

CELEBRATING 800 YEARS OF ST. FRANCIS

P E A C E



The Jubilee Year of Saint Francis



Jan 10, 2026
to Jan 10, 2027

As part of this yearlong celebration and lead-up to the Transitus, TSSF Creation Justice Peace is offering 3 months of daily reflections focusing on Justice, Peace, and Creation. This booklet contains daily inspirations for contemplation and action, that are designed to both feed and challenge you by weaving our Principles into each reflection. We will also host one online Zoom meeting during each month.

We hope this will enliven your Rule and thus bring you much Joy as we celebrate 800 years of St.Francis' vision!

This booklet is also available in Spanish and Portuguese
at TSSF.org/creation-justice-peace-cjp



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DAY 1

TSSF Principles Day 1 The Object

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor." (John 12:24-26).

Reflection:

I help lead the First Year Novice Formation Circle for English speakers. Every month I tell the novices, "Look for what surprises you in the assignment." That is where formation happens. Today, I am struck by the notion that God will honor me if I serve Jesus. Wow, I never thought about God honoring me before. I honor God by "showing respect, esteem, deference," which some online resource says is involved in honoring someone. And I serve Jesus. Honoring God and serving Jesus put joy in my heart.

Yet my body suddenly feels different when I think of God honoring me. It is unsettling, to have this new dimension of peace between us. Sometimes, maybe more often than we expect, it is good for peace to stir us up. It is as if some of the threads of peace move up and some down, and then a new cross thread whips across. There is a lot of disturbing motion in being woven into the fabric of life. Of course it is unsettling.

But make this your own. WHAT SURPRISES YOU in the first day's reading of the Principles, and why?

Rick Bellows TSSF

DAY 2

TSSF Principles Day 2 The Object (continued)

In the example of his own sacrifice, Jesus reveals the secret of bearing fruit. In surrendering himself to death, he becomes the source of new life. Lifted from the earth on the cross, he draws all people to himself. Clinging to life causes life to decay; the life that is freely given is eternal.

Reflection:

The secret of bearing fruit is
to be at peace with not bearing fruit.
It is not at all about fruit, but rather all about peace.
Surrendering requires inner peace.
The life freely given is a life at peace.
The power of a martyr's witness is the martyr's peace.
The same is true of an activist's activism.
To bring about change that one is acting for,
one's power to influence is magnified by one's peace.
There is no power in fight, externally or internally:
anxiety, fear, doubt, stress, or revenge, violence, collateral damage—
These may be real, felt deeply, but peace must hold them gently,
carry them, not deny them, but also not be overwhelmed by them.
The peace must be tethered to Jesus's peace on the cross.

How does your sense of peace envelop your stress and anxiety?
How does it envelop and control revenge, rage, or anger?
How have you ever experienced the power of peace?
How have you ever experienced bearing fruit
in the context of peaceful surrendering?
What makes being at peace—surrendering the fruitfulness—
so liberating?

Rick Bellows TSSF

DAY 3

TSSF Principles Day 3 The Object (continued)

The object of the Society of Saint Francis is to build a community of those who accept Christ as their Lord and Master and are dedicated to him in body and spirit. They surrender their lives to him and to the service of his people.

Reflection:

Like the early Christians described in the Book of Acts, the members of the Order gather around our shared sense of the Spirit of Christ. Though we are dispersed throughout the world, we are together in prayerful openness to life shaped by God's Spirit. In these divided times, we serve God by making peace through listening, curiosity, patience, and creative blending of difference; and we ground our peacemaking with prayer.

In stillness, we allow ourselves to sit with dis-order and wait for God's peace to find us. Sitting in silence for awhile each day allows us invite God's peace to bubble up to surface and mingle with whatever comes our way today. May we rest awhile in the peace, which passes all understanding (Phil 4:7)



Looking for peace is like looking for a turtle with a mustache: You won't be able to find it. But when your heart is ready, peace will come looking for you. Ajahn Chah

Ellen Rutherford TSSF

DAY 4

TSSF Principles Day 4 The Object (continued)

When Saint Francis encouraged the formation of the Third Order he recognized that many are called to serve God in the spirit of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience in everyday life.

Reflection:

In our service of profession to the Order, each candidate says before the gathered tertiaries: "I give myself to our Lord Jesus Christ, to serve him for the rest of my life in company with my brothers and sisters in the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis, according to the Principles of the Order, seeking to spread the knowledge and love of Christ, to promote the spirit of love and harmony as the family of God, and to live joyfully a life of simplicity and humble service after the example of Saint Francis."

It is a wonder to consider the variety of personalities and gifts among the members of the Third Order. Each of us is engaged in particular ministries, according to our interests, opportunities, and necessity. Some ministries are parish-based, others involve work with community organizations, many are un-organized and carried out as the moment appears.

Our service evolves over a lifetime, and the way we hear our calling grows as we grow. What was important to us in our twenties finds a different expression by the time we reach forty, sixty, or eighty. Beneath those changes, our commitment to God and our neighbor persists. Through the years, we are encouraged by other tertiaries, who share this calling to loving service.

A gift of our common life is listening to the stories of how God is manifest in so many different contexts. How many areas of ministry have you heard about that stretch your knowledge of who God is and how God acts in the world?

Ellen Rutherford TSSF

DAY 5

TSSF Principles, Day 5

The First Aim of the Order:

To make our Lord known and loved everywhere

The Order believes that it is the commission of the church to make the gospel known to all, and therefore accepts the duty of bringing others to know Christ, and of praying and working for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Reflection:

As members of the church, we participate in God's mission to make God known and loved throughout the world. It is no surprise that where there are people, there are differences and, often, conflict. Finding peace calls for the welcome of variety and the capacity to weave diversity into a new unity. Each of us lives this balance in our local churches with times of peace and times of not-yet-peace.

Discord in our local parishes can cause great grief in our hearts and in the common life of the community. We peacemakers persist with the conviction that God has placed us in each gathering with good purpose, though the break in community harmony can be painful for us. Hear these wise words from Abbot Poeman:



A certain brother came to Abbot Poemen and said: "What ought I to do, Father? I am in great sadness. The elder said to him: Never despise anybody, never condemn anybody, never speak evil of anyone, and the Lord will give you peace."

Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert* (1960), LIX

*Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayer for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(BCP 817)*

Ellen Rutherford TSSF

DAY 6

TSSF Principles, Day 6

To make our Lord known and loved everywhere
(continued)

The primary aim for us as tertiaries is therefore to make Christ known.

Reflection:

In our mission to make Christ known, each of us discerns the gifts and opportunities which are given to us to carry out this aim. Our gifts are given to us as “manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7). The welfare of all God’s creation depends on our artful exercise of community life.

Inclinations and sensitivities, talents and skills, experiences and opportunities; all these are resting in us as gifts to be offered for the good of our common life. While we may be aware of some of our gifts; often, it is someone else, who calls forth our gift. Sharing our gifts is a two-sided prospect: the practice of offering ourselves when we see opportunity and the habit of noticing others’ gifts that we might call out.

When he was dying, St Francis made clear to his brothers the uniqueness of each person’s response to Christ. He covered the wound in his side with his right hand, as if to preserve the seal of his own unique response, and he said, “I have done what was mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours to do.”

Let us give thanks for the gifts that God has placed in our Order for the good of the world...

Gracious God, we give you thanks for your generosity in providing us with all that what we need as a religious community in the Episcopal Church. We thank you for the diversity of gifts among us, those we know and those that we have yet to uncover. Help us to share what You have placed in us with a spirit of humility, and let us, always, make love our aim. We ask this in your Name. Amen.

DAY 7

TSSF Principles, Day 7

The Second Aim of the Order: 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.

Challenge:

Is harmony peaceful? If so, how is it related to our pledge to fight? Is a pledge to fight the same as standing up to or against something?

Reflection:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

Colossians 3:12-15

Action for Today: Let Peace Rule

Reflect in Preparation: How is love like a garment with which you clothe yourself? How does this love bind everything together in perfect harmony? Is this harmony a kind of peace?

Action: For everyone you meet today, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.”

Reflect on your experience afterward: Notice what difference it makes in relating to others. How does love let the peace of Christ rule in your heart? How does peace rule? How does it enforce its rule?

DAY 8

TSSF Principles, Day 8

To spread the spirit of love and harmony (continued)

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.

Reflection:

In 2006 some of my family went to one of my favorite places—Running Eagle Falls—where water gushes out of a hill beneath a stream in Glacier National Park.

Indigenous people named this place after Running Eagle, a woman whose vision quest at the falls, led her to be a warrior. Her name expressed humor—eagles running were as strange in their culture as woman warriors. This little hike on our first day at Glacier National Park, was just right to get our bodies, spirits, and senses of humor ready for the rest of the trip. It prepared us to expect the unexpected. The rest of the trip challenged us beyond expectations. We realized our self understanding was limiting us, so we opened our minds up to adventures far more exciting than we had planned. We

also faced fear by backpacking into remote areas and sleeping in bear country. What was best of all? Our precautions worked—we never encountered a bear. We faced challenges and fears without being overly limited by them. We looked past limitations. welcomed surprises as opportunities, and kept our sense of humor too. Be open: to yourself, others, and everything different.



Rick Bellows TSSF
(adapted from *Peace that Passes Understanding*, 2012, p. 3-4)

DAY 9

TSSF Principles, Day 9

To spread the spirit of love and harmony (continued)

As Tertiaries, we are prepared not only to speak out for social justice and international peace, but to put these principles into practice in our own lives, cheerfully facing any scorn or persecution to which this may lead.

Reflection:

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.” Martin Luther King, Jr.¹

Our Principles call us to spread the spirit of love and harmony—to promote peace. Lasting and meaningful peace, however, cannot be achieved without social justice. When inequality and injustice exist, peace is only temporary and superficial. True peace is only possible when all people have equal access to resources and opportunities, and are free from discrimination and bias.



[International Day of Peace 2024 - UN Chief Message](#)

U.N. Secretary-General, António Guterres urged the world to build a culture of peace with justice, equality, and hope for all.

¹ 1964, A Martin Luther King Treasury by Martin Luther King Jr., Chapter 2: Montgomery Before the Protest, page 30, published by Educational Heritage, Yonkers, New York.

DAY 9 (CONTINUED)

TSSF Principles, Day 9

To spread the spirit of love and harmony (continued)

How we live the Christian gospel makes a difference in the world. To love our neighbors as ourselves is to seek their well-being. To love as God loves is to give the gift of ourselves. To love like Christ involves risk. How are we manifesting God's love?



"Protest" by Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850 - 1919).

Reacting to the exploitation of labor, the poet sees silence as moral failure, and inaction in the face of injustice as complicity.

The Episcopal Church supports legislation and policies that protect human rights, prevent atrocities, promote gender justice, and work towards reconciliation around the world.

[Advocacy Resources - The Episcopal Church](#)

Finn Pond TSSF

DAY 10

TSSF Principles, Day 10 The Third Aim: To live simply

The first Christians surrendered completely to our Lord and recklessly gave all that they had, offering the world a new vision of a society in which a fresh attitude was taken towards material possessions. This vision was renewed by Saint Francis when he chose Lady Poverty as his bride, desiring that all barriers set up by privilege based on wealth should be overcome by love. This is the inspiration for the third aim of the Society, to live simply.

Reflection:

Why Simplicity is so Important:
Every Dimension of Life is Lived
in the Flow of Everyday Experience

[O]ur lives are continuously woven into a single, hugely diverse, sacred fabric of all life which is our common home and life together. Ultimately all justice issues - racial, social, political, economic, or ecological - are confronted and healed here, and so are all prayerful contemplative struggles with the worldly powers. That is why simplicity is so important: every dimension of life is lived in the flow of everyday experience, in every breath. The Holy Spirit is already weaving our lives, and she's asking us to join, rather than to hinder her Work. She's asking us to understand that everything really does hold together in God, and that Christ is the center of our diverse worlds, rather than us.

(An excerpt by Jeff Gollier from
The Franciscan Forms of Service, 2021,, p. 28)

What barriers between you and others should be overcome by love? Focus your love on them and watch for barriers to be lowered. Be at peace.

Rick Bellows TSSF

DAY 11

TSSF Principles, Day 11 To live simply (continued)

Although we possess property and earn money to support ourselves and our families, we show ourselves to be true followers of Christ and of Saint Francis by our readiness to live simply and to share with others. We recognize that some of our members may be called to a literal following of Saint Francis in a life of extreme simplicity. All of us, however, accept that we avoid luxury and waste, and regard our possessions as being held in trust for God.

Reflection:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

“The life I've always wanted
I guess I'll never have
I'll be working for somebody else
Until I'm in my grave
I'll be dreaming of a life of ease
And mountains Oh mountains o' things”
*Tracy Chapman*¹

As I walk through aisles of abundance—store shelves stocked with “mountains o' things”—I think of the multitudes in the world waiting for lights in their homes at night, waiting for safe drinking water and adequate food for their children. As I drive through a cold rain to a warm house and a hot meal, I think about homeless families waiting for affordable housing and mothers at the food bank worried about how to feed their hungry children.

DAY 11 (CONTINUED)

To live simply (continued)

I think about “those whose sole misfortune was having mountains o’ nothing at birth.” Tracy Chapman sings about a consumerism that has bewitched us, about a system and culture that reveres materialism and keeps us focused on our wants rather than on the needs of others. I think about the richness of this country and wonder why there is such a disparity between the wealth of a few and the needs of the many. I wonder why we are a short-sighted society, unable to recognize that in the long run our well-being depends upon the well-being of an entire community.

The issue is not merely the vast wealth of some, the issue is the lack of concern for the deep poverty of the many among us. Too many of us spend our lives chasing more possessions, more status, more success, only to feel ever more stressed, anxious, and dissatisfied. To live simply is to live intentionally and generously, appreciating what we already have and focusing on what brings joy and meaning to our lives and the lives of others. Together, simplicity and generosity promote an inner peace and joy.



"Simplicity" by Emily Dickinson

“How happy is the little stone”
This poem invites us to be content with
what we have.

¹ Chapman, Tracy. 1988. “Mountains O’ Things.” Studio album, Tracy Chapman. Electra Records.

DAY 12

TSSF Principles, Day 12 To live simply (continued)



Reflection:

The Cross Transforms into the Tree:

An Instrument of Violence Becomes a Symbol of Peace
When we pick up our crosses and follow Him [Jesus] with faith,
determination and patience, the Cross transforms into the Tree.
A quote from Jeff Golliher, *The Franciscan Forms of Service*, p. 28)

Imagio Divina:

1. For several minutes: Meditate on an image of the Cross, an instrument of violence.
2. Imagine yourself picking up the Cross and claiming it as your own.
3. Imagine your cross becoming the Tree, a symbol of peace and life?
4. Contemplate with thanksgiving that this peace comes from following Jesus. Allow Jesus to show you the ways to peace.



Are they symbolically making room for our turn to follow on the cross?

Deposition
by Roger van der Weyden
c. 1435, Public Domain

Rick Bellows TSSF

DAY 13

TSSF Principles, Day 13 The Three Ways of Service

Tertiaries desire to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, whom we serve in the three ways of Prayer, Study, and Work. In the life of the Order as a whole these three ways must each find full and balanced expression, but it is not to be expected that all members devote themselves equally to each of them.

Reflection:

As Peacemakers, we are dedicated to, first of all, praying for peace. Recently a request went out to all of our members, to pray for peace daily. The United States is engaged in war activity against the nation of Iran in collaboration with Israel. Israel has been at war against the people of Gaza, and now Lebanon. For years now, an aggressive war against the people of Ukraine has been ongoing, started by Russia. And these are only the ones that make the headlines. So going before God, holding up the people in these areas who are under attack, and who are attacking others, is a practice we are all called to do.

Study. Our Creation, Justice, Peace group invited our sister, Terry Rogers, to lead a study about the ongoing situation with the Palestinians. We can all avail ourselves of learning more about that conflict and others around the world. But just as important, we can use our practice of Study to learn more about being peacemaker, about the practice of nonviolence. Maybe you'd like to contribute to Franciscan study by putting together a lesson on Peace for our Ongoing Formation programs on the TSSF Website.

And finally, we are all called to work for peace. Maybe this means joining activists for peace in your local community – attending peace rallies or demonstrations. But for each of us as Franciscans, we are called to be peacemakers in our own personal lives – in our families, our community of friends, our church, and our community. Our times seem rife with polarization and disagreement. What are steps you can take to make peace among the people you know and love?

“The earth is too small a star
and we too brief a visitor upon it
for anything to matter more than the struggle for peace.
Colman McCarthy

Carol Tookey TSSF

DAY 14

TSSF Principles, Day 14 The First Way of Service: Prayer

Tertiaries seek to live in an atmosphere of praise and prayer. We aim to be constantly aware of God's presence, so that we may indeed pray without ceasing. Our ever deepening devotion to the indwelling Christ is a source of strength and joy. It is Christ's love that inspires us to service, and strengthens us for sacrifice.

Reflection:

Being Aware of God's Presence

Describe ways you are aware of God's presence.

Here are four ways I especially am aware (to get you started): I am aware of God's presence when I feel thankful, when I think creatively, when I see God's image in someone, and when I experience peace.

Now you begin the list of ways you are aware:



DAY 15

TSSF Principles, Day 15 Prayer (continued)

The heart of our prayer is the Eucharist, in which we share with other Christians the renewal of our union with our Lord and Savior in his sacrifice, remembering his death and receiving his spiritual food.

Reflection:

Unwrapping Ourselves Spiritually

People today hear the word “church” and they often think of buildings. Of course, church buildings are sacred - as places where we go to remember in the deep sense of *anamnesis*; that is, remembering (unwrapping ourselves spiritually) who God is, what God’s Creation is, and who we are. This happens when we take into our hearts the words of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist: *Do this in remembrance of me*. The Body of Christ lives in a sacramental relationship with the great Body of Life that God placed in our care. ‘Rebuilding’ weaves together our human hearts, minds, eyes and hands with the Holy Trinity—the Holy Mystery of life itself. (Jeff Golliher, *The Franciscan Forms of Service*, p 27)

Unwrapping yourself spiritually reminds me of a Quaker bumper sticker, “I skinny-dip in the Ocean of light.” The book of Revelation foretells of the time there will be no need for sun or moon, light or lamp, for the glory of God will be our light. The next Holy Eucharist in which you participate, hold in your heart the image of unwrapping yourself spiritually in the light of God. Welcome God to make peace within you as an incarnation of God’s peace.



Dueling Rooftops: These photos show two church buildings with roofs that seem to compete: the cross vs the antennae in Springfield, Massachusetts, and Big Ben, the clock tower of the political center of London, and Westminster Abbey, a powerful church. In which building is God manifesting God’s incarnation more? Which is most likely to need peacemakers? Or to equip or train peacemakers?



Rick Bellows TSSF

DAY 16

TSSF Principles, Day 16 Prayer (continued)

Tertiaries recognise the power of intercessory prayer for furthering the purposes of God's kingdom, and therefore seek a deepening fellowship with God in personal devotion, and constantly intercede for the needs of his church and his world. Those of us who have much time at our disposal give prayer a large part in our daily lives.

Reflection:

Though Paul says to "pray without ceasing", that does not mean we say "Our father..." over and over endlessly. It's more about letting everything you say be said in the presence of God. Indeed, in that way, everything you do can be a form of prayer.

But that may make you think God is monitoring you to make sure you're doing it right. The spirit of Francis sees far beyond that. The Franciscan way is to recognize that God's love is constantly flooding through you and your response is to accept that love and go with the flow as sincerely as you can.

But that's still not fully the spirit of Francis either. A fully realized Franciscan would recognize the further duty to pass that love forward to others in need of it. Now that's prayer! When you give a sandwich to a beggar, without expectations and even without words, you're praying as Francis would.

The Way of Service for this day calls for intercessory prayer. That of course is important and must be a key part of any prayer programme. But it's incomplete in Franciscan terms if it does not also extend to embodying God's love flowing through all His beloved, and paying it forward to those in need of God's love and human grace. Then our prayer is fully and richly Franciscan.

Gary Russell TSSF

DAY 17

TSSF Principles, Day 17

The Second Way of Service: Study

True knowledge is knowledge of God. Tertiaries therefore give priority to devotional study of scripture as one of the chief means of attaining that knowledge of God that leads to eternal life.

Reflection:

The Way of Service for this day calls for devotional study of Scripture in order to know God and His promise of eternal life. The Franciscan perspective on this duty is to practice discernment in order to address the deeper values found in Scripture.

All too often, users of Scripture merely skim their favourite passages from the surface of the literal text in order to bolster a chosen agenda. That is in no way devotional study and can be considered Bible abuse.

The Franciscan way is to recognize that the ancient writers of Scripture were focused on the deeper meanings that these unique writings could point to, if carefully examined for coherence and discernment. Francis himself offered many insights into these profound revelations of Scripture. The result has been a recognized charism that Franciscans have followed faithfully for centuries. The literal texts are merely the first shovels in the ground in the quest for deeper Franciscan insight, which has withstood the test of time.

So the call for devotional study is a call to dig deeply and find the treasure that Francis has bequeathed to us.

Gary Russell TSSF

DAY 18

TSSF Principles, Day 18 Study (continued)

As well as the devotional study of Scripture, we all recognize our Christian responsibility to pursue other branches of study, both sacred and secular.

Reflection:

The study of Peace is both sacred and secular. Jesus came to bring peace between God and us. Jesus told his disciples “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.” And his final gift to the disciples was the Holy Spirit. In that gift, Jesus breathed on them and received the Holy Spirit. And then he taught them one final time about forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a central work in the business of Peacemaking. The body of holy scripture has much to say about peace.

Beyond scripture, numerous writers have written about the pursuit of Peace. John Dear has written many books on the practice of non-violence, as have Gandhi and his followers.

Many lists of books on Peace exist for you to peruse, and perhaps check out at your local library, or purchase at your local bookstore. Here’s just one list:

[You Can’t be Neutral on a Moving Train](#) by Howard Zinn

[The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace](#) by John Paul Lederach

[How to Change the World](#) by John Paul Flintoff at School of Life

[The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding](#) by Lisa Schirch

[Creating True Peace](#) by Thich Nhat Hanh

[Freedom is a Constant Struggle](#) by Angela Davis

[Peace by Peaceful Means](#) by Johan Galtung

[The Little Book of Conflict Transformation](#) by John Paul Lederach

[The Art of Waging Peace](#) by Paul K. Chappell

[I Am Malala](#) by Malala Yousafzai

Use this list or another and start reading and checking them off. Or find a group in your Fellowship, Parish, or Community that is interested in Peace and study some of these books together. We can all learn more by sharing with and listening to others. Online courses on Peace and Peacemaking are other options.

“It’s a bit embarrassing to have been concerned with the human problem all one’s life and find at the end that one has no more to offer by way of advice than “try to be a little kinder.”

Aldous Huxley

Carol Tookey TSSF

DAY 19

TSSF Principles, Day 19 The Third Way of Service: Work

Jesus took on himself the form of a servant. He came not to be served, but to serve. He went about doing good: healing the sick, preaching good news to the poor, and binding up the broken hearted.

Reflection:

Select something(s) or someone that gives you peace: Something you picked up in nature, something you made, or something you bought. It could be a person, words you memorize, a Bible passage, a song or piece of music, a poem you can read, etc. Join us at an online meeting this evening prepared to share why it (or they) help you find peace, keep peace, share peace, and spread peace, too.

Contact Rick Bellows at rickbellowstssf@gmail.com for the Zoom Link.

August 19, 7:30-8:30 PM Eastern Daylight Time

DAY 20

TSSF Principles, Day 20 Work (continued)

Tertiaries endeavour to serve others in active work. The chief form of service that we have to offer is to reflect the love of Christ, who, in his beauty and power, is the inspiration and joy of our lives.

Reflection:

This morning after doing the Daily Office online I was chatting with the mostly American participants on how different the mood is between Canada & the USA at this moment. I said something which within the context of that conversation made them laugh: "When we know and face our problems we soon have no problems. The problem in Canada is that most Canadians don't think we really have a big problem [but we do] – now THAT'S a problem." In other words, although there is clearly a lack of Peace in the USA, and things appear more peaceful in Canada under the rug, there is lots bubbling and not being dealt with. The key word here is active: as it says in today's Principal: we need to serve others in ACTIVE work. Being passive and thinking "it's not so bad because its worse elsewhere" is not Peace, it's only ensuring that in the future there will be a big, nasty "boom!"

That means that Peace is ACTIVE. While Peace is certainly the absence of war, it is not the absence of struggle and conflict. It is simply a better way to dealing with struggle and conflict. Being passive and complacent is not Peace: it is guaranteeing a war will come. Peace is not running away from conflict – it is facing it with compassion, intelligence, and patience.

Points to ponder and Act On

Is your personal expression of Peace active or passive? While you don't actively sin by commission, do you sin by passive omission? Is your faith ACTIVE? Do you inspire others to be joyful by your example?



Gordon Kubanek TSSF

DAY 21

TSSF Principles Day 21 The Three Notes of the Order

Humility, love, and joy are the three notes that mark the lives of Tertiaries. When these characteristics are evident throughout the Order, its work will be fruitful.

Reflection:

Here we go again – more of the Holy Trinity, more of the Holy Dance called God, called Life. Today I am meditating on how it is that God creates, God sustains, and God destroys. God is birth, God is life at this precise moment and place, and God is also death.

This Holy Trinity is a mystery for which I have no answer, but I do have an experience to make it all very real. It has to do with the age old question of “why do bad things happened to good people”, or put another way: why do we all get clobbered? Why is that we can do everything “right” and still get a kick in proverbial “behind”?

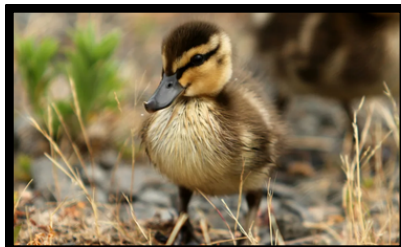
It’s a mystery, but as I am getting clobbered, I have one comment on this reality: while it hurts, it also makes me appreciate the little things I took for granted. Getting clobbered is making me more grateful. The mundane becomes amazing. People are so kind. I notice goodness so much more. It’s as if the world, me included, is “vibrating” more, full of the vitality of God. There is nothing “new”, yet everything is “renewed”.

Perhaps this Peace that I feel after the initial pain of being clobbered is the fruit of the Spirit? Perhaps my prayers and the prayers of others praying for me are bearing fruit? Perhaps the 3 notes of humility, love, and joy bear the most fruit after being clobbered, that is, after being trimmed as grapevines are trimmed to bear much fruit? Perhaps, like the baby duck in the video, we all are lost, but with our 3 notes and prayer we will be found by our Mother, the Holy Spirit?

Points to ponder and Act On

We all, understandably, try our best to avoid suffering, yet suffer we will. Perhaps we can see that in our lives, as in Nature, storms are needed so that afterwards life is renewed. How have you been “clobbered in your life”? How has this enriched and grown your faith? Always remember, there are no hopeless situations, only people who think hopelessly. (W.Newman)

[A mother Duck acts out the Parable of the Lost Sheep](#)



Gordon Kubanek TSSF

DAY 22

TSSF Principles Day 22 The First Note: Humility

We always keep before us the example of Christ, who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and who, on the last night of his life, humbly washed his disciples' feet. We likewise seek to serve one another with humility.

Reflection:

It is hard to be humble in the right way—to serve others in a loving and sacrificial way that enables you to flourish and not merely survive. I wonder if sometimes our humility is used as an excuse to not be assertive, to not face challenges and conflicts and take on responsibility. In other words, it rationalizes conflict avoidance. This is not the path to Peace, it is the path to an infection that festers within our souls and eventually bursts forth in violent conflict. Of course most of us have a tendency to avoid painful or unpleasant things, to resist doing the hard things in life. But the path of humility is that of strength, not weakness.

Humility is the path where we can carry our cross instead of running away from our challenges. Humility allows us to bear all, and when we do, something miraculous can happen: others help us and in sharing make our burden light.

When we are humble as Christ was in washing the disciples feet, we do not turn away from the suffering of others or allow culture to stop us, but rather we embrace them – as Francis did when he embraced the leper.

Thus, to follow Jesus in the way of love is to move out of our comfort zones and connect with those who suffer. To ignore the pain of others when we are able to offer support, hardens our hearts a bit. Surviving in this way is not flourishing. We cannot insulate ourselves from others if we are to truly love our neighbor. Humble service requires that we face the hard stuff in life and become agents of healing and peace to those who are hurting. Then our humility will have allowed the Dove of Peace to take flight.

Points to ponder and Act On

- Read [The Dave Test](#) by Frederick W. Schmidt. Its about real faith in hard times.
- Is your humility selfless?
- Is your humility fueled by empathy and compassion?
- Is your humility expressed in action?
- Does your humility allow you to do the hard things in life by being as counter-cultural as Jesus was when he washed the feet of his disciples?

DAY 23

TSSF Principles Day 23 Humility (continued)

Humility confesses that we have nothing that we have not received and admits the fact of our insufficiency and our dependence upon God. It is the basis of all Christian virtues.

Reflection:

When I read “our dependence upon God” I am instantly brought to my current life situation in which a close family member is very sick and there is nothing I can do but wait for the treatments that the Doctors have prescribed to first begin and then to take effect [the effect will take at least 6 months to act]. I am finding this waiting brutal. The knowledge that there is nothing that I can do, the knowledge that I have no idea how the treatment will go gives me sleepless nights and days where all I do is find ways of distracting myself so I don’t have to think about it. In other words, I am being spiritually trained to be humble. I am being trained to realize my insufficiency and dependence upon God. I have known this in my head, but quite honestly, this is the first time I felt this so powerfully in my heart and body – and it’s much tougher than I could have possibly have imagined. I sure hope and pray that I will find Peace in this journey. I sure hope and pray that this journey will allow my other Christian virtues to flourish.

Points to ponder and Act On

Do you like to be in control? Do you like to know and understand and be able to fix problems? These are all good things – sometimes. Have you figured out when you should take action and when you need accept your insufficiency and dependence upon God? If you have, has this brought you Peace?

Try reading [The Stature of Waiting](#) by W. H. Vanstone if you want a deeper dive into the power of waiting.

Gordon Kubanek TSSF

DAY 24

TSSF Principles Day 24 Humility (continued)

The faults that we see in others are the subject of prayer rather than of criticism. We take care to cast out the beam from our own eye before offering to remove the speck from another's. We are ready to accept the lowest place when asked, and to volunteer to take it. Nevertheless, when asked to undertake work of which we feel unworthy or incapable, we do not shrink from it on the grounds of humility, but confidently attempt it through the power that is made perfect in weakness.

Reflection:

Moving Deeper into More Radical Levels

The lives of Francis and Clare are two of the best examples of how spiritual weaving can emerge and transform our lives in creative ways. For them it involved gradually unwrapping themselves from the world and then weaving a renewed spiritual vision and way of life as it emerged in their awareness. This began with the story about Francis and the Cross of St. Damiano where he heard 'rebuild my church'. His Work there laid the penitential foundation and vision of the Franciscan Order. Charlie McCarron TSSF reminded [us] recently that a widespread movement of rebuilding churches was already underway before Francis heard those words. What the Spirit did with Francis and Clare was to weave the meaning of the existing movement deeper into their souls and the fabric of life, which takes our Work to a spiritually deeper and more radical level.

(Excerpt from the webpage of TSSF.ORG,
By Jeff Gollhofer, Assisting Minister Provincial
for Sacred Ecology.)

Describe ways your faith has recently more fully emerged in your awareness. Consider how this emergence has deepened your sense of peace. How has it had an impact on your spiritual work, your work on behalf of others, and your work for God?



Rick Bellows TSSF

Photo of a farmer changing water for a horse.

DAY 25

TSSF Principles Day 25 The Second Note: Love

Jesus said, 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Reflection:

Even the Beatles wrote "All we need is Love" but what type of Love? Tough Love? Unconditional Love? Love of Self? Love of your child? Love for a Cause or Principal?

For me the word love is like saying "I love soup" or "I love pie" – it's such an all encompassing truism that it's completely unhelpful. Although we often emphasize on the "it makes me feel good" form of love, I doubt that is what Jesus new commandment meant. It makes more sense to me to examine the life of Jesus or the life of St. Francis to see love incarnated. What I see is a non-judgmental, sacrificial, love in context Love that is sometimes mushy, as in "Let the little children come unto me" but other times tough. In other words, Love is Life and gives Life while simultaneously and paradoxically that giving of Life means there is death, death upon the cross but also death to sin.

Points to ponder and Act On

So yes, we love, but we love "as I have loved you". We sacrifice, but we do so knowing that there is more than the moment, that our Love will grow into more life and that with every loss there is also gain. So let's practice this today and love like St. Francis did: hug the leper in your life, live the very thing you are most afraid of, and overcome your fear because Christ's love has no room for fear. Then, when fear is gone, you can live in Peace.



Gordon Kubanek TSSF

DAY 26

TSSF Principles Day 26 Love (continued)

As our love for them increases, as our love for Christ grows deeper. We have a special love and affection for members of the Third Order, praying for each other individually and seeking to grow in that love. We seek the same love for those with whom we have little natural affinity, for this kind of love is not a welling-up of emotion, but is a bond founded in our common union with Christ.

Reflection:

When I went to my first Provincial Convocation, I had no idea of what to expect. What happened was wonderful beyond my wildest expectations: I felt I could just be myself and after talking with anybody for a few minutes give them a big hug. I felt like I had found my family. In the “air” there was no space for criticism or judgment; just joy and gratefulness and wondrous.

Today’s Principal says it all, it was not [only] a emotion, but a bond founded in our common union with Christ. That common bond felt so real, so strong that all these years later, I still feel it. I feel it when I visit Tertiaries in their homes [which we did on a road trip across the USA], I feel it when I hold zoom meetings with CJP [Creation, Justice, Peace], I feel it when I chat yearly with tertiaries in my role as a Chaplain. It’s real, but what I notice is that it’s real when I put faith and energy into the meeting. The common union is my choice, and when I choose it, the union springs forth. Thus, it’s not objectively “real” but rather a creation of the activity of the spirit of God within me.

Points to ponder and Act On

When was the last time you made the Love within you alive by making your love obvious and visible? When was the last time Love was up-welling from within you so that people around you could tell that you really, really cared? When was Love so alive within you that you put another’s interests ahead of your own knowing that this was a sacrifice that would be tough, but well worth it? How did this bring you Peace?

DAY 27

TSSF Principles Day 27 Love (continued)

The Third Order is Christian community whose members, although varied in race, education, and character, are bound into a living whole through the love we share in Christ. This unity of all who believe in him will become, as our Lord intended, a witness to the world of his divine mission. In our relationship with those outside the Order, we show the same Christ-like love, and gladly give of ourselves, remembering that love is measured by sacrifice.

Reflection:

Regardless of the place or context, the Spirit knows much better than us that weaving can happen in small ways or large. It happens in ordinary (Is anything really ordinary?) conversations, community organizing, through letters written to newspapers, during the sharing of food, in the look in our eyes, through a simple word spoken and in silence - anywhere, and everywhere we can imagine. Both activists and solitaries can be adept weavers. To weave can be the giving of a gift, the receiving of one, or both - heartfelt receiving can be a form of giving too. Weaving does not divide, exclude, or segregate. Weaving is actively non-violent; it is dedicated, faithful, and loving. [It is an instrument of peace.]

Excerpt by Jeff Gollhofer, from The Franciscan Forms of Service, 2023, p. 28

Points to ponder and Act On:

How is community building or weaving, actively nonviolent? Plan some ways you can weave in your church and other communities you live in, and then weave. Reflect on the experience.

Rick Bellows TSSF

DAY 28

TSSF Principles Day 28 The Third Note: Joy

Tertiaries, rejoicing in the Lord always, show in our lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. We remember that we follow the Son of Man, who came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed little children, who was a friend to tax collectors and sinners and who sat at the tables of both the rich and the poor.

Reflection:

Imagine St. Francis returning from a journey to his little chapel. It is the dead of night and it is wintertime. It is so cold that icicles are hanging from the bottom of his habit. The ice is cutting his legs and his blood flows down them. This sounds gruesome. Whatever happened to birdbaths, Brother Sun and Sister Moon?

And he imagines arriving at the chapel, knocking on the door and then waiting, covered in mud and ice. When a brother finally arrives at the door, he explains that he is Brother Francis, and he asks to be let in. The brother who answers the door turns him away. He knocks again and pleads to be let in. The brother tells him that this is not a decent time to be out, and that they cannot accept beggars at this time. They already have too many like him in the house, and they do not have room for any more.

St. Francis says that if he could meet this situation with peace and serenity, without getting upset, then he would have true joy. Wow. This all sounds extreme and, frankly, somewhat crazy. For us moderns, who practically worship comfort, it is next to impossible to embrace this lesson presented to us by St. Francis – but to become like Francis in this way is our challenge and also our gift to the world. You are that gift. Be that gift. Let this true Peace, the Peace that is within, shine brightly in your Life. *(excerpt from the National Catholic Register, May 20, 2026)*



Points to ponder and Act On

For me this imaginary tale embodies the special “flavour” of our Franciscan faith: we consciously link our belief by emphasizing that Joy inside of us is needed for Peace in the world to flourish. Have you had an experience like that described above? How did you respond? In some ways we are all beggars: we do not deserve to be let in the house of God but are let in because of God’s grace.

Gordon Kubanek TSSF

DAY 29

TSSF Principles Day 29 Joy (continued)

This joy is a divine gift, coming from union with God in Christ. It is still there even in times of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment, and an inward serenity and confidence through sickness and suffering. Those who possess it can rejoice in weakness, insults, hardships, and persecutions for Christ's sake; for when we are weak, then we are strong.

Reflection:

Have you ever asked yourself: what is "it" all for? And by "it" I mean human life and the sun and the moon and the stars and sea urchins and quasars and the whole big bang... why? What's the point? Well, I most certainly don't have THE answer, but of one thing I am certain: part of any answer is JOY!

I am guessing that the spirit of Franciscan Joy is one of the reasons you joined the Third Order. I am guessing that the Joy that St. Francis lived out has gotten you through many a hard day. I am hoping that all of your Christian faith and acts are filled with Joy. Religion, as we have all seen, runs the risk of becoming self-righteous and judgmental – that is why we have and need Joy. True joy takes us off our self-absorbed navel staring "it's all about me" being to the experience that we are connected and part of all: one with God, one with each other, one with Creation, one with the transcendent story of the infinite Universe. We may only be a drop in the ocean of Life, but like St. Thérèse of Lisieux says, "I am gone like a drop in the ocean, and only Jesus is left. My king and my master."



Points to ponder and Act On

Read up on the life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux who had inner peace that everybody noticed. Although she died very young and seemed to accomplish "nothing important" in her life, it was her insight that the most humble person, the smallest act of kindness, is part of the wave of faith that brings heaven down to Earth. Yes, life is hard, but that is all the more reason to live in Joy - the Joy we share with God that does not rely upon outer circumstances. May others notice the inner Peace within you that is nurtured by Joy shown as it did for St. Therese.

Gordon Kubankek TSSF

DAY 30

TSSF Principles Day 30 The Three Notes

The humility, love, and joy, which mark the lives of Tertiaries, are all God-given graces. They can never be obtained by human effort. They are gifts of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of Christ is to work miracles through people who are willing to be emptied of self and to surrender to him.

Reflection:

My Spirit Spins
It is this that makes
my spirit spin
My bones to quake,
my blood run thin,
My flesh to melt
inside my skin
My very pulse
create a din -
It's this that makes
my spirit spin:
That heaven is
not up but in!

by Sister Mary Ignatius [Sacred Heart Magazine, 1942]

What this poem makes me see is that Heaven and Hell and Earth and you and me and God are all here and now, around us and in us. I find that comforting to know that I am part of this infinite story of unfolding Grace but also a challenge because, if what I am matters, then what I do and think and feel also matters. God, by allowing me to live in heaven [or hell] this very moment, at this very place, in turn throws down the gauntlet. I, like the thieves on either side of Jesus's cross on Calvary, must choose to believe; I must choose to let my spirit spin. Then and only then, can the Peace of God which passes all understanding live both in Heaven AND here on Earth.

Points to ponder and Act On

How are humility, love, and joy marking your life as a Tertiary? Do your neighbours or family members notice that you are touched by the Holy Spirit in these 3 ways? Do you feel different now because of this Franciscan path that you have chosen to journey on?

DAY 31

Our Franciscan Faith in a Seemingly Unraveling World

Reflection:

How can the Principals of our Franciscan Faith help to live lives closer to God, to each other and our true selves as our world seems to unravel?

If there was a “Principle” for Day 31, the above question is a candidate. In my experience questions rather than answers are the most healing as they help us grow and become closer to God and our Love for the world and all its inhabitants as we work to nourish the Peace of God within our hearts and express that Peace in our actions.

Rather than focus on answers, today’s imagined “Principle” is a question that allows us to make our 30 Principles part of our everyday lives and thus incarnate them into the very real and very messy world we live in. I believe this “Principal” is the unstated but understood hope that we all have: to have our Franciscan faith help us navigate in a world that seems to be unraveling and to make the advice from this Psalm alive in our lives:

Which of you desires life
and covets many days to enjoy good?
Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.
Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it. - Psalm 34, verse 12

Points to ponder and Act On

I pray that the Spirit that is living within these words will also move within you so that Peace, the living Peace of God, will live within your heart. The messiness and discomfort of the world will always be with us, but that is actually OK – this “mess” can also be a path to and with God. All we need to remember is that where God is there is also Peace: but God’s Peace is not static and easy, God’s Peace is a dynamic Life force that demands much from our faith and then action to make that Peace incarnate in our world. I now leave you with Peace, a mysterious Peace that is beyond our understanding, a Peace that always heals, a Peace that makes us whole.



Gordon Kubankek TSSF

CONCLUSION

We hope and pray that these 31 days of Peace-themed reflections that we have celebrated together for the Jubilee Year of St. Francis have brought you the joy and peace and love that are God's reflections and gifts to our world.



A Four-fold Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.
May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.
May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.
May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

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Handwriting practice lines consisting of 25 horizontal dotted lines.