It provides another perspective to the phenomenon of Francis, the saint and brother.

A Decade After: Paul Alexander, the Director

Well, it is now eleven years since making the film and I have moved on to writing three novels and starting a new business as an environmental land manager of a fifty acres farm on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park wilderness. This might seem a long way from *Finding Saint Francis* and films, but in reality that episode was the beginning of a transformative process leading to the practical implementation of thinking through a modern Franciscan way of life. The booklet, *History of the Young Franciscan Movement*, has been very much a part of the process along with another booklet TSSF has kindly published for me titled, *A Joyful Celebration of Contemplation for All*.

I'm contemplating writing another booklet exploring, more in story form, how anyone who is feeling trapped in this current climate can embark on a Franciscan lifestyle. In a way this would be a follow on from the film but would be less about finding Saint Francis and more about logically coming to the conclusions that a Franciscan way of life makes complete sense in a world that is going topsy turvy.



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

Now you can download a copy of the entire five-part series free by clicking [here](#).

You will get not only what has been printed, but also all the references, and **Lagniappe: Comparing Franciscan Movies Along Continuums.**

Benedict the Black Fellowship Supplement: A Celebration of Joy!

A Celebration
of Joy!
by Masud Ibn
Syedullah

In this time of increased political and social upheaval and uncertainty, the St. Benedict the Black Fellowship offers the following gifts of “Joy” to our Order, calling to mind it is a fruit of the Spirit, so characteristically Franciscan, and much needed in times like these.

“A Franciscan's
Joy”
Jeauince Tribue
Burnette

In the darkest valley
let your light shine.
Your smile shall be a beacon
for others during these troubled times.
The joy that floats between us all
will be our truest sustenance.
When the forces of injustice
try their hardest to cripple us
remember that you are not alone.
Your spirit of hope
will buoy us in this storm.
We will each of us serve as
our community's strength.
A warm embrace from loved ones,
A kind word during a stressful day,
A bit of laughter among friends...
These tiny treasures
and those like them
shall be our anchor.
Never forget that
our inner joy is a gift
from God.
And nothing
And no one
will take it from us.



Joy
By Janice
Syedullah

Joy is knowing, deep in your heart and soul, that God always shows up for us. No matter how many times we fail, how many times we fall, God shows up for us. Even when we aren't aware of it or can't see it. That joy may express itself through joyous dancing, (like David), or in singing, or in countless other ways an individual may express joy. In the midst of pain and suffering sometimes, like Thomas, we doubt. But God is faithful all the time. All the time, God is faithful and because of that we are joyful.

When we have a personal relationship with Him, we know about that faithfulness from experience. Like a deep friendship or like what we experience from a soul mate, we know that we can depend on God's love for us. He has our back. Knowing that gives us strength, courage, and hope. Knowing that makes us want to shout for joy; to dance; to sing; to give praise to the one who is our deliverer, our savior.

Joy

By Janice Syedullah (cont.)

Imagine that we are surrounded by enemies and we can see no way out. Imagine we can only presume we are going to die, and then suddenly, out of nowhere, God appears like a superhero from some Marvel comic to save us. How do we feel then? We are joyous! We feel like dancing for joy! In the midst of our death experience, we are saved.

I tend to think of Thomas not as doubting Thomas, but as Thomas needing reassurance. He had been through hell. His closest friend had been murdered in the most vicious way. His friend was tortured and humiliated. This friend who was more than a friend, who was a mentor and teacher, experienced what seemed to be a defeat. What could he now believe? What could he hope? How could he trust? Under threat of his own safety, he deserted his friend. How could he believe that his friend would come back to him and welcome him? But here he is, standing before him and proclaiming his love and faithfulness. When Thomas sees this, he shouts in joy, "My Lord and my God"! Joy is knowing Christ and the love he has shown for us through his ministry, his death, and his resurrection in spite of our own unfaithfulness, betrayals, and failures. Thanks be to God!



"JOY"

By Diana
Turner-Forte

Pure joy—bird's morning chant,
the steady upward push of *Sanguinaria canadensis*
woodland fairies filled with play; twirling
kicking up water droplets in country streams.
Intoxicated by joy's essence
like shooting stars
hearts pulsating
rhythmically
Rejoicing wherever souls entangle
joy's dance a mere flicker
igniting air with light
commingling in the cosmos.



Hallelujah, Anyhow!

By Bishop Bar-
bara Harris
(Edited by Kelly
Brown Dou-
glas)

Review By Diana
Turner-Forte

A gospel hymn expressing praise and gratitude to God during difficult times concludes with these words "Hallelujah, anyhow!" and is the title of Bishop Barbara Harris's memoir which is filled with numerous challenges, as well as celebrations. It is the story of the first woman to the episcopate of the Anglican Communion. To say that the role itself requires certain gifts would be an understatement, but since this woman was African American the sheer feat of her rise to the role is worth knowing about, acknowledging and bearing witness to. The book highlights a specific period in the history of the United States and from the perspective of shining a light on church hierarchy and complicity inhibiting opportunities not only for women, but specifically for women of color. The book masterfully combines Barbara Harris' eloquent

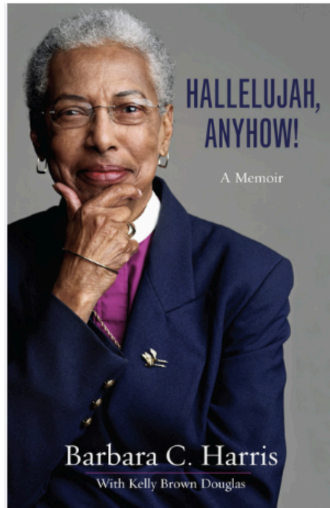
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Hallelujah, Anyhow!

Review By Diana
Turner-Forte
(Cont.)

story-telling ability with Kelly Brown Douglas's curiosity and skill at teasing out deeper thoughts through dialogue on certain topics. *Hallelujah, Anyhow!* is filled with truth-telling and is presented in a unique format for a memoir.

Though a church-attending child, becoming a bishop was not on young Barbara's mind. She prayed and attended church regularly and was involved in many aspects of church life, but chose or was pushed into a career in public relations that began with a totally misogynistic and racist offer: "...I'll teach you public relations. I'll pay you twenty-five



dollars a week, even though you aren't worth anything." She proved to be a brilliant, resourceful, and diplomatic negotiator, eventually becoming public relations manager for Sun Oil Company. From her experience in board rooms, education, and churches she developed a broad and keen sense of the territory she was navigating and through the pages of the book you recognize that she speaks from direct experience when she commented on racism with these words: "Today racism is more subtle and institutionalized and therefore more difficult to deal with... The damnable thing about institutionalized racism is that well-meaning white folk don't have to do anything overt to insure its perpetuation."

What is somewhat disconcerting in reading Barbara Harris's story is that if you did not know better you might wonder if the memoir took place in the early 19th century with its references to blatant racism, sexism, and general disrespectful language toward a woman, but, in fact, her life covers a period of time from 1930-2020, with her conse-

cration as bishop in 1989. The book reflects cultural prejudices and the evolution of our still-evolving society. This book should serve as cause for deep reflection of the church which in spite of gay bishops and other women bishops, there is much work to be done in honoring our Baptismal Covenant to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being."

Towards the end of *Hallelujah, Anyhow!* we get a glimpse of Harris's preaching skills through a collection of six sermons that are life-affirming. Extolling the divine feminine in an annual celebration of Women's Day at historic St. Thomas (the African Episcopal Church Absalom Jones founded in Philadelphia in 1792) and using the fourth Gospel of John, Jesus's interaction with the Samaritan woman, we're invited to ruminate with Harris on the topic: "Thirst for the Kingdom of God." Just to give a flavor of the range of insights a sermon that for an Absalom Jones Service in which Harris draws parallels between Jones (1746-1818) and nearly 200 years later Dr. Martin Luther King's (1929-1968) journey toward freedom as a spiritual practice that is ongoing and will one day liberate everybody. The six sermons provide an overview of her charismatic yet forthright manner of delivering the message of the Gospels. You'll want to return to this treasure trove of reflections often.

Hallelujah, Anyhow! sheds a different light on the interweaving of church, state, and the social and political underpinnings we continue to tread these days. We are still bending the arc—one of truth, freedom, and seeking God in the messiness of this world. In so many ways Bishop Barbara Harris was a trailblazer epitomizing servant leadership, her humble activism in the Jesus Movement and the role each one of us plays in bringing the kingdom of God to earth. The book closes with a final shout of embodied hope, "When You're feeling down and out. / Throw your hands up high and shout Hallelujah anyhow. / 'cause I'm wrapped up in Jesus. Singing Hallelujah anyhow."

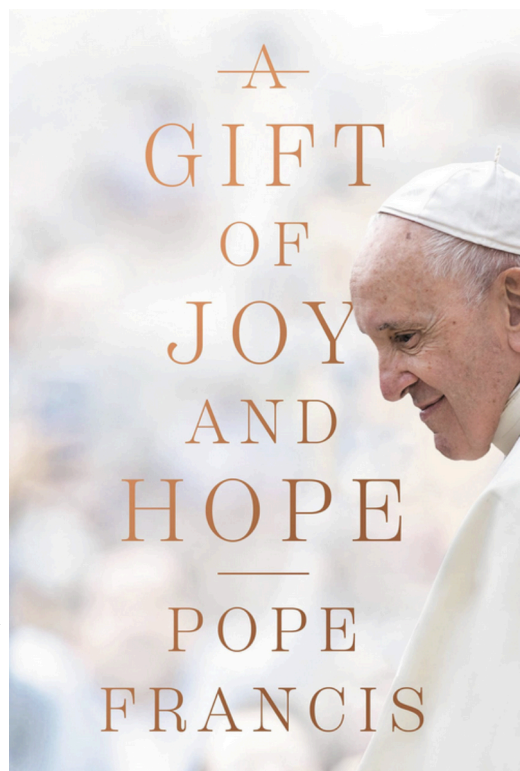


The Gift of Joy and Hope

by Pope Francis
(From the book
cover.)

A Gift of Joy is an invitation to embrace authentic beauty, and a reminder to be open to encountering God, even in the midst of challenges. In this inspiring collection, Pope Francis encourages readers to change attitudes that exclude others; to reveal the deep dissatisfaction we all hide; and to overcome life's challenges with the courage of faith. He also challenges readers to hope without pessimism or doubt, to recognize the beauty all around us, and to let God show us how to deal with our doubts and fears.

This book aims to encourage readers to look outside themselves and believe that hope is still possible, and that joy always has the last word. "God is joyful, and he wants us to be full of joy, too."★



Reflections and Meditations by Masud Ibn Syedullah

“Both here and in all your churches throughout the world, we adore you, O Christ and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.”

(The opening prayer of Third Order Daily Obedience)

Everywhere present You are, O Christ. Everywhere present — to be perceived, acknowledged, and adored. How perceptive Francis was to recognize You — everywhere — in and through all things. Such intuition — such insight — such clarity of Your Reality. And this little opening prayer calls Your Reality to our attention. This little opening prayer can indeed BE an OPENING / invoke AN OPENING for us — for us to “SEE” You — here — right here and now — WHEREVER that may be — WHEREVER we are.

How perception-altering that can be — to usher us into Your Presence — better, to AWAKEN us to Your Presence. It is like Moses becoming aware of the Burning Bush. He was in Your Presence without knowing it — going about his business doing his work and suddenly You brought Yourself into his awareness. He had not known the land upon which he stood was Holy Ground containing You.

So, as I use this little opening prayer, it indeed invites My Eyes to become clear of vision — to perceive, acknowledge, and adore You — now, here, in THIS place — and I do...Thank You Lord for Your Faithfulness!



Reflections and Meditations by Masud Ibn Syedullah (cont.)

A Reflection on 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another [from glory to glory]; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit."

Dear Lord, reflecting on this passage, I can see how, through the years, You have drawn me, step by step, to discover new levels of You and of myself. How far I have come over the decades in my understanding of who You are and what You expect of me — and knowledge of myself, and what You are "growing" within me.

O Christ, sometimes it has been so very painful to change — to allow myself to emerge from one stage to another. Yet, having done so, I thank You for Your patience — Your ever-drawing, persistent Spirit calling and encouraging me onward — providing the faith, trust, courage, and support to follow You.

How arrogant, how uninformed and naïve I have been at times thinking that "I knew" what Your will was, and what Your will was for me, only to discover there was yet another leg of the Path I knew not of — one You led me onto that made all the difference in my life — led me further into a dimension of Your Life and mine that I could not have anticipated or perceived.

I thank You for the "gift of evolution" — leading me from glory to glory, as difficult as that is at times — helping me to understand this journey with You is truly one of new discoveries, surprises, unexpected gifts along the Way. You are SO gracious dear Lord — so kind — so generous, so persistent in a Life-Giving way to nudge me into the place I need to be. May I always trust You to be with me, and to be willing to surrender to Your will. May I trust that "Your rod and Your staff" protect and give me the confidence to follow You along Your Path — beyond my "knowing" — my "seeing". Thank you, dear Lord.

"Lead me, Lord; lead me in Your righteousness;
make Thy way straight before my face.
For it is Thou, Lord, Thou Lord only
who makest me dwell in safety."



"My soul clings to you; your right hand holds me fast."

Psalms 63:8 (BCP)

O God, I thank You that we are mutually bonded. You have created me for You — for Yourself. You are Home. You are the Ultimate my soul yearns for. All of the superlative qualities of Life which I can imagine are Ultimately You! Each of the Fruit of the Spirit is the Purest and Most Superlative of You: You Are Love, You Are Joy, You Are Peace, You Are Patience...and so much MORE. My soul yearns for each and all of these. My soul hungers and thirsts for each. THEY are YOU, are LIFE in the fullest — the Source and Sustainer of my life. My heart knows that and is drawn as if by some huge magnetic force towards You. A homing pigeon it is, intent on returning Home.



Yet, there are those times of confusion, as in a fog, when in my yearning I am drawn toward what appears to be that which will satisfy my hunger — quench my thirst,

(Cont.) **Page 32**

Reflections and Meditations by Masud Ibn Syedullah (cont.)

but it is counterfeit — having the appearance/attraction of being Good, The Good, but it is not. I do so thank You God that You are so faithful — so dedicated to me that Your right hand holds me fast. Although my grasp of You, in the “moment”, may slacken, Your grasp of me is constant. O how very thankful I am. What joyous confidence that truth evokes in me. You are always faithful, ever drawing me to You, “re-minding” me of who I am and whose I am — that I am One with You — that it is You above all else my soul desires, and on whom I can depend. With great joy and peace my soul clings to you; Your right hand holds me fast. May it always be — eternally.



“Living in the Presence”

A video exploring the joy-filled and life-giving transformational Presence of God through contemplative practice.

By Masud Ibn Syedullah

Among the several institutions with which I collaborate, my work with New Skete Monastery (a monastery of the Orthodox Church in America — OCA) took an unexpected move forward about a month ago when one of the monks, Brother Theophan, a neuroscientist, invited me to co-create and present a program with him at New Skete's annual Pilgrimage Day — an event featuring special liturgies and spiritual formation programs.

Br. Theo's ministry is one of spiritual guidance by drawing from the new findings of neuroscience and the centuries-old wisdom and practices of contemplative prayer and meditation. Since the disciplines of psychology and contemplative practice have long been central interests of mine, I was both humbled and overjoyed to be asked to collaborate with him to create a presentation interweaving these disciplines. As a result, I ask you to make the time to view the following video; the weblink is provided below:

“Living in the Presence: Insights from Neuroscience and Contemplative Practice”



August 10, 2024; New Skete Monastery 2024 Pilgrimage; Br. Theophan Miskovic and

Fr. Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF; <https://youtu.be/OGLywRawJZ0> (50 minutes)

Enjoy! — and I look forward to hearing your response to it.

Email: ibnsyedullah@gmail.com

