



# The Franciscan Times

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

*Pace e bene*

**Spring 2026**

## **Reflections on Peace and Peacemaking in A Time of Strife and Chaos**

Masud Ibn Syedullah Convener — The Saint Benedict the Black Fellowship

Peace and peacemaking are among the top Franciscan charisms. One can hardly think of St. Francis without being reminded of and inspired to be “an instrument of peace.” The following four pieces are offerings to our Province from the Saint Benedict the Black Fellowship that invite contemplation of and actions toward peace and peacemaking in this time of war, social and political strife, and chaos.

May God’s peace and every good be with you!

### **To Share the Prince of Peace:**

#### **A Reflection on Days Five and Six of *The Principles***

Masud Ibn Syedullah

The First Aim of the Order is “To make our Lord known and loved everywhere.” Our daily disciplines guide us to reflect on this and the other parts of *The Principles* over and over again, extending into weeks, months, days, and years. We hope (and pray) that over time, deeper and broader meanings and implications will emerge for us as we continue to live our life — following Christ in the Way of Francis.

After years spent reflecting on this First Aim, my thoughts focused on how we are called to respond to the invitation to *tell* people about Jesus. I thought that whether one was a clergy or lay person, the task was to share the Good News of God through either the spoken or written word — through conversations, sermons, teaching, books, and other written materials. The point, I thought, was to introduce others to the person of Jesus — the story of His life, mission, teachings — and what we, as Christians, believe about the significance of His death and resurrection. So, my understanding essentially focused on informing and educating others about Jesus and what Christian faith teaches about Him. However, experiencing the ever mounting social and political tensions in the USA and around the world during the past few years, this First Aim began to take on a more expansive meaning for me.

On January 6, 2021, I stared with astonishment at the television screen as I observed the violent and chaotic breaching of the United States Capitol and was stunned by a sign being carried by one of the revilers in the crowd. It read in bold letters, “JESUS SAVES!” That sign, beyond all else, caught my attention and drove me into deep thought. Nearly instantly, the 1950’s television show “To Tell the Truth” came to mind in which a set of panelists question several contestants in an attempt to identify which one was truly the person they claimed to be. Finally, at the end of the questioning, the person telling the truth stood up at the

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## Reflections on Peace and Peacemaking in A Time of Strife and Chaos (cont.)

### To Share the Prince of Peace (cont.)

moderator's command, "Will the real (name of the person) please stand up!"

Watching the screen that day, a voice inside of me imagined, "Will the real Jesus please stand up!" What I observed and experienced on the screen that day (in the name of God and Christ) was so very far from what I understood and experienced God and Christ to be.

The Jesus I know said, "You will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:16-20). St. Paul lists some of that fruit, "...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23). What I witnessed that day bore no resemblance to the fruits that Jesus of the Gospels produced. It is the *fruit* of that Jesus we are called to "make known and loved" — not to merely *talk about* Him, or "bear signs" (of any kind) of His name, but to make Him known and loved by what we do.

These days as I read and meditate, whenever I come to the word *Jesus* (or words that refer to Him) I substitute them by saying (or thinking), "the fruit of God's Spirit is....". For example, in Day Five, I substitute, "Our Order believes it is the commission of the Church to make the Gospel known to all, and therefore accepts the duty of bringing others to [experience the Fruit of Christ's Spirit through us]. Or, in Day Six: "The primary aim for us as Tertiaries is therefore to make [the Fruit of Christ's Spirit] known." And, "Like them... [we bear witness to [Christ's Fruit of the Spirit] in our own immediate environment...". As I do this, I am being reminded of the specific "fruit" Paul itemizes in the Letter to the Galatians.

Therefore, in what Spirit do we engage those with whom we disagree? In what Spirit do we exercise whatever power and authority we have in situations? How committed are we to strive for fairness and to honor and respect the dignity of all persons — without exception? How committed are we *to deeply listen to the other person*, rather than being *determined to persuade them to our position at all cost*? These are but a very few of the ways we can "make our Lord known and loved" — by demonstrating in word AND deed — the Real Deal — the Jesus of the Gospels. Let us truly go forth — in the Name of Christ!

### A Pondering on Peace

Janice Syedullah

Peace comes with a price. Peace requires intentionality. Peace is not a fluffy pat on the head or goody-goody-two-shoes type of attitude. Peace as a practice may result in division.

To practice peace is to bring what has been broken together and what has been lost to be found. It is when an age-old argument between family clans is settled because one party has the courage to step forward and shake the hand of their former enemy, or when speaking up when someone is being mistreated or bullied.

Standing up for issues involving truth and justice may get you thrown in jail. Jesus said "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34 and <sup>51</sup> Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but

## Reflections on Peace and Peacemaking in A Time of Strife and Chaos (cont.)

### A Pondering on Peace (cont.)

division. <sup>52</sup> From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup> They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” Luke 12:51-53 It is this kind of peacemaking that is so desperately needed in today’s world. We need Christians to be bold enough to withstand persecution for promoting peaceful solutions when warmongers call for revenge, destruction, power, and colonization. Peace demands respect for every human being and every living creature. Peace requires work.

Some of our greatest thinkers penned thoughts about peace:

- “The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace.” — Mahatma Gandhi
- “Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.” — Albert Einstein
- “It is not enough to win a war; it is more important to organize the peace.” — Aristotle
- “Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.” — Albert Schweitzer

St. Francis of Assisi modeled a life of peace through demonstrating radical love, embracing all of God’s creation, and surrendering himself passionately to God alone. His work on earth showed how to promote peace with compassion, forgiveness, and understanding.

“Lord, grant us the grace to practice peace by walking closely in His footsteps.” Amen



**Benedict the Black**  
By Br. Robert Lentz, OFM

### Two Poems About Peace

#### “The Peace of Wild Things”

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

— Wendell Berry, from *The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry*

## Reflections on Peace and Peacemaking in A Time of Strife and Chaos (cont.)

### Poems About Peace (cont.)

#### “Making Peace”

A voice from the dark called out,  
“The poets must give us  
imagination of peace, to oust the intense, familiar  
imagination of disaster. Peace, not only  
the absence of war.”

But peace, like a poem,  
is not there ahead of itself,  
can't be imagined before it is made,  
can't be known except  
in the words of its making,  
grammar of justice,  
syntax of mutual aid.

A feeling towards it,  
dimly sensing a rhythm, is all we have  
until we begin to utter its metaphors,  
learning them as we speak.

A line of peace might appear  
if we restructured the sentence our lives are making,  
revoked its reaffirmation of profit and power,  
questioned our needs, allowed  
long pauses...

A cadence of peace might balance its weight  
on that different fulcrum; peace, a presence,  
an energy field more intense than war,  
might pulse then,  
stanza by stanza into the world,  
each act of living  
one of its words, each word  
a vibration of light—facets  
of the forming crystal.

— Denise Levertov, from *Breathing the Water*

## Five Peace Videos and Two Books Promoting Peace

### YouTube Videos Promoting Peace

- Poems for Peace | UNICEF
- Poem on Peace and Intolerance "We cannot wait" A Nigerian Inspirational Spoken word Poem
- A poem for peace from 14-year-old Rita in South Sudan | UNICEF
- Poems for Peace | Antonina, 15 y.o.
- Poems for Peace, a voice to kids surrounded by conflict - Behind the News - YouTube
- Michael Jackson - Earth Song. (Lyrics).
- Imagining Another Way (with Christena Cleveland, PhD and Richard Rohr; <https://youtu.be/6pB4crqOwt8?si=vng9UceLx7gZmgBd> on YouTube

### Books Promoting Peace

- *My God is a Black Woman*, by Christena Cleveland, PhD, introducing Black Madonnas from her research.
- *Hope is Here!: Spiritual Practices for Pursuing Justice and Beloved Community*, by Luther E. Smith, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Church Community at Candler School of Theology at Emory University

## Milestones: Welcome the Newly Professed

**Frank Logue** My journey toward the Third Order began with my wife, Victoria, feeling a call to community as a Franciscan. She professed in 2007. During the formation leading to that step and, in the years after, we discerned how we would as a couple and a family, with our daughter, live out The Principals. In so many ways this was a fit for me and Victoria whose faith was shaped by our thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail in 1988 where we experienced radical simplicity for six months immersed in creation.



I have served as the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia since May 30, 2020. Previously, I was a church planter from 2000-2010 and assisted the previous Bishop as Canon to the Ordinary from 2010-2020. Victoria and I wrote a devotional to give to the diocese: *Feast of Feasts: Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany with St. Francis* (Low Country Press, 2022). The process of writing that book in our spare time in 2021-2022 led to me deciding to not just support Victoria as a tertiary, but to also discern whether to join the Order. In the formation that has followed as a postulant and novice, I have enjoyed getting to know more tertiaries, especially at the Provincial Convocation in Arizona in 2023. I have also benefitted greatly from our Sister Simplicity Fellowship, with whom I professed my vows at Grace Cathedral in Charleston on January 24. I can see a number of ways in which this formation has influenced my work as a Bishop. I trust that will continue as a Tertiary.

**Amy Slaughter**

I am a life-long Episcopalian who somehow only discovered the Third Order, Society of St. Francis in the last ten years — and I am endlessly grateful. I now recognize my authentic self and call, and the integration of many of my lifelong pursuits in Franciscan spirituality and practice. I live in a rowhouse in Baltimore and have three young adult children. I serve as the Rector of St. Francis Episcopal Parish & Community Center in Timonium, Maryland.



I often say my real seminary formation happened at Viva House, the Catholic Worker community in Baltimore, and through years of faith-based community organizing— learning prayer by washing dishes, practicing theology in meeting rooms, and living out love in public life. I delight in community art-making and volunteering at the Walters Art Museum, and learning to preach and preside in Spanish with my gracious community around me. I am happiest in democratic learning spaces, and any place where curiosity and dignity of each person and each part of Creation are taken seriously.

[You can find an interview of Amy's "The Franciscan Way" on our TSSF website or YouTube at <https://youtu.be/nH5ArSLcBLA?si=h-paQ0YBOcRTW4hg>]

**Georgiana Stewart**

Georgiana is a graduate of the University of Toronto (B.A. Hons), Queens University Faculty of Law (LLB) and Trinity College, University of Toronto (MDiv). She was ordained deacon in 2019 and priest in 2020 in the Diocese of Ontario where she serves as priest-in-charge of St. Paul's Sydenham and St. Luke's Kingston. Georgiana is married to Michael Capon, music director of St. James Church in Kingston. She also plays cello.

## Welcome the Newly Professed cont.)

**Randy  
Hemp**

Whether it was my employment, my marriage, my education, or *even* the smaller decisions that I've made, they all began with discernment questions. Questions like, "God, is this the path of Your preference? If so, please guide my way that I may see the right direction."

God has guided me through many decisions, and one such decision, led me to a silent retreat, and then on to the discovery of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis. My "Yes" to the Third Order was not immediate. Time in prayer, researching the website, and time in meditation and introspection, were *very* important to me.

From my opening letter of inquiry to my Life Profession, I have been discovering the ways of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis through fellowships, mentors, instructions, teachings, and education. From the writing of my reports to the Fellowship classes, I have spiritually grown through these. I have met the most wonderful, patient, empathic, compassionate, peaceful, and joyful people in the Third Order. Through their help I am able to recognize areas of my life of where improvement is needed and appreciate the areas when I recognize the needs of people and I'm able to help fill them.

Now with my adherence to my Rule of Life, the Principles, and the Franciscan Rule of Life, I will continue to hold on to their standards and teachings and share them with other people. I thank God for everyone who touched my life in a positive, Third Order Franciscan way.



## Milestones: Rest in Peace

**Joan  
Bedell—  
Professed  
35 Years**

Joan Bedell peacefully embraced sister death earlier this month with her loved ones by her side. Joan, a kind and gentle soul, will be missed by all. She was 89

Joan was convenor of the Fellowship in Philadelphia for many years and also was an Assistant Formation Director.

She was also a director of parole officers within the Philadelphia Criminal Justice System, Female Offenders Comprehensive and Integrated Services Network (FOCIS).



Joan Bedell and John Rebstock

**Bernard  
George  
"Bernie"  
Templin —  
Professed  
29 Years**

### From Wright & Salmon Mortuary Services Obituary

Bernie's life was one of service and commitment to his family and his church.

"Bernie" passed away at the OSF Richard L. Owens Hospice Home in Peoria, Illinois on Wednesday, July 23, 2025.

Bernie was born on May 8, 1933, in Peoria, to John and Lucie (Boettger) Templin, the youngest of eight children. He married Marta Vonachen on November 28, 1964, in Peoria. She preceded him in death on January 25, 2012. They were married 47 years.

Bernie worked at Caterpillar Inc. for 45 years, retiring in 1995. He was appointed to the Peoria City Council



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## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Bernard  
George  
“Bernie”  
Templin  
(Cont)**

on two occasions and volunteered as a member of the city Zoning Commission, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals. After retirement he worked for the city for a short time as a Real Estate Consultant. He was also a volunteer with the American Red Cross, having been on its Blood Region Board of Directors for 15 years, a driver for the Blood Region for six years, and having donated 50 gallons of blood and platelets.

Bernie was a life-long active member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church where he sang in the choir and served as a member of the Vestry and various committees many times. He also served at the altar as a Eucharistic Minister, Subdeacon, MC, and scheduled all lay altar servers. He made a Cursillo in 1972 and was active in that movement, having been on many teams since then, including one in Geneva, Switzerland. He was also involved in the formation of the Walk to Emmaus, a Methodist version of Cursillo, and was on a team that met in Hong Kong.

### **From John Brockmann**

Bernie was there at our first Provincial Convocation in New Orleans in 1997, and was friends with the longest professed member of TSSF, Lucy Pierce, who also lived in Peoria. Bernie used to go to Chicago once a year to participate in the fellowship there when it existed.

**Rev.  
Deacon  
Patricia  
(Patsy)  
Anne  
Dyer—  
Professed  
8 Years**

She died at 81 on November 24, 2025. She and fellow tertiary, Charmaine Pavy, were ordained as Deacons on June 30, 2022.

### **From her own Welcoming the Newly Professed *Franciscan Times* (Spring 2018, p. 21).**

*My family and I worship at St. James the Just Anglican Church in Sangre Grande, Trinidad, and it is with great joy that I moved to profession in TSSF. My journey had its small twists and turns, but the love and encouragement of my extended network of family, friends and local TSSF fellowship (as well as my formation counselors) have seen me safely through.*

*I serve as a lay minister in my parish, assisting at services and with religious education at a local secondary school. I enjoy working with young people and organizing events to promote greater fellowship within our wider church community. I also serve on the vestry, applying my experience in the accounting field as a member of the finance committee.*

*I enjoy cooking delicious meals and sharing at family get-togethers. I take great pleasure in listening to church music—my favorite instrument is the pipe organ.*

*I truly appreciate my Franciscan brothers and sisters who buoy me up with love and guidance as I pursue my journey of living a Franciscan life in Christ.*

### **Third Order Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Claude Berkley, eulogizes Patricia**

You can view our own Third Order Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Claude Berkley, eulogize Patricia at her funeral here on YouTube at 1:27:  
<https://www.youtube.com/live/jrHDDNmux9c?si=V48wASmDwLOFW7gC>



## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Dianne  
Aid—  
Professed  
33 Years**

From GOFUNDME.com Appeal

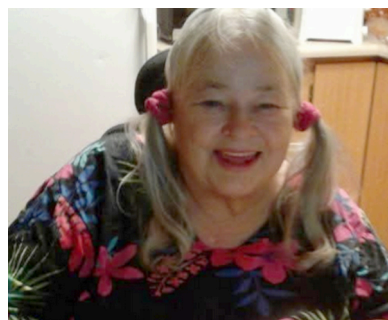
Our beloved Dianne passed away on February 1, 2026. Dianne touched the lives of so many people around her. She dedicated her life to working with Jubilee Ministries since starting in 1991 and later directing the Jubilee Center at St. Matthew/San Mateo in Auburn. Dianne was a Franciscan who lived by the motto she cherished: “Nothing about us without us.” She advocated for comprehensive immigration reform, provided support and safety to victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, and created spaces for Indigenous immigrants to reconnect with their cultural heritage. Her kindness, humor, and strength left an indelible mark and we will miss her every day.

Her funeral service at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral will be spoken in three languages: primarily English and Spanish with a little bit of Purépecha, a Mexican native dialect that she was learning (a mix.... some things will be spoken in Spanish, while the reading is in written in the English and vice versa).

**From November 30, 2016, Episcopal News Service Webpage, “Domestic Poverty,” “5 Questions with Dianne Aid, TSSF”**

1) How long have you been affiliated with Jubilee Ministries, and in what capacity?

I have been involved with Jubilee Ministries since 1991, first as Coordinator of a Jubilee Ministry in the Diocese of Spokane. In 2003 our parish, St. Matthew/San Mateo, Auburn, in the Diocese of Olympia became a Jubilee Center. We set out to serve and partner with the growing immigrant community, mostly from Mexico. I have been blessed to be the coordinator of this work. What started as an afterschool program to assist children from non-English speaking families has become what the community has defined. Today we advocate for Comprehensive Immigration reform and have been leaders in The New Sanctuary Movement. We provide space and opportunities for indigenous immigrants from Mexico to reconnect with pre-conquest cultural heritage (currently with Mixecta and Purepecha communities). We are on the horizon of industrializing our parish hall kitchen to create opportunities for the development of micro businesses.



I served on The Jubilee Advisory Committee from 2009-2012, and currently, I am assisting Diocesan Jubilee Officer in the Diocese of Olympia.

2) What is/are your role(s) in your diocese? In your parish? In a ministry or ministries?

In the Diocese of Olympia I work with Economic Justice, this work really is inter-faith serving on the Program Committee of the Faith Action Network.

## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

### Dianne Aid (cont)

In my parish, I coordinate the Jubilee Center which in addition to what is described in the first answer provides ongoing support and safety planning for Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. I also serve as the catechist in my congregation.

I am currently president of The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice and have recently been appointed to the Executive Council Economic Justice Loan Fund Committee.

I am a professed Third Order Franciscan and approach life and ministry grounded in Franciscan principles.

3) What's one way you've been changed by your work alongside the economically disadvantaged?

The motto, "Not about us without us" has been a revelation. I live my life from a wheelchair (since 2001); this has brought some blessings because I became vulnerable. The communities which I set out to "help" from my place of white privilege have taken care of me. For whatever reason, or how I ventured down this path my days are spent among people who struggle to make ends meet (I myself am on a fixed income), who live in the shadow of possible family separation due to immigration status.

This on the surface seems bleak, but what I have found is the power of community, the courage to march and testify for human rights, and most of all to be able to celebrate joys of life and live in the beauty of diversity.

Our entire congregation has engaged in advocacy, community, and celebration. We are at 50% immigrant head of household membership. There are no stepchildren, we together proclaim Jubilee.

4) What does advocacy mean to you?

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor... And all eyes were fixed on him."* (Luke 4:18-20)

Advocacy requires moving beyond our comfort zones, hear stories, walk with oppressed and marginalized communities who fall victim to corporate greed, and step out of the way so "the other's" voice is heard.

5) Where in your diocese (or parish, or ministry) have you seen Jesus?

Every day, *cada dia*, [every day] in the streets, fields, gathering around the table, in the dances.

Finally, at night the comforting words of Compline put it all in perspective. God bids me rest and approach the new day with openness and expectation.

**2010 Citation from Diocese of Olympia Bestowing the Bishop's Cross at the Diocesan Convention Recognizing Service and Ministry. Given by The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel**

A life-professed member of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis, Dianne lives her life following in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi with integrity and faithfulness. As a faithful Franciscan

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## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

### Dianne Aid (cont)

Dianne continually sets out, in the Name of Christ, to break down barriers between people and to seek equality for all, working against the ignorance, pride and prejudice that breed injustice or partiality of any kind. Her Franciscan understanding of poverty has led her deeply into a commitment to social justice for those marginalized and disenfranchised and the poorest of the poor, the new “lepers” in today’s world, whom she has embraced with the same grace and enthusiasm as Francis kissing the leper. Dianne followed a call to serve especially immigrant families by welcoming them into the faith community of the Episcopal Church and then to stand by them and enter with them into the many difficult issues they face daily. In doing so Dianne has had to strenuously advocate for them so that they could truly be included in our faith community, by pressing for translators and translation equipment, a place at the table at vestry and bishop’s committee meetings, and helping them find their own voice for advocacy efforts. She did not hesitate to be identified with the people she has served, in true Franciscan style, but has been included by them in their family and cultural celebrations and customs. Dianne has had the heart of an evangelist in the Franciscan aim “to make our Lord known and loved everywhere,” and therefore worked to make the EFM (Education For Ministry) courses accessible and translatable to Spanish. Dianne made a conscious choice to be engaged in this ministry knowing that she would receive very little back financially for her own life support. This has not fazed her; she lives purposely in the Franciscan ideal of Holy Poverty, living simply. Her genuine love for the Purepecha people has led to greater involvement with community social service agencies and local government, as well as diocesan and national church involvement. Dianne also lives out her Franciscan rule of life through daily prayer and meditation, reading the daily office and studying the holy scriptures, and intentional reflection on how she is living her rule with her spiritual direction and Third Order chaplain. She has on many occasions spoken of how grateful and humbled she is to be entrusted with ministry in the Name of Jesus and to know that it makes a significant difference for many.

#### **See also Dianne’s articles in the *Franciscan Times*:**

**Fall 2013, pp 21, 23:** “Rolling Around The Church,” and “TSSF Comes Face-to-Face with the Doctrine of Discovery: Reflections on Provincial Convocation, 2013” Summer 2013

**Fall 2014, pp. 16-8:** “Real People Caught in a Broken System: Piecemeal Immigration Report.” Fall 2014

#### **From Verleah Kosloske, Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity**

Dianne lived out her commitment to social justice through her annual visits to Washington, D.C. to be part of Ecumenical Advocacy Days and Franciscan Action Network. Her passion to serve people in need and her love for Francis shone through her life.

#### **Her Last Few Years From Beverly Hosea and St. Clare Fellowship**

I would add that her last few years were not kind to her. She lost her Section 8 housing when she was admitted to a long-term care facility meaning that when she was recovered enough to leave, she would have to get back on a years-long

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## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Dianne  
Aid (cont)**

waiting list for affordable housing. This meant that the nursing home became her permanent residence. However, even here she ministered to other residents with Bible studies and prayer, joined in zoom meetings and was able to take the access bus to get to church and a few other places.

For all the ministry she gave and the lack of her own personal funds, she was still rich in friends. Just before she died, she had been looking forward to going out to dinner with her sisters and brothers of the St. Clare Fellowship. And I can't help but mention her affinity for the Wolf of Gubbio, for whom St. Francis interceded with village people, establishing peace and continual feeding and care for the wolf for the rest of his days.

**Scott  
Robinson —  
Professed  
24 Years**

**From the Earth & Altar blog, October 2024**

Scott has one of those résumés that give HR people a migraine. He grew up amongst the glacial hills and lakes, and long, cold winters of Central New York. He has worked at Renaissance Faires as, variously, an actor, musician, and a Tarot reader, and, at one faire, he met his wife, Allison. He taught college music for ten years, then studied to become an Interfaith Minister, in which he concentrated on hospice chaplaincy. He is a professed member of the Third Order of St. Francis. He recently begun the study of Druidry, as part of his quest to “free Christ from his Near Eastern captivity.” He has early onset Parkinson’s Disease, which is making him less inhibited every day, God help us. He lives in Philadelphia.

**From *Chestnut Hill Local* online newsletter, March 7 2024**

The latest addition to Wissahickon lore is the just-published book, *Wissahickon Poems* (Resource Publications), by 18-year Chestnut Hill resident, the Rev. Scott Robinson, 59, who will be reading from it and answering questions on Sunday, March 10, 3 p.m., at booked, 8511 Germantown Ave. Representatives of Friends of the Wissahickon will be present with information about protecting and preserving the creek and the park.

“The poems in ‘Wissahickon’ exist for one reason,” Robinson told us last week. “That is to draw our attention to a natural world that is ‘ensouled.’ Trees, rock, water, fungi, animals, fish and birds all participate in spirit and ... all serve one end: to help us to see, feel and know that ... all the creatures with whom we share our planet are our elder siblings because they were here before us.”

Robinson said that Wissahickon Park is “absolutely” one of the reasons he is living in Chestnut Hill. “Oh, my,” he said. “The spectacular geology, the flora and fauna, the sound of the water, the history – so many things!”

Robinson is a former hospice chaplain, a Ph.D. in musical composition from the University of Minnesota, and a highly respected composer whose musical group, Mandala, has performed in churches, colleges and other venues around the country.



## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Scott  
Robinson  
(cont.)**

Two years ago, he published *The Way In; What a Hospice Chaplain Learned Living with Parkinson's, in Poetry and Prose*. My main purpose in writing *The Way In*," Rev. Robinson told us at the time, "is that so few people know anything about Parkinson's disease. If you are at an advanced stage and in a nursing home, no one will listen to you, so while I am still in a position to have a platform, I want to use it."

When asked how he is currently doing with Parkinson's disease, Robinson replied, "I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in. I could be better, but I could be much worse."

Robinson was treated with something called Deep Brain Stimulation, a surgical procedure that implants a neurostimulator and electrodes that send electrical impulses to specified targets in the brain which are responsible for movement control.

"It was a disappointment," he said of his treatment. "The only apparent result of the surgery was that I regained my sense of smell, though the 'post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy' (assuming one thing caused another merely because the first thing preceded the other) might be involved. It actually happened all at once in the woods, an overwhelming inpouring of olfactory sensations."

Robinson's wife, Allison Ballantine, is chief medical officer at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia branch in King of Prussia. Their daughter, Sophie is a freshman at American University and also has a job coaching at a circus school in D.C. Another daughter, Clare, 20, is working on a research project in New Zealand.

### **From *Roulette* website, October 30, 2021**

Scott Robinson is an award-winning composer and multi-instrumentalist who has presented his music in nearly every corner of the globe, appearing on more than 275 recordings. He has worked with Joe Lovano, Ron Carter, Maria Schneider, Chet Baker, Henry Grimes, Ella Fitzgerald, Anthony Braxton and many more. Scott's ScienSonic Laboratories imprint has released more than a dozen adventurous and far-reaching albums, including *Flow States* with Milford Graves, Roscoe Mitchell and Marshall Allen. His quartet album *Tenormore* was named "Best New Release" in a 2019 *JazzTimes* poll. (you can hear one of Scott's concerts here (<https://roulette.org/event/scott-robinsons-higher-powers-a-richard-m-powers-centennial-concert/>))

He has written for *Sojourners*, *PRISM*, *Cross Currents*, *Minnesota Parent*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. He currently composes, records and performs original kirtan with his band Mandala (mandalaband.net.)

### **From his Jacob F. Ruth Funeral Home Obituary**

Throughout his life, the constants of music and spirituality shaped Scott's professional path. He enjoyed a distinguished career as a musician, composer, and college professor, and later served as a hospice chaplain. He was also a devoted member of the Third Order of St. Francis and the

## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

### Scott Robinson (cont.)

Episcopal Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, living his faith through both action and spirit.

Known for his intellectual rigor, Scott read every footnote, studied every historic plaque, and questioned any offhand ascertain. His remarkable depth of knowledge and ability to synthesize information made him a formidable advocate for causes that mattered deeply to him, particularly those addressing injustice and inequity. His familiar sense of humor, sharp and occasionally dark, showed through in his social media post on the day he was enrolled in hospice: the iconic “Looney Tunes” clip, “Oh, we’re the boys of the chorus, we hope you like our show, we know you’re rooting for us, but now we have to go-o-o-o-o-o-o!”

Scott is survived by his wife, Allison Ballantine; his two daughters, Clare and Sophie Robinson; and his brother, Mark Robinson. Through his love and actions, he instilled in his daughters the same deep sense of justice that guided his own life, and he was immensely proud of them. Even as Parkinson’s disease limited his mobility, Scott continued to march for the causes he believed in, showing up with fearless integrity and inspiring others to do the same.

### Alice Bangs — Professed 23 Years

From John Brockmann

Alice was 79 when she died of cancer on March 18. She was a member of the Delmarva Juniper’s Seesaw Fellowship and used to drive four hours each way to meet for Fellowship meetings and frequently stayed overnight. When the Delmarva Juniper’s Seesaw Fellowship ceased, she became a member and Fellowship Convenor of the Lady Jacoba Fellowship.

In 2004, I asked Alice if she would write an article for the Franciscan Times about her work with the local Catholic Workers group. The following article is what she produced, and I reprinted it in *Treasures from the First 50 Years (1971-2021)*.

“Christ of the Breadlines” Advent 2004

For close to a year now my husband and I have joined other Catholic Worker volunteers every Tuesday and Saturday mornings to help prepare and serve breakfast to homeless guests.

The routine is simple. On a typical day we show up at Sacred Heart Catholic Church around 6 a.m. to set pots of water on the stove to boil for grits, oatmeal and tea. Coffee is brewed in a large commercial pot. The large water keg is filled. While the water is heating up, we gather around a table to take turns reading from the daily missal. Steve Baggarly and his wife, Kim Williams, are the Catholic Worker leaders in the area. One or the other initiates discussion based on the readings and Catholic social justice teaching.

Back to the kitchen to stir the grits and oatmeal with added ingredients—lots of butter for the grits, lots of brown sugar for the oatmeal, and regular sugar for tea. Most of the homeless guests request a high degree of sweetening; some of this is due to drug interaction. Generally, they are not into health issues of cholesterol and diabetes. A few, however, do refuse the pastries or cookies and go only for fresh fruit.



Continued on page 15

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## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

**Alice  
Bangs  
(Cont.)**

When all is ready at a few minutes before 7 o'clock, the cart is loaded up and rolled out to the CW van. We pause to pray the Prayer of St. Francis, then carpool a few blocks away to one of Norfolk's oldest cemeteries. We turn off onto a short, little-traveled side street alongside the old brick west wall of the cemetery where a line is steadily growing. Hence the name of the breakfast site, "the Wall."

As soon as we pull up, several men hurry over to help us unload and set up tables, and carry over the heavy containers. Other Catholic Worker volunteers show up on specific days every week or once a month. CW serves breakfast every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, rain or shine, hot or cold, from 7 to 7:30 or later, depending on amounts of second helpings available and late "first-timers." (I was told that they served a handful of people during Hurricane Isabel last September. George and I were on the line when the remnants of Alex came through this summer and, despite the flooding in which the old CW van "died" for good, about twelve people were waiting for us.)

Some volunteers come on a personal basis, like us; others represent their churches' commitments to that particular type of outreach and periodically bring sandwiches, sweets, fruit, or other hot dishes. One volunteer hard-boils approximately 1500 eggs a month. Another volunteer brings his bicycle tool kit and sets up a mini curbside repair clinic. It is a pleasure to see a guest, who arrived on a rattling, squeaky bicycle, and leave after breakfast on a well-oiled and tuned-up quieter one with a big smile on his face.

After checking that everything is in place and everyone has a "job" to do, Steve gives the word and the line starts to roll. Jobs include handing out plastic bags as people approach the table, offering the sweets, eggs, bananas or oranges on hand, ladling the grits and oatmeal, giving out spoons and napkins, pouring the coffee and tea, and watching over the condiments table to keep the sugar, creamer, and salt dispensers filled. There is also trash detail, although most of the guests bring their trash over to the big bag tied to the back of the CW van. But standing above all, is the spirit of hospitality and fellowship that CW offers.

The line is shorter at the first of every month, due to paychecks, but quickly lengthens. Yesterday we served about 110 guests.

The line moves smoothly. Some guests are regulars of long standing. Others are transitioning through the area. Some have jobs, but earn too little to make it on their own. A few occasionally show resentment or embarrassment over having to be in a breakfast line. Drugs and alcohol dog many. I notice several who appear just beaten down by years of assorted ills from which there seems no escape.

After the food is gone or everyone has had their fill, we pack up and return to church to wash the pots and utensils. Some of us come from different backgrounds and faith traditions, and stand in different places on the socio-political map, yet we come together on common ground and go from there.

So, how did I come to volunteer with Catholic Worker? It's hard to pinpoint the beginning. One night last fall while reading in bed, I reached blindly in the bedside table drawer for a bookmark, and pulled out a pocket-sized foldout card listing local places where homeless people can go for shelter, food, etc. I have no recollection of when or where I picked that up. The first name I saw

## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont)

**Alice Bangs (Cont.)** listed was Catholic Worker. The next day I called CW Hospitality House and had a long chat with a volunteer, then asked if they needed any assistance on the breakfast line. The following week saw me there, wondering where this might lead me.

At my annual silent retreat last December, I came across William Miller's *A Harsh and Dreadful Love; the Story of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement*. I began reading and reflecting during one long evening of solitude in the main house in front of a burning candle. The following month, I obtained a used copy, and also one of Miller's biographies of Dorothy Day. Then I read Day's *The Long Loneliness*. More recently I've been studying Jon Sobrino's *Jesus the Liberator*, about liberation theology from the Latin American perspective. These all deeply engage the mind, but I believe there will be no growth in me as a Christian and Franciscan if I turn away from the experience of regularly putting myself face to face and hand to hand with comfortable society's rejects.

The sub-heading of Simplicity, the local CW's newsletter, is "Living Simply So That Others May Simply Live." Like a few other volunteer activities, this has become part of my life, not a "do-good" block to be checked. It is a continual challenge in my Rule of Life. During my first days on the breakfast line, it felt awkward to greet those strangers when I got out of my car. I felt self-conscious, as though I were being scrutinized as one who has a lot by many who have so little.

But since then, I have come to know several individuals by name, and enjoy impromptu conversations with them and others.

One morning Steve asked if I had room to take one of the guests back to church. I all but flinched as we drove off — the personal odor was overwhelming. But I merely opened the windows, just enough so as not to be obvious in my intent, and began chatting, and determinedly tried to disengage my mind away from my nose.

One man always greets us on arrival with bear hugs. The fastidious part of me wants to recoil from the sweaty, soiled cheek pressed next to mine, and the smelly, never-washed clothes. But didn't Francis embrace the leper as he sought to overcome his repugnance and fear? In fact, these are among the lepers of our society. As I stand behind the table, greeting each guest and offering eggs, sweets, bananas or whatever, I see before me the picture of Fritz Eichenberg's



woodcut, "Christ of the Breadlines." I first saw a copy of it several years ago. It remained a haunting image in my mind. Perhaps that was the seed of what much later has come to pass. The picture came to life when I began working on the breakfast line.

### From Martha Knight

I first met Alice when I was a postulant the summer of 2008. I can still remember vividly the *Page 16*

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## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont.)

### Alice Bangs (Cont.)

joy in her face as she told me all about her TSSF Fellowship at that time, Delmarva Juniper's Seesaw. We were a small Fellowship: Alice, Bonnie Barnidge (deceased), John Brockman, Nancy Woodward and myself. I can still remember my first meeting at John Brockmann's house where he cooked a delicious dinner for us!

Due to my deteriorating health, I hadn't been in touch with Alice especially after Delmarva Juniper's Seesaw ceased to exist. But it was Alice that organized the reception after I made profession at Grace Episcopal Church in Yorktown in 2012.

Alice's sharp wit and loving heart still illumine any dark path I encounter.

#### From Beth Harris

Alice will be greatly missed by all of us in our Lady Jacoba Fellowship. She was a sweet, spiritual, smart, generous lady. She crocheted a lovely long wrap for my profession in 2020, and she led wonderful programs for our fellowship meetings.

My favorite memories of Alice will always be her love of reading (natural for a retired librarian) and her love of nature, and the annual trips she and George took to their cottage on Orrs Island in Maine. They loved visiting the old bookstores and taking walks around the island. Cathy Reynold's photo of Alice reading with Moxie in her secluded, quiet place on the island is perfect. She was also an avid gardener and had a lovely yard, and she and George took daily walks around their neighborhood. It breaks my heart that she is gone, but our memories of her will always be with us.

*Caption for picture to come: Alice (and Moxie) in her reading nook at the family cottage on Orrs Island, Maine.*

#### From Cathy Reynolds

I am writing this reflection on the eve of Alice Anderson Bangs' profession as a Franciscan. Alice died only a few days ago, but I sense that she is celebrating her profession in the next realm. I envision her dancing with Francis and Clare, marveling at the beauty of the celestial view, and greeting many dear friends and family.

What to remember of Alice? There are so many aspects of her amazing life I could mention. Her interest in history, literature, nature, gardening, the environment, social justice, and spirituality illustrate her wide-ranging curiosity. So, I will pick just a few.

*Books.* Alice loved books. She haunted used bookstores wherever she traveled. Our fellowship often received texts, videos, and photographs of unique book shops she visited in Maine, Virginia, and North Carolina. Then, at our meetings, she would show us her bundles from the latest excursion. Spirituality, history, literature, poetry — she loved them all. I share her love of old books and history. As I open some of my own treasured old books, I smell that wonderful fragrance of old paper and cloth binding, and think of Alice.

*Art.* Alice was an artist in fiber arts and painting and writing. She crocheted a beautiful green afghan, surprising me with great delight at the color. She knew all of our favorite colors! She also wrote well both in academics and beyond. (I found that she wrote a thesis exploring the Creole Affair between Britian and the United States involving fugitive slaves; she

## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont)

### Alice Bangs (Cont.)

received a Masters in History from Old Dominion University). Aside from her academic work, Alice presented several programs for our fellowship...everything from her visits to Maine to Franciscan saints such as Mary Ann Cope. These programs were replete with excellent commentary and well-researched collection of photographs. I believe that she worked briefly as a librarian, which explains her organizational and research talents.

*Place.* A native Norfolk, Virginia, Alice nevertheless adopted Maine (birthplace of her husband George) as a favorite "thin space." Orr's Island especially was a retreat for George, Alana (their granddaughter), and Alice. Every summer or fall they journeyed to the cottage that remains in George's family. We in Lady Jacoba Fellowship got to delight vicariously in these trips as Alice texted photographs and reflections about her wanderings both on and off the island. The photograph shared here is from one of those visits.

*Francis.* Alice loved our Brother Francis dearly. Just last year she sent her Lady Jacoba Fellowship sisters a small Tau cross that George had carved from a dogwood branch. I wear this as I type this reflection. I am grateful to have tangible items with which to remember Alice, the Tau and the afghan.

I first heard of Alice almost 20 years ago when I lived in Southwest Virginia and attended St. Elizabeth's Fellowship. Tertiaries talked about how Alice and her husband were raising their granddaughter Alana and active in the Catholic Worker movement. When my husband and I retired to my homeplace of Tidewater Virginia, I finally met her. When Delmarva Juniper's Seesaw Fellowship ceased Alice joined St. Elizabeth and then Lady Jacoba Fellowship. Over the past several years I have been blessed to be her friend and Franciscan sister. I will miss her greatly.

### Kathyann Corl— Professed 9 Years

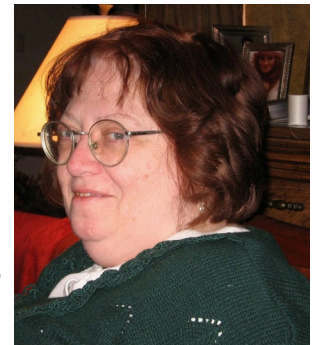
From Anna Pruet

The Franciscans in the Central Pennsylvania area who knew Kathyann are so very sorry to hear about her passing. We were always in awe of her enthusiasm and her deep love of the Church and the way of Francis. May she rest in peace and may the Holy Angels of Heaven bring her to the Christ she adored with the most gentle of arms. She was 72

From Katrina Núñez (daughter)

It is with great sorrow that we share the news that Kathyann Corl, my Mom, has entered eternal peace. She was a tireless champion and devoted advocate in her professional life for those fighting against the stigmas of recovery and mental health, inspiring countless individuals along the way. As a loving mom, she instilled in us the value of serving others, encouraging us to volunteer, care for one another, and serve at the church, leaving a lasting impact wherever we went.

In her faith community, as a devoted Franciscan and member of St. Stephen's Cathedral, she generously gave her time and talents, found solace in her art,



## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont)

**Kathyann  
Corl—  
(cont.)**

writing, and worship, may she now rest in the arms of her heavenly home, surrounded by love and peace. May her life's legacy continue to uplift and inspire all who had the privilege of knowing her, leaving them better than they were before.

She leaves behind her husband, Bill, four siblings, her daughter Katrina Núñez and grandchildren Isaiah Núñez and Isabel Nunez as well as great-nieces and -nephews.

**From her own “Learning to Dance the Key Concepts of WRAP” November 17, 2016**

<https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/learning-to-dance-the-key-concepts-of-wrap/>

My own life journey has been like a country line dance — two steps forward and one step back. I have danced in joy and in sorrow. My faith and creativity have guided me. Along the way, I discovered what I would come to know as the five key concepts of WRAP: support, education, self-advocacy, personal responsibility, and hope. Living WRAP has helped me learn to live in the moment, and truly being with another person in the moment is the greatest gift anyone can offer.

My story begins with support. In 1987, I was a single parent, newly diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and had just been in a homeless shelter. I felt lost. Because I had seizures, I was intrigued when I saw a sign on a storefront in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, announcing an epilepsy support group. It was there that I began to reclaim my life.

I had graduated from Temple University but was only able to work for several years. With the encouragement of my family and friends, I returned to school and graduated from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a master's degree in adult and community education. My thesis was on nonverbal communication patterns in families where parents have disabilities, and I received grants to develop weekend education programs for children in such families.

My mother, who was my main supporter, passed away unexpectedly in 1996, the same year I graduated. Friends from my church family were there to support me when I walked across the stage. I was beginning to understand that I can't recover on my own. When I invited others into my life — and learned that I could give back by supporting them, too — we broke down the stigma, shared our stories, and grew together.

Education and self-advocacy have also been critical for my own recovery and are among the tools I pass on to others. In 1998, I went to work for Keystone Human Services in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where I began sharing my life story and my knowledge of health literacy. I helped my peers understand that they have a voice and a choice. They don't just have to say “yes” to the doctor. They can create a relationship that helps level the playing field and focuses not on “you” or “I” but on “we.” I developed my first engagement tool called “Com-mun-i-cators,” in which encouraged individuals to ask questions about how their health would impact their lives. Navigating the Health System and Surviving is a user-friendly handbook I created in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association.

## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont)

### Kathyann Corl (cont.)

Personal responsibility is my touchstone. I knew I could have lived out my days on disability. Certainly, that seemed like an option in 2005 when I was on medical leave from my job with two broken legs, the result of osteoarthritis and a couple of falls. But I made a choice to recover. In 2006, I became the first person with lived experience on the management team at Keystone. I became the community relations coordinator, a job I still hold today, and married my soul mate, Bill. I made a choice to help transform the mental health system toward recovery.

**Kathyann's video of *Why I'm an Episcopalian* on YouTube, here it is**

[https://youtu.be/v8xXaLjiYPM?si=h6uphux3\\_xqBlaKD](https://youtu.be/v8xXaLjiYPM?si=h6uphux3_xqBlaKD)

At the 2020 Virtual Conference: Diversity in Recovery-Oriented Systems: Building Inclusive Communities, she was awarded the Distinguished Career Award.

### Guy S. Hook (Companion) From Hartenstein Funeral Home Obituary

Guy S. Hook, 81, of Stewartstown, Pennsylvania, passed away on January 13, 2026. Guy was born on June 1, 1944 in Baltimore City, Maryland. He died January 26, 2026.

Guy graduated from Towson High School in Maryland, class of 1963. He worked for "The Phone Company,"

now known as Verizon for 36 years. He was a professional musician, an accomplished banjo player, and enjoyed playing music together with his wife Yvonne.



Guy was former Vice President of Boro Council in Stewartstown for 18 years, the chairman of Stewartstown Boro Water Authority, and an EMT at Eureka Volunteer Fire & Ambulance Company.

Guy is survived by his loving wife of 23 years, Yvonne K. Hook (Koyzis) professed since 1993, his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

### Joyce Wilding Professed 18 Years

— in the Society of Ordained Scientists, Joyce was an associate member and their environmental educator. at Christ Church Cathedral in Nashville, she was the environmental ministry leader from 1998-2008. She also coordinated retreats for the Center for Religion and Environment.

Joyce Wilding was the ENTREAT Local Society Initiative (LSI) Co-chair at the University of the South at Sewanee, responsible for planning, hosting and/or facilitating the public Science & Religion: Renewal of Reverence series.

She was a member of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science; the Episcopal Ecological Network (EpEN) National Steering Committee and the EpEN liaison to the Episcopal Science,

## Milestones: Rest in Peace (cont)

**Joyce Wilding (cont.)**

Technology & Faith Committee; and responsible for Province IV Environmental Ministry programs for twenty Episcopal dioceses in nine southern states.

Joyce was a Third Order Franciscan, and part of the Volunteer Staff at Penuel Ridge Retreat Center, and the Ecology Group Leader of Christ Church Cathedral in Nashville, Tennessee.



Joyce was a management consultant liaison to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Green Energy Marketing Team, the Cumberland River Compact, the Coalition of Environmental Responsible Economies (CERES), and the Southface Energy Institute (a non-profit organization, dedicated to the advocacy of energy efficient and sustainable design).

She had extensive experience in the behavioral sciences and more than twenty-five years of professional development experience, specializing in conflict resolution, culture diversity training, and team building. Joyce designed and facilitated a five-year Leadership Communication Training program at IBM's Watson Research Division.

Joyce was very much the spirit of our Province's Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation efforts for many years, and wrote at least 15 articles for the *Franciscan Times*.

**Joyce's Sermon at the Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville, Tennessee (March 10, 2021).**

<https://youtu.be/dCD7Z72f9Ak?si=vNFbKKia2z160Ihm>

## Book Reviews

### *Inheriting Paradise: Meditations on Gardening* by Vigen Guroian.

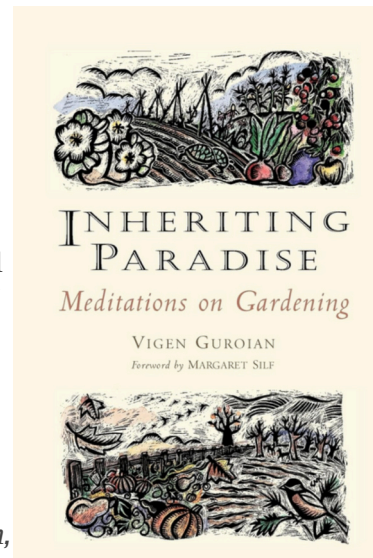
Wm. B. Eerdmans-Lightning Source, 1999, 112 pages, Kindle and Paperback, ISBN 978-0802845887

A Review by Darlene Ash

"Every suburban garden and every rural allotment have the potential of a two-way mirror to bring eternity right down into our own backyards."

This tiny book can speak to us as we garden or read so that we inhale the beauty of the earth, the spring flowers, the food we grow, and the joy of being in a garden with its spiritual essence.

*Even today on this earth of horns  
we can see in the field  
The spikes of wheat which God,  
despite whose curses, has given:  
cradled with them, the grains receive their birth,  
thanks to the wind;*



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## Book Review and Invitations to Review (cont.)

### Review of *Inheriting Paradise*

(cont.)

*at the will of the most High,  
who can perform all things,  
does the breeze suckle them,  
like at a mother's breast it nurtures them,  
so that herein may be depicted a type  
of how spiritual beings are nourished.*

St. Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise

This tiny book was a marvelous gift of such beauty in its prose, its poetry, and its Christian significance. It includes the entire Christian year in its writings of gardening as a spiritual task. An example:

*“At advent time icy snowflakes play timpani on the last leathery leaves  
that cling to the branches of the young pin oak in the backyard. The  
year is old and the earth has grown cold. My garden has turned brown to gray.”*

I read a page or two in the evening at bedtime and paused to absorb the beauty of the words which, connected my mind with my world of gardening in my own yard and my inner world of spirit. Also, Guroian's book takes you through the entire Christian year.

Professor Guroian's writings include Biblical quotes, western writers and poets and Eastern orthodox writings. Another example is:

*As long as earth lasts,  
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat summer and winter, day and night,  
they will never cease.*

Genesis 8: 22. REB

As gardeners we are co-creators with God and, in a way, we can celebrate that relationship with joy and happiness as we dig and plant for the resulting goodness of food and beauty.

*“Even today on this earth of thorns ·  
We can see in the field  
the spikes of wheat-which God,  
Despite those curses, has given  
cradled with them, the grains receive their birth,  
Thanks to the wind,  
at the will of the most High,  
Who can perform all things  
does the breeze suckle them,  
Like a mother's breast it nurtures them,  
So that herein may be depicted a type  
Of how spiritual beings are nourished.*

St. Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise

Do buy this little book. It is not expensive, and it is mentally and spiritually nourishing in the garden and also in your bed in the evening.

## Book Review (cont.)

***The Paradox of Poverty: Why Are the Poor in Spirit “Blessed”?*,  
Susan R. Pitchford Liturgical Press: Collegeville, Minnesota, 2025.  
Paperback and Kindle. 296 pages. ISBN 979-8400802102**

### Review By Glen T. Southergill

Amongst any Franciscan’s properly stocked bookshelf we *should* find a number of works by our Sister, Susan Pitchford. While a strong case can be made for a prior work from her already impressive corpus to be an “at least have this one” recommendation, I would eagerly submit that this newest text falls quite directly into this category. With it, Pitchford again provides significant contributions as an influential contemporary Franciscan author.

For TSSF members, the question of “what cuts to the quick” of a Franciscan vocation often stimulates significant conversations. Is it, as our principles assert, the aim to make the Lord loved and known everywhere? Perhaps so. Is it our drive to remove barriers that marginalize or divide peoples as practitioners of true peacemaking? Again, perhaps so. Or it may be discovered, as ideas often are, in the simplicity of time spent in creation when earth, water, and sun remind us of God’s ever-present love (and presence). Yet invariably all conversations of this sort must turn to the notions of poverty underlying our self-denial and humility. Each TSSF sibling, in their contexts and circumstances, has been called a manifestation of poverty to fully express their Charism, however paradoxical that idea may prove to be. Therefore, poverty’s definitions, histories, problems, possibilities, and applications warrant careful thought.

Pitchford in 283 pages of accessible, well-organized, and thoughtful language lays bare this paradoxical concept from the days of Clare (and Francis)

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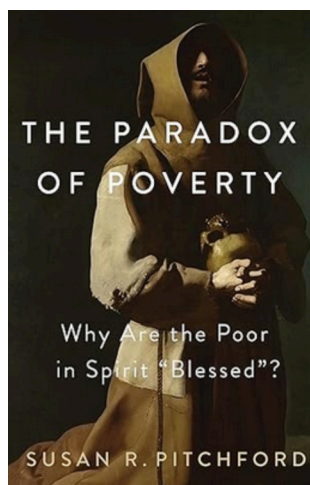
### Review By Jeff Gollither

For the last few years, I’ve been searching for some recent spiritually insightful writing that would help me (and all Franciscans) to discern and respond more deeply to the many interwoven challenges that we face. I’m thinking of politics, economics, human rights, race, gender, climate, and ecology, as well as the unwillingness of most news media to address seriously the perils of these global issues. If more deliberate, effective action is not taken soon, then the outcome could be catastrophic.

I’m glad to say that a few months ago, I found exactly what I’ve been looking for in a book written by one of our own tertiaries: Susan Pitchford’s *The Paradox of Poverty*. Reading her words has helped me to strengthen my resolve even more, and I highly recommend it. Among modern writings on the morality of Franciscan and Christian spirituality, this is one of the most thorough, thought-provoking, and provocative books that I’ve read. And it’s written in a well-researched way combined with a personal style which invites the reader to dive into the spiritual depths of our lives, personally and collectively.

Here, I’ll discuss only a few sections of the book. First, in the opening and conclusion, she points directly to the “paradox of poverty,” saying that discerning the paradox involved is crucial for following the path of Christ. In that sense, it all revolves around Jesus’s words in the Beatitudes: “*Blessed are the poor ... Blessed are those who mourn ... the persecuted.*” And then, “for centuries, people have learned the truth in his promise that we will find the greatest happiness ... deepest fulfillment in things that seem to impoverish the soul.”

Continued on page 25



## Book Review (cont.)

### Review *The Paradox of Poverty* by Southergill (cont.)

the contemporary practices of recovery from alcohol via Alcoholics Anonymous to the oft-termed original sin of racism. Her work begins with two very significant acknowledgements. In the first, poverties can be experienced in plurality. There are the imposed poverties that follow “racism, sexism, and violence of all kinds...” (4). Such “imposed” poverties fail critical tests of holiness, free will, and spirit. Rather, as complicated in the pages to follow, this substantial text reflects and complicates the definition as “an experience that diminishes us, that suggests we need something or something we don’t have” (7). Further, her work notes that holy poverty represents a means towards an end (to love and recognize love from God). Poverty when so defined marks a distinct entity far departed from the excesses of cultures of “have/have not” or discomfort for discomfort’s sake.

Insightfully, Pitchford acknowledges the significance of joy central to Holy Poverty, noting for instance that while poverty’s holy manifestation “[welcomes] helpless vulnerability as the one thing that will enable me to draw close to the crucified Christ, to share in both his anguish and the promise of paradise” (112). This theme of joy from and in relationalities accessed via Holy Poverty tracks across time in Pitchford’s development: from the early days of the Church, through the founding of our Franciscan tradition, and into Sacred Heart devotion. In so doing, Pitchford’s treatment of poverty births a broad and robust connection with Christian history without using a nostalgia that diminishes its nuances.

After defining Poverty, readers can with appreciation note the call of poverty present in the significant contemporary contexts of racism and alcoholism recovery. The text would simply miss the mark without these important extensions. As a critical hinge to move into these concerns under the auspices of “Collective Forms of Poverty,” readers will be richly rewarded by closely reading the fifth chapter that considers gender alongside authority. Poverty indeed, whether of race, gender, or addition, can move from the “strictly individual” forms into a more collective and systemic form. Pitchford for instance notes, “being female in a patriarchal church and society is a group-based form of poverty” in which gender can “shut out” remarkable women based only on gender-based exclusion. Yet poverty works against the systemic exclusion to instead “amplify voices we might prefer not to hear” (163). One of the paradoxes then is that authority via poverty in the Christian tradition creates windows for power that shock the systems that exclude. Pitchford insightfully discusses mysticism to highlight instances and illustrations of these occasions alongside her rich sociological expertise. The holiness of poverty then can be found not only in the relationship of a personal nature, but the reclaimed voices and perspectives institutional power tends to suppress.

Similarly, Pitchford richly weaves and develops questions of collective poverty into the spiritual underpinnings of alcoholism recovery and naming systemic racism. Both chapters deal richly with subjects that, if TSSF members take to heart the peacemaking inherent to our Rule, cannot be overlooked. For instance, Pitchford wisely and rightly names the contributions of the Black Church to the Civil Rights movement and identifies common reasons White Ministers may avoid studying or hearing Black Voices. Even if they read with difficulty, these chapters should be read closely and carefully for their many insights. And about healing via poverty, the

## Book Review and Invitations to Review (cont.)

**Review *The Paradox of Poverty* by Southergill (cont.)** steps associated with AA provide ample grist for recognizing a liberating and life-giving manifestation of poverty. Readers could astutely read this section alongside the document “Reflections on the Principles of The Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis and the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous” available via TSSF.org [<https://tssf.org/resources/articles-videos/>]

Poverty as a concept and practice, as Pitchford does, must be defined carefully to identify when and how it becomes Holy. Then once defined, readers can move beyond the text to note its presence in new and as yet undiscussed ways. Is there a Holy poverty associated with or observable amongst proliferating Artificial Intelligence? Or what about the often-painstaking political processes by which protest or organizing public witness translate to changing policies? Such situations can, in part, be understood through a lens of poverty once equipped with our Sister Susan Pitchford’s thoughtful gaze. We remain indebted to her work for it both illuminates and extends our spiritual tradition into the present and future.

### Review *The Paradox of Poverty* by Golliher (cont.)

Keep in mind that the author explores many layers of interwoven spiritual meaning, not only with regard to the Beatitudes, but also the meanings of “poverty” and its religious history. Her purpose is to help us better understand what Jesus was talking about and how we actually respond when we read or hear his words spoken during worship services. It requires considerable inner courage, on the author’s part, to undertake this kind of reflection. Susan is not imposing an “us versus them” dynamic onto the issues involved, nor is she suggesting that she’s right, and the reader is wrong. Instead, she identifies with us all as humans struggling to follow the spiritual path, while encouraging us to go deeper.

At the same time, some of Susan’s thoughts brought a smile to my face. For example, in the first few pages of her book, she says this, very candidly, about Jesus’s words in the Beatitudes: “Is he nuts? ... Who defines “happiness” in this way? What is so blessed, after all, about suffering the pains of poverty?” This is more than a rhetorical trick. Her questions adeptly set the stage for chapters ahead that explore the ambiguous spiritual and ethical meanings of “poverty” in Christianity. In a sense, that’s the heart of this book, which is great, because we need it in these perilous, authoritarian, and propagandistic times. And in an immediate way, her words mirror at least one part of our inner responses to the Beatitudes, despite the fact that we might not be completely aware of it. Then, a few pages later, Susan explains that “holy poverty” is very different from the “deprivation that comes from selfishness and greed.” And, she asks each of us, “... is the poverty that we experience against our

## Book Review (cont.)

**Review *The Paradox of Poverty* by Golliher (cont.)** will, or is it chosen voluntarily?" Our answers, of course, depend on the actual circumstances of our lives, and our capacity to see through our ego-driven minds enough to be genuinely truthful.

Put another way, it's possible (perhaps likely) that when we read or hear the Beatitudes, we're drawn into the Holy Mystery in some ways, but without taking the words seriously enough, without discerning the depth of their meaning for us personally. We love the words, but neglect to consider how to put them into practice; i.e., how to live their meaning so we're actually following the path of Christ as he would want. Jesus himself knew that we would do this — that we would resist. Nevertheless, he doesn't give up on us, just as he gave himself to God on the Cross. We must remember that he also said about himself: "I am the Gate" and "the Door." That is to say, he is the opening of the passage through the darkness of our own lives into the Divine Light. We enter the Gate when we surrender our egos to the needs of the soul and begin to genuinely realize that "I can't do this on my own." Then and there, we begin to make the journey in a much deeper way. The Cross transforms into the Tree of Life, and the Spirit whispers to our souls, "I love you, do not be afraid."

With that in mind, let's return to the discussion of poverty in a more worldly context. The author, of course, explores the prime examples of St. Francis and St. Clare. For example, *"Thirteenth century Europe experienced a profound spiritual revival in which poverty assumed different forms and took on multiple meanings. Francis of Assisi, il Poverello himself, fell hard for Lady Poverty, that personification of his longing for the lowest place. In that low place, his identification with the poor Christ became so complete that the wounds of Jesus' passion were inscribed in Francis' own flesh. Clare shared Francis' uncompromising commitment to radical material poverty, in which this nobly born lady found her highest privilege."*

Susan reminds us that St. Clare, who had a disagreement with Pope Gregory about this, emphasized that poverty is not actually fasting nor asceticism, but seeing Christ in the poor. In other words, "it's about love." Susan also refers to the contemporary writer Ilia Delio, in saying that "poverty is not the starting point, but the inward deepening of poverty that allows the seeker to enter more deeply into the mystery of God." In relation to Franciscan poverty today, she emphasizes that we need to discern more carefully that economic poverty is not the goal and encourages us to discern the "multidimensional nature of poverty." Otherwise, we fail to name it and respond to it, and "we fail to see ourselves as God sees us." Spiritual poverty is not about the "stuff" we own. As St. Francis understood it, spiritual poverty is about humility.

Putting this in a broader cultural and political context, Susan discusses some critical contradictions involving spiritual poverty in relation to the institutional church in its partnership with empire. She calls this section of the book, "The Blessing and Curse of Constantine." This is not an actually

## Book Review (cont.)

Review *The Paradox of Poverty*  
by Golliher (cont.)

an attack on the institution, but a discerning description of the spiritual impact of compromising shifts within it that illustrate the tensions between spirituality and worldly power. As Susan explains,

“after Christianity was made the official religion of empire, it became difficult to embrace extreme poverty for Jesus’s sake.” In my own experience, the religion of empire undermines the desire for deep humility, creating instead an *us versus them* opposition, which is manifested today in different forms. The official meaning of “empire” has become a matter of history, but as she explains, that worldview had not been left behind. We have witnessed this in modern times, when televangelists such as Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson have proclaimed what amounts to a “Prosperity Gospel,” where poverty is a sign of moral failure.

But I’m getting ahead of myself. Susan carefully traces the historical dynamics that have shaped our understanding of poverty. She discusses, for example, the original desert monastics, such as St. Anthony and many others, who sought spiritual refuge there so they could attain the spiritually genuine poverty of the Beatitudes. She carefully explores the Sacred Heart Tradition with its mystical immersion in the wounds of Christ, in which our own hearts become inflamed with the divine fire within us. Referring to Thomas Merton’s *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1994), she discusses the search for the inner place within us where we find “the link between our poverty of spirit and our belovedness.” As she explains, that link is the place at our very core that bears the name “*Beloved*.”

This leads Susan to explore “collective forms of poverty,” especially in relation to gender, race and addiction. The focus on gender issues involves the struggles of some well-known mystically charismatic women saints of the church who sought “union with Christ.” She focuses especially on Saint Gertrude the Great, Saint Mechtild of Hackeborn, and Mechtild of Magdeburg and their struggles with issues of authority within the patriarchal church. Issues of gender and poverty are a major focus of her book. The next chapter, titled “Racism — the Poverty of Peoples,” addresses one of the author’s principal concerns: “... I want to show how the experience of living with centuries of systemic racism is a collective form of poverty experienced by African-Americans, and not just material poverty, but poverty broadly defined.” She draws upon some helpful structural models to clarify the dynamics involved, saying that racism isn’t actually a matter of only bigoted individuals. Instead “the problem of racism is institutional, cultural, pervasive, and self-reinforcing.” In other words, “white supremacy is a system.” In answering the question, “Is Racism Still a Thing?”, she draws upon the writings of Cornell West (and others), and then puts it this way: “... racism is a toxic smoke that seeps into every corner of American life.” And, she weaves together race with gender in relation to Black liberation and womanist theologians in a truly insightful, prophetic discussion.

Near the concluding chapter is a discussion of “Addiction and our Souls,” in which Susan reminds us of our idolatries and the “golden calf.” As she puts

## Book Review (cont.)

### Review *The Paradox of Poverty*

by Golliher (cont.)

it, the “scar from our original wound has been extended in our souls.” Again, referring to the spiritual insights of Thomas Merton, she says that when we find the wound, we have reached the “Eden Point,” where the “little point of nothingness and of pure poverty is the pure glory of God.” And then, as she puts it, we “no longer pretend to be self-sufficient ... powerless is a synonym for poverty ... we accept our poverty and submit to the rescue.”

In her conclusion, Susan writes that “many of the greatest and deepest spiritual truths are found in paradoxes like the Beatitudes,” and “when Jesus said the poor in spirit are blessed, it’s because of love.” And as Henri Nouwen put it, “we keep forgetting who we are ... poverty as a divine gift keeps reminding us of our true identity.” And then, at the very end of her book, she writes: “But if my poverty brings me to understand both myself and my neighbor as cherished by God, chosen and beloved, then the connectedness of us all is revealed. United, we are drawn together into the current of love flowing among the Persons of the Trinity, and the circle is complete.”

Those are beautiful words written in a beautiful book, rooted in the holy Paradox of Poverty, flowing from the human heart and from the heart of the Beatitudes — “Blessed are the poor in Spirit.” The words I have written in this review give only a brief taste of what Susan has given us. The whole book is a spiritual feast. Again, I highly recommend it.

(Many thanks to Janet Fedders for her helpful editing of this review.)

## Retreat and Re-Align with Creation at Mountain Light Retreat

Debbie Scott, Greccio Companions Circle

In the bowl of mountains named Blackwell’s Hollow in Crozet, Virginia, there is a retreat center that originally began as a mission under the direction of Blue Ridge Archdeacon Frederick Neve. Born in England and Oxford-educated, this turn of the century Anglican priest came to Virginia to serve in Episcopal churches just outside Charlottesville. Little did he know that the nearby mountain people were to become his flock and that he would establish 30 missions to serve them.



One of these missions, which comprised a mission house, church, and vicarage, served the local people until the church was decommissioned in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today this property serves as a local retreat center open to all who are in search of a place to rest, reconnect, and realign with our Creator God. Named Mountain Light Retreat, this historic place offers a variety of resources to lead retreatants to reconnection, most especially to the beautiful mountain setting. Watching the sunrise on the mountain is spectacular as is observing the full moon. Walking the property one can hear the different bird calls, the rustling of the squirrels and snorting

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## Retreat and Re-Align with Creation at Mountain Light Retreat (Cont.)



deer. The well water tastes so good that folks fill up their water bottles on arrival and before departure.

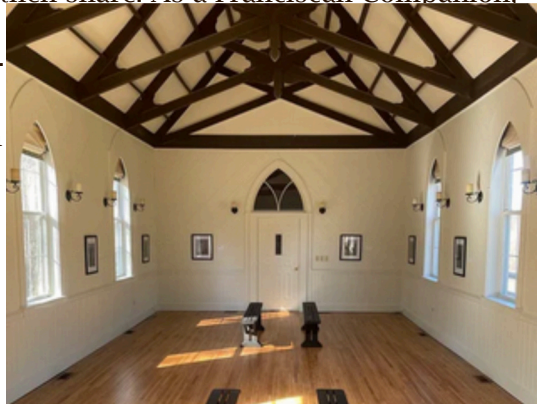
Spirituality may be experienced in many ways at the retreat. There are three labyrinths, a classical design on the outdoor labyrinth, and an indoor classical rainbow labyrinth and a Chartres designed labyrinth for indoor walks. Singing bowls and other instruments are available to use. The artwork of internationally known Vermont artist Janet McKenzie is available for Visio Divina, including her original "In the Garden of Blessings" as well as a copy of her best-known work, "Jesus of the People."

Day retreat activities have included prayer bead workshops, poetry writing, eco-spiritual gatherings focused on John Philip Newell's most recent books, Celtic spirituality, Yoga and Mindfulness, sound baths, and spiritual direction.

The retreat setting invites a camp spirit, a joyful feeling of return to the wilderness with a sense of respectful belonging among all living beings. The simplicity of this former mission urges realignment of one's values alongside what is good for all life, of taking time to express gratitude, to feel the wonder of God's creation, and to rekindle a humble heart with love for the awesome diversity of life in these mountains. In this thin space, one can imagine how at home St. Francis would have been here, with Brother Sun and Sister Moon, filling himself with joy that he would then share. As a Franciscan Companion, I hope I am sharing the joy I am so privileged to experience at the retreat.

At this particular time, with concern over our responsibility and injunction to care for each other and the Land that sustains us, going to a retreat literally grounds us. In a letter to Hubert W. Pelt (February 24, 1930), George Washington Carver wrote:

*"I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every day, every hour and every moment of our lives, if we will only tune in and remain so."*



What is the Land trying to communicate to us that we miss when we are not tuned in? St. Francis taught how listening to the wolf of Gubbio and responding in love as a community brought peace between the wolf and the townspeople. Attuning ourselves to the Book of Creation can sustain our work as peacemakers.

To learn more about ways to experience Mountain Light Retreat for an individual retreat or group retreat, for a day or overnight, or for individual

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## Retreat and Re-Align with Creation at Mountain Light Retreat (Cont.)

spiritual direction, go to the website [mountainlightretreatva.com](http://mountainlightretreatva.com), or write to Debbie Scott, Retreat Director: [Debbie@mountainlightretreatva.com](mailto:Debbie@mountainlightretreatva.com).



## New Parish Home Needed for Statues of Third Order Patrons

John Brockmann

As the SSF Little Portion Friary at Mount Sinai, New York was closing down a decade or so ago, we decided that we did not want the two statues of our Third Order patron saints to be lost in some archive or basement. They were originally displayed in the Poor Clares (OSC) Chapel. St.

Elizabeth seems to be a mass-produced statue, but St. Louis is unique and hand-crafted.

So, Ken Norian and I determined they should be moved to a parish where there is a TSSF rector and, perhaps, multiple tertiaries or Companions, and where the statues would be used or displayed for liturgical purposes.

My parish in Norwood, Massachusetts became the first foster home, but when I retired as rector, they were moved to Harvey Hill's parish Agawam, Massachusetts. Well, now Harvey is retiring, and the statues need a new home. Can you help?

The statues are too big, heavy and fragile for mailing so you will probably have to pick them up and transport them.

Please contact me or Harvey if you are interested.



**Louis About  
Three Feet  
Tall**



**Elizabeth  
About  
Two Feet Tall**